



Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.3/1987/1
17 October 1986

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Twenty-fourth session
23 February-4 March 1987
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Provisional agenda

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6. International economic classifications.
7. Price statistics.

8. Industry, energy and environment statistics:
 - (a) Industrial statistics;
 - (b) Energy statistics;
 - (c) Environment statistics.
9. Demographic and social statistics:
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 - (b) Social statistics and indicators.
10. Technical co-operation.
11. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes.
12. Programme implementation.
13. Programme objectives and planning.
14. Provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Commission.
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Annotations

1. Election of officers

In accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure and past practice, the Commission will elect, at its first meeting, a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur to serve from the beginning of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission to the beginning of its twenty-fifth session.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

The items on the provisional agenda and the corresponding documentation were considered by the Commission at its twenty-third session ^{1/} and approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1985/122 of 28 May 1985.

The Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination considered the provisional agenda at its eleventh session (see E/CN.3/1987/21, paras. 5-36). The Working Group amended item 3, entitled "Special issues", by merging sub-item 3 (c), entitled "The interrelations between statistical services and the emerging network of data bases" into sub-item 3 (a), entitled "Communications between national and international statistical agencies" to form a new sub-item 3 (a), entitled "Communications between national and international statistical agencies and the development of data bases".

The coverage of the document requested under agenda item 9 (b), entitled "Social statistics and indicators", has been expanded to incorporate work on indicators of living standards and patterns of consumption to accommodate General Assembly resolution 40/179 of 17 December 1985, entitled "Patterns of consumption: qualitative aspects of development".

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the work of the session (E/CN.3/1987/L.1).

3. Special issues

(a) Communications between national and international statistical agencies and the development of data bases

The Secretary-General will submit a report on various aspects of communication between national and international organizations, including classifications, methodological issues, technological issues and questions of comparability. Steps which could be taken to improve communications in a range of areas, including technology, will be addressed. Recent experiences in the development and use of data bases at the national and international levels will be included in the document. Details on the current status of the statistical data communication between national and international statistical services, including information on the data collection activities by the international agencies from national

statistical services and current activities related to the dissemination of international statistics to national statistical agencies and among international statistical agencies will be reviewed. Some of the basic problems that might be raised by utilizing the new technologies available in data communication will be examined. The steps that would need to be taken to enhance statistical data communication in the light of the new technological developments will be considered.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on issues of communication between national and international statistical agencies and data base development (E/CN.3/1987/2).

(b) Special problems in the statistically least developed among the developing countries

The Secretary-General will submit a report on the statistical problems and priorities and the appropriateness of existing international statistical guidelines for the statistically least developed among the developing countries. It will include a summary of the report of the Interregional Workshop on Statistical Development in the Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries held at Addis Ababa, 19-23 May 1986, at which the following topics were discussed, inter alia: statistical priorities and requirements; special problems impeding statistical development; personnel development and training; national measures taken to alleviate statistical problems and international efforts to assist in statistical development.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on special problems in the statistically least developed among the developing countries (E/CN.3/1987/3).

4. Dissemination of international statistics

The Secretary-General will submit a report on various aspects of the dissemination of international statistical data, including measures taken for improving the quality and usefulness of international statistics, improving the dissemination of international statistics and recent developments in providing services to users. The types of problems encountered by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat that affect the timeliness and quality of its publications will be discussed, and details on obtaining information from countries (such as on-time provision, gaps, editing, deviations from international standard definitions, need for follow-ups), processing (computer hardware and software) and publication (translation and printing) will be provided in the document. Successful initiatives and information on the general experience of other international organizations will be made available.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the dissemination of international statistical data (E/CN.3/1987/4).

5. National accounts and balances

(a) System of National Accounts (SNA)

The Secretary-General will submit three reports under this sub-item.

The first report will describe progress made in the SNA review since the twenty-third session of the Statistical Commission and include information on the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on the Structure of the SNA held in June 1986, summarize the issues covered at and the initial findings of other international meetings held in 1985 and 1986 on the SNA review, report on the future work programme and revised schedule of meetings for 1987-1990 and discuss the progress made in the preparation and publication of the handbook of national accounting series.

The second report will present the results of a special survey of the basic economic information used to compile national accounts in developing countries. It will contain a summary of the background and a description of the survey questionnaire, followed by the analyses of the availability of the basic data sources vis-à-vis the implementation of SNA accounts and tables. Particular attention will be paid to the quality of the basic sources supporting the compiled production accounts and the potential sources available for implementing the institutional sector accounts. It will also suggest some feasible steps to be taken in developing countries for further implementation of SNA.

The third report discusses the progress made in reconciling SNA concepts and data with those of related fields of statistics, with special reference to International Monetary Fund statistics on balance of payments, government finance and international finance. The report notes that reconciliation facilitates joint analyses of national accounts and related data and also enables utilization of related statistics as a point of departure in the compilation of national accounts; this may reduce duplication of compilation work and result in a reduction of resources required. The report also reviews the procedures followed to reconcile related data with those of national accounts, including the use of bridge tables. It surveys, by way of example, the possibilities for the reconciliation of concepts and data of SNA with those of some other areas of statistics, including agricultural statistics, industrial statistics, employment statistics, income distribution statistics and household sector accounts. An outline of the planned work for the future is presented.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on progress in the revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA) (E/CN.3/1987/5).

Report of the Secretary-General on the state of the basic economic information used in the System of National Accounts (SNA) (E/CN.3/1987/6).

Report of the Secretary-General on links between the System of National Accounts (SNA) and related fields of statistics, with particular reference to balance-of-payments statistics (BOP), government finance statistics (GFS) and money and banking statistics (MBS) (E/CN.3/1987/7).

(b) System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)

The Secretary-General will submit a note transmitting to the Statistical Commission a report prepared by the secretariat of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) on the improvement of the methodology for the compilation of the statistical balances of the national economy. The Secretary-General will also submit a draft in two volumes prepared by the secretariat of CMEA, entitled "Draft basic methodological provisions for the compilation of the System of Balances of the National Economy", volumes I and II, for possible adoption by the Statistical Commission as a revision of Basic Principles of the System of Balances of the National Economy. 2/ Volume I will include information on basic concepts and definitions; the balance of the production, consumption and accumulation of the global product (the national balance); the balance of production, distribution and redistribution and final disposition of the global product and the national income; an input-output table; the manpower balance; indicators of the material wealth and the balance of fixed assets; indicators of the income and consumption of the population and the balance of non-material services. Volume II will include the Classification of the Branches of the National Economy of the Member Countries of CMEA and a System of Indicators of Social Statistics.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance on the improvement of the methodology for the compilation of the statistical balances of the national economy (E/CN.3/1987/8).

(c) Links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy

The Secretary-General will submit a report on progress made in the study of SNA/MPS links since the twenty-third session of the Statistical Commission. It will include a discussion of specific proposals for the improvement of Comparisons of the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy, Part One: Conceptual Relationships, 3/ which contains a description of the linkages between the main aggregates of the two systems. A description of the results of experimental calculations of gross domestic product (GDP) and net material product (NMP) which have been carried out by both the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and by countries on a bilateral basis will be included. Proposals for future work in the area of SNA/MPS links will be put forth.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the elaboration of the conceptual framework for the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) comparisons and related experimental calculations (E/CN.3/1987/9).

6. International economic classifications

The Secretary-General will submit a progress report on the harmonization of international economic classifications, together with the "First complete

draft of the revised International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities" and the "First draft of the Central Product Classification". The progress report will include information on the Integrated System of Classifications of Activities and Products (SINAP), the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System of the Customs Co-operation Council, the revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, the development of the Central Product Classification, the recently published Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Rev.3, 4/ and plans for future work on harmonization and the revision of economic classifications. The results of the expert groups and working groups held in connection with the work on classifications since the twenty-third session of the Statistical Commission will also be included.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the harmonization of international economic classifications (E/CN.3/1987/10).

7. Price statistics

The Secretary-General will submit a progress report describing the country participation in phase V of the International Comparison Project (ICP), including the regional groupings and the core-country (interregional) comparisons, new methodological aspects and conclusions that can be drawn from ICP and related meetings held in 1985 and 1986, practical experiences derived from the core-country comparisons and the programme of work for the years 1987 and 1988, including a timetable for the final stages of phase V.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on phase V of the International Comparison Project (ICP) (E/CN.3/1987/11).

8. Industry, energy and environment statistics

(a) Industrial statistics

The Secretary-General will submit a report introducing the draft recommendations for a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries, including their relationship to the existing international recommendations for industrial statistics and a summary of the comments of the expert group convened in 1983 to review a preliminary draft of the recommendations, and "Draft recommendations for a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries", covering both theoretical and operational issues. The draft recommendations address the conceptual questions related to inquiries into household and small-scale industrial units, deal with the practical aspects of conducting inquiries into those units and contain a review of selected country practices related to the organization and conduct of inquiries and a bibliography.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the introduction to the draft recommendations for a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries (E/CN.3/1987/12).

(b) Energy statistics

The Secretary-General will submit a report on the methodological work done since the twenty-third session of the Statistical Commission on energy statistics, including new and renewable sources of energy, energy price and cost statistics and units of measurement and conversion factors. It will include information on co-operation and co-ordination activities between the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the regional commissions and other international organizations and the data collection and dissemination programme. A proposed future programme of work will be presented in the report.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on energy statistics, including statistics on new and renewable sources of energy (E/CN.3/1987/13).

(c) Environment statistics

The Secretary-General will submit a report on the work completed and the progress made in environment statistics since the twenty-third session of the Statistical Commission. It will include information on the work in methodology, co-ordination, the collection, compilation and dissemination of environment statistics and will describe, in particular, the methodological work of the Statistical Office that has focused on the preparation of a technical manual of environment statistics. The report will outline plans of the Statistical Office to include a number of tables on selected series of environment statistics which can be largely compiled from international sources in its recurrent publications.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the environment statistics programme, including the methodological work carried out and progress towards collection and dissemination of environment statistics (E/CN.3/1987/14).

9. Demographic and social statistics

(a) Population and housing censuses

The Secretary-General will submit a report which sets forth the Secretariat's preparations for the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme to be carried out during the period 1985-1994 and "Draft supplementary principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses" for possible adoption by the Commission. The report contains information on developments since the twenty-third session of the Statistical Commission at the global, regional and national levels,

the preparation of draft supplementary principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses, additional technical documentation, census training and other technical co-operation activities needed in the context of the 1990 World Census Programme, as well as planned census activities of the regional commissions in coming years.

The document containing the draft supplementary principles and recommendations briefly describes the important developments underscoring the need for supplementary recommendations for population and housing censuses. It deals with the topic of economic characteristics in order to apply the new International Labour Organisation standards on statistics concerning the economically active population in future censuses 5/ and the topic of international migration to implement the recommendations on statistics of international migration adopted by the Commission at its nineteenth session in 1976. 6/ Also included are enhanced recommendations dealing with data requirements related to special population groups in order to clarify the circumstances and status of these groups.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the World Population and Housing Census Programme, 1985-1994 (E/CN.3/1987/15).

(b) Social statistics and indicators

The Secretary-General will submit a report on progress made in the co-ordination of work on social statistics and indicators and, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/179, work on indicators of living standards and patterns of consumption. It contains information on the co-ordination and development of selected international methodological studies on concepts and classifications and the integration of data sources with special relevance to social statistics and indicators. It also contains a review of activities pertaining to the selection and specification of indicators for various specialized applications, such as monitoring and evaluation, special groups, including women, children, youth, the elderly and disabled persons, and other special issues. Information on co-ordination and issues related to the work on international publications and data bases of social statistics and indicators completed and planned and the collection and compilation of statistics and indicators in connection with special international mandates, including those on women, disabled persons, agrarian reform and rural development and Health for All by the Year 2000, is provided.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on progress in work on indicators of living standards and patterns of consumption and the co-ordination of work on social statistics and social indicators (E/CN.3/1987/16).

10. Technical co-operation

The Secretary-General will submit four documents under this agenda item. The first one will be an overall report which summarizes the technical co-operation programmes in statistics of the United Nations system, of bilateral agencies and of

multilateral agencies outside the United Nations system, during the period 1983-1986, based on information provided by the international organizations and countries. It contains a summary of the overall programme and summarized tables providing data on reported expenditures on technical co-operation in statistics in developing countries, according to the main forms of co-operation activity and by major groups of subjects, and a geographical breakdown of the technical co-operation activities in statistics by regions, subregions and countries. Issues in statistical training and in statistical data processing are addressed, and information on the role of micro-computers and mini-computers in overall data-processing activities in developing countries is provided.

The second document under this agenda item will be a report reviewing the progress made in implementing the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) in developing countries since the twenty-third session of the Commission and providing an assessment of the overall impact of NHSCP in strengthening survey capability and data availability. It will describe the status of the mobilization of internal and external resources, progress on technical studies and documentation, technical support and promotional activities at the global, regional and national levels, including the arrangements for programme co-ordination and management. The future strategy and long-range plan of NHSCP will be discussed.

A third report will be submitted by the World Bank on the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS). It will contain a review of the core objectives of LSMS and the activities that were developed to meet those objectives in the light of the analysis carried out on problems of data availability and existing survey practices in developing countries. It includes information on two tests of LSMS methodology, including questionnaire and survey design recommendations.

The Secretary-General will submit a fourth report on assessing the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics. It contains a review of previous discussions on this topic, as well as a discussion on the purpose, scope and limitations of any assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics. Some examples of evaluation of technical co-operation in statistics are presented. It also contains a description of a tentative plan for an in-depth country study of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics and a plan for identifying or developing measures of national statistical capability.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on technical co-operation in statistics rendered by the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries (E/CN.3/1987/17).

Report of the Secretary-General on an assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics (E/CN.3/1987/18).

Report of the Secretary-General on the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) (E/CN.3/1987/19).

Report of the World Bank on prototype surveys of the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) (E/CN.3/1987/20).

11. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes

The Commission will have before it the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination on its eleventh session, held at Geneva from 2-4 September 1985. The report includes a review of the provisional agenda and the documentation for the twenty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission, special topics for consideration by the Commission at its next several sessions and a consideration of the co-ordination of the statistical data-collection activities of international organizations.

Documentation

Report on the eleventh session of an Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination (E/CN.3/1987/21).

12. Programme implementation

The Secretary-General will submit a report containing an overall review of the principal statistical activities of the international organizations for the years 1984 and 1985 and approximately the first six months of 1986. It will concentrate on major achievements and important changes in the activities of the organizations. The Secretary-General will also submit a report containing information on significant developments which have occurred since the various substantive reports for the Commission were completed and information on any important developments in areas of work not already covered by the agenda of the Commission.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on an overall review of the statistical work of the international organizations (E/CN.3/1987/22).

Report of the Secretary-General on updated information on the work of the Statistical Office (E/CN.3/1987/23).

13. Programme objectives and planning

The Secretary-General will submit two reports to the Commission. One will contain a description of the plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics up to the end of 1989, concentrating on important planned changes in the activities of the organizations, namely, new activities and activities to be cancelled or significantly modified. The other report will provide information on the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat for 1988-1989, including broad information on priorities, resources and performance and information on the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995. The Commission will also be provided with a preliminary indication of the implications that the current financial crisis in the United Nations has for the statistical programmes of the United Nations.

"The attention of the Commission is drawn to Economic and Social Council resolution 1986/51, section VI, paragraph 4, in which the Council invited its subsidiary bodies to examine ongoing and planned research activities within their areas of competence and to formulate their requests for studies in the light of such information and of emerging issues of international concern, and further invited them to consider, where appropriate and feasible, explicitly relating their draft resolutions to the medium-term plan."

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on plans in statistics of the international organizations (E/CN.3/1987/24).

Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1988-1989 and information on the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995 (E/CN.3/1987/25).

14. Provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Commission

In accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure, the Commission will have before it the provisional agenda for its twenty-fifth session, together with an indication of the documents to be submitted under each item and the legislative authority for their preparation in order to enable the Commission to consider those documents from the point of view of their contribution to the work of the Commission and their urgency and relevance in the light of the current situation.

The Commission will also have before it, in the document containing the draft provisional agenda for its twenty-fifth session, information prepared in response to a recommendation and request of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination at its eleventh session (see E/CN.3/1987/21, paras. 29 and 41). The Working Group had recommended that under this agenda item, the Commission, at its twenty-fourth session, might wish to re-examine whether the Commission's efforts are being properly directed in terms of a balance between new areas of statistics, new programmes to be commenced and older programmes to be dropped from consideration. As part of this re-examination the Commission, when reviewing the proposed agenda for its twenty-fifth session, in 1989, might also wish to consider carefully the appropriate size and content of the agenda and the number of documents requested in relation to the time available for adequate preparation and discussion at the session while still ensuring that new issues take a significant place on the agenda. It was suggested that "consideration be given by the Commission to a reduction in the load imposed on the members of the Commission by the agenda" (E/CN.3/1987/21, para. 29). The Working Group had requested the Statistical Office "to submit to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-fourth session a document incorporating (a) the current criteria for classifying subjects as special topics and (b) the revised, expanded, consolidated list of special topics as an aid for the Commission to review the criteria for special topics and to select the special topics for future discussion" (E/CN.3/1987/21, para. 41).

The attention of the Commission is drawn to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1979/41 and 1981/83 on the control and limitation of documentation and, in particular, resolution 1982/50 on the revitalization of the Council. In paragraph 1 (j) of resolution 1982/50, the Council urged all its subsidiary bodies to exercise the utmost restraint in making requests of the Secretary-General for new reports and studies and to implement fully the decisions of the Council and of the General Assembly with respect to the control and limitation of documentation.

The attention of the Commission is particularly drawn to paragraph 4 of the annex to Council resolution 1982/50, in which it is stated that the documentation and programme of work of the subsidiary bodies of the Council and the Assembly should be streamlined in order to enable them to perform effectively the functions entrusted to them; that the Council and the Assembly should continue to review the provisional agenda for their subsidiary bodies, together with the list of requested documentation, in order, inter alia, to establish greater consistency in the overall request for documentation and its orderly consideration at the intergovernmental level, taking fully into account the medium-term plan and the programme budget; and that in doing so, the Council and the Assembly should also take into account the need for the consolidation of items and documentation for their subsidiary machinery.

Further, the Council, in resolution 1981/83, instructed its subsidiary bodies to take urgent measures to streamline their agenda and programmes of work and to bring about a substantial reduction in their requests for documents, bearing in mind the duration and cycles of their meetings, and to report to the Council on measures adopted, taking strictly into account the guidelines set forth in the pertinent resolutions and decisions of the Council and the General Assembly.

By decision 1983/163, the Council decided to request the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of intergovernmental and expert bodies, before decisions are adopted, any request for documentation that exceeds the ability of the Secretariat to prepare and process on time and within its approved resources; and to draw the attention of intergovernmental bodies to areas where duplication of documentation is likely to occur and/or where opportunities for integrating or consolidating documents that deal with related or similar themes might exist, with a view to rationalizing documentation.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on the draft provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Commission (E/CN.3/1987/L.2).

15. Report of the Commission on its twenty-fourth session

The Commission will adopt the report on its twenty-fourth session, which will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1985, Supplement No. 6 (E/1985/26), chaps. I and XII.

2/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.71.XVII.10.

3/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.XVII.6.

4 United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XVII.12.

5/ See International Labour Office, "Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians; resolution I: resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment" (Geneva, 1983).

6/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5910), chap. III, sect. B, para. 60.
