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### PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING

Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for  
the biennium 1988-1989 and preliminary proposals for  
the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995

Report of the Secretary-General

### INTRODUCTION

1. At its twenty-fourth session, the Statistical Commission will have before it a note by the Secretary-General on the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1988-1989 and related information (E/CN.3/1987/CRP.1) and a note by the Secretary-General on preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan of the Statistical Office of the United Nations for 1990-1995 (E/CN.3/1987/CRP.2).

2. The continuing financial uncertainties of the United Nations make the formulation of the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 and the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995 extremely difficult in all fields of activity of the Organization, including the field of statistics. Consequently, the proposed work programme for 1988-1989 and preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan for 1990-1995 have a degree of uncertainty about them (see also E/CN.3/1987/24, paras. 5 and 6).

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\* E/CN.3/1987/1.

#### I. PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE BIENNIUM 1988-1989

3. The note on the proposed work programme will contain: (a) the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1988-1989; (b) proposals on priorities in the work programme; and (c) indicative figures of the number of professional work months assigned to each programme element.

4. The proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1988-1989 is tentative, since it has not yet been reviewed by the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board and is subject to change in the light of the Board's review of the relevant submissions for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989 and of the Secretary-General's decision on the proposed programme budget as a whole, which is to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-second session for its consideration and approval. The work programme for 1988-1989 is based on the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989, which was reviewed by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-first session.

5. The Commission may wish to review the proposed work programme and proposed priorities of the Statistical Office for 1988-1989, and provide its comments to the Secretary-General. It should be borne in mind that, in accordance with the terms of regulation 3.1 and rules 103.2, 103.3, 103.5 and 103.6 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, while the suggestions or recommendations on the substance of the work programme by the intergovernmental body concerned may be taken into account in the course of the preparation and review of the programme budget, the Secretary-General cannot commit himself to the adoption of such suggestions or recommendations before the completion of the proposed programme budget.

#### II. PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS FOR THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1990-1995

6. In accordance with the relevant parts of the regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation (see ST/SGB/204), preliminary proposals on the medium-term plan are submitted for review and comment by the Statistical Commission. In particular, the review should focus on (a) the determination of relative priorities among activities subsumed under a given programme, (b) initiatives proposed by the Secretariat and the Commission and (c) the identification of activities which are proposed for termination or curtailment.

7. Recommendations for changes adopted by the Statistical Commission will be taken into account in revising this draft to produce the plan to be submitted to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. As is the case with the programme budget, the approval of the medium-term plan is a prerogative of the General Assembly.

8. The note on the preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan has two components. The first component is entitled "General orientation" and is a

proposed framework for the medium-term plan. The second component is structured in two programmes (World statistics and Technical co-operation in statistics) and eight subprogrammes (Development of concepts and methods; Application of advanced technology in the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics; National accounts, industry, international trade and transport statistics; Energy statistics; Price statistics and related areas; Social demographic and environment statistics; Co-ordination of international statistical programmes and Support of technical co-operation). The contents of the second component (the programmes and subprogrammes) are illustrations of the kinds of activities that would follow from the proposed framework for the plan.

9. The Commission may wish to provide general guidelines on priorities, innovations and curtailments for the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995.

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