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PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING

Preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan of the Statistical
Office of the United Nations for 1990-1995

Note by the Secretary-General

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CHAPTER __. STATISTICS

GENERAL ORIENTATION

1. The statistical programme was established by the Economic and Social Council at its first session as a permanent and continuous function of the Secretariat. It provides a wide range of statistical services to the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, the regional commissions and other organs within the United Nations and all Member States.

2. In response to the continuing and evolving needs for information for national and international planning and action, the statistical capabilities in many countries should be strengthened to provide users with a reliable information base, including statistics on resources, economic activities, population, economic and social development, and interrelationships at the national and international levels. The current work of the statistics programme contributes to the development, expansion, improvement and maintenance of those capabilities through the formulation and improvement of statistical methodology, the provision of technical co-operation support, and the expansion of the collection and dissemination of statistics in numerous fields, including national accounts, international trade, raw materials, industry, public finance and prices, energy, transport, the environment, human settlements and the social and demographic fields.

3. The methodological work includes the development of recommendations, guidelines, classifications, manuals and technical reports dealing with the collection, compilation, processing, presentation and utilization of statistical data and the organization of national statistical services and operations. The technical co-operation activities in support of countries are integrated into the overall working of the Statistical Office. Those activities draw upon the regular work of the Office - for example, by using and promoting the use in countries of the methodological work of the Office - and they contribute to the development of methodology by promoting feedback on the special statistical needs and problems of the developing countries and the applicability of the methodologies to countries. National statistics relevant to most sectors of economic and social activity are published for most countries and areas of the world and disseminated to Governments and a wide range of other users. By putting its own data into an international context, each country can obtain perspectives that cannot be obtained in any other way.

4. In recent years, broader and more integrated approaches to development planning and policy formulation have been widely adopted at both national and international levels. This has increased the demand for a greater degree of integration in economic, social, demographic and environmental statistics to meet these planning and policy needs. The amount of statistical data available at the international level has increased rapidly and grown more detailed. Technology for storing, processing, communicating and disseminating data is continuing to change. An appropriate blending of these is needed to ensure that the required statistics are made available to the wide range of users in ways that suit the wide range of uses made of the statistics. This will involve choosing appropriate forms of

technology for dissemination to suit user needs. Comprehensive data on economic and social structure and change are still seriously lacking in many countries. Knowledge of the reliability of available data is lacking in many fields and for many countries. There are serious time lags in issuing data. All these factors need to be addressed to improve the usability and availability of data for policy and decision-making purposes at the national and international level. International statistical work is carried out by a large number of national and international organizations. Each organization has its own objectives, priorities and methods but also shares a number of common concerns. Efficient and effective use of the resources of these organizations requires that a cohesive, integrated and co-ordinated international effort be mobilized for the benefit of countries.

5. The proposed plan for 1990-1995 has been prepared taking account of previous and current plans and decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Statistical Commission, and relevant special world conferences and decisions and plans made for special decades and years on issues of special international concern in the economic and social fields. Recent legislative authority has further defined the orientation and the emphasis of the statistics programme within the overall established framework. In recent years specific requirements have led to the inclusion of such topics as crime and criminal justice, environment, human settlements, population and special populations groups, including children, youth, women and disabled persons.

6. Within the framework set out above, the statistics programme during the period 1990-1995 will have the following important aspects:

(a) Development of concepts and methods, with efforts especially directed towards the completion of and follow-up to the ongoing review of the system of national accounts, including related work on linking the system of national accounts with other statistical systems and frameworks, the revision and harmonization of economic classifications for statistical use and the development of methodology in relation to statistics and indicators on special population groups. This methodological development will be undertaken with full recognition of the interrelation of the fields of statistics for which the Statistical Office is responsible and their interrelatedness with other fields of statistics as well. In addition, special efforts will be made to provide national statistical offices, particularly those in developing countries, up-to-date information on national experiences and practices in newer fields of statistics and with current statistical policies, methods and techniques used in the collection, compilation, processing, evaluation and dissemination of statistics;

(b) Improvement of statistical operations and application of advanced computer and related techniques geared towards improved storage, organization, access, processing and dissemination of statistics. Special attention will be given to the utilization of personal computers, improved compatibility of data bases in various fields and review of the most appropriate means to disseminate the full range of statistical data, making the best use of possibilities offered by the various media, including publications, computer tapes, diskettes and micro-fiches. In particular, the possible changes in the contents of printed publications consequent to the use of diskettes, micro-fiches and tapes and the now and rapidly evolving optical-disk technologies for dissemination will be addressed;

(c) Support for technical co-operation activities with special emphasis on economic statistics, the establishment and strengthening of household survey capabilities, statistical data-processing capabilities and capability for conducting population and housing censuses;

(d) Collection, processing and publication of statistics with particular attention to the building up of extended time series and basic data essential for analysis of long-term economic and social change at the country, regional and global levels and to providing indications of the reliability of statistical data. The Statistical Office serves a wide range of users and the outputs have many applications; a major aim will be to use available processing, communications and dissemination technologies to serve this diversity of users and applications effectively and efficiently. Enhanced communication with users will be required to understand more fully their needs in terms of contents and in terms of the forms in which data can best be made available;

(e) Co-ordination of the international statistical system with continued efforts towards conceptual consistency and technical integration. A special relationship exists between the Statistical Office and the statistical divisions of the regional commissions. They work closely together on all aspects of their programmes in full recognition of the complementary and interdependent nature of their work. In this division of labour the regional commissions ensure that individual regional considerations are taken into account in the development of global standards and classifications. Regional commissions assist in the collection and processing of country data; a well-established framework exists for the exchange of country replies to questionnaires and of computer tapes, thereby ensuring that all statistics are available throughout the United Nations. The close relationship that exists between the Statistical Office and the statistical services of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations will continue to be emphasized and promoted. In addition, emphasis will also be placed on establishing closer links with the work of related non-governmental organizations in areas of common concern.

7. Areas where efforts will be curtailed between 1990 and 1995 as compared to the 1984-1989 period include the following:

(a) The work in general price statistics previously was aimed at developing and promoting a unified methodology for price statistics and a central facility for maintaining price data accessible to all international agencies but for 1990-1995, work will concentrate on the International Comparison Project, on maintaining work on price statistics for internationally traded commodities and on revision of methodologies for price and quantity statistics;

(b) Work in income distribution statistics is expected to be limited to monitoring of data developments and compilation of data from individual countries regarding household income and expenditure statistics;

(c) Planned work will be suspended on one aspect of co-ordination - that is, the previously planned overall review of statistical publications of the United Nations system is no longer contemplated, but within each subject-matter the question of consistency and compatibility among the various international publications will be given attention.

PROGRAMME 1. WORLD STATISTICS

SUBPROGRAMME 1. DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTS AND METHODS

(a) Objectives

The objectives of this subprogramme are:

- (i) Intergovernmental objective: to develop concepts and methods for national and international statistics and to improve their quality and comparability;
- (ii) General objective of the Secretariat: to develop concepts, definitions, classifications and methods of data collection and dissemination for national and international statistics, to promote their harmonization and integration and to improve their quality in terms of timeliness, scope and coverage, comparability and usefulness.

(b) Strategy for the period 1990-1995

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

A revised System of National Accounts (SNA) will be available in draft form after discussion in a series of expert group meetings undertaken in the context of the SNA review. Handbooks will be available in draft or finalized form in a number of areas, including for example, accounting for production, external transactions and public sector accounts. Also, as a part of the SNA review, conceptual links between the concepts of SNA, the System of Material Balances of the National Economy (MPS), the European System of National Accounts (ESA) and various other statistics that are internationally standardized (balance of payments, industrial statistics, etc.) will have been more clearly defined.

Work on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 3 will have been finalized with respect to part one, covering activities producing transportable goods. A tentative version of part two, dealing with activities that produce non-transportable goods and services, will have been completed. The Central Product Classification will have reached an advanced stage of completion, and its content will have been delimited. Other international classifications, such as the Classification of the Functions of Government will be outdated by then and will need to be revised. The Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3 (SITC, Rev.3), its corresponding indexes and the Classification by Broad Economic Categories in terms of SITC, Rev.3 will have been published. Work will be under way on the revision of the International Standard Definitions for Transport Statistics. Work on a report on national practices in statistics on services and follow-up work on service statistics will have been initiated.

Most of the preparations to assist countries in carrying out the 1990 Population and Housing Census Programme will have been completed, including supplementary principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses

and related handbooks and manuals for their effective implementation and for timely publication of census results. Initial development of basic sources, techniques and documentation for national data bases, making use of specialized micro-computer technology, will have been completed, covering women, human settlements, disabled persons, and general social statistics and indicators.

Other methodological work will have been completed and reports and publications issued on energy statistics, national accounts at constant prices, environment statistics, a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries and effectiveness of the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics.

(ii) The period 1990-1995

Work on national accounts will focus on the finalization and follow-up of the SNA review. The emphasis will be on promoting implementation through the further elaboration of SNA handbooks, especially in the areas of enterprise accounts, the contribution of the service sector to GDP, balance sheets and financial flow statistics. Cost and time saving strategies, such as benchmark as against current accounting or short-cut estimation methods will be developed in order to help countries improve the timely availability of national accounts statistics.

Work on SNA/MPS links will include further development, testing and dissemination of improved methods, including software, for making such links. Related work on fostering linkages between SNA and the systems and frameworks in specialized fields of statistics will emphasize continued work on conceptual issues and the development of handbooks and guidelines for national work on linkage.

In the area of economic classifications, work on the Central Product Classification and the third revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, including the development of numeric indexes for these classifications, will be completed. Further revisions of classifications will be initiated, and special-purpose classifications in selected fields will be developed. The possibilities of improved harmonization with CMEA classifications will be explored. Under the guidance of the Statistical Commission, the Statistical Office will continue to promote the co-ordination of this work and will be the focal point for the provision of advice to other agencies and Governments.

In the fields of social, demographic and human settlements statistics, priority will be given to (a) providing guidance to countries in the implementation of recommendations for the 1985-1994 population and housing census decade, and (b) developing methodologies for statistics and indicators on special population groups, including women, youth, children, elderly and disabled. Technical reports will be prepared on specialized statistical topics as specific needs are identified, such as international migration and related statistics and special population groups.

The concepts and definitions established for industrial statistics will be linked to the framework of the revised SNA/MPS, where possible. Work on the statistical treatment of small-scale industrial activity will continue and will be incorporated into the International Recommendations for the 1993 World Programme of

Industrial Statistics. Revised recommendations for construction statistics will focus on national and international needs and national practices, as well as relationships to the national accounts. Work on the standardization of definitions and terminology for statistics on mineral production and consumption will continue with particular attention to the secondary recovery of metals.

In the context of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), a number of studies will be undertaken which are designed to assist countries in planning and implementing an integrated programme of household surveys. This series of publications will provide reviews of issues and procedures in specific areas of household survey methodology and operations and in selected subject areas.

The Guidelines on Principles of a System of Price and Quantity Statistics will be revised, taking into account work on consumer price indices, producer price indices and external trade indices. Guidelines on international comparisons will be prepared incorporating experience gained to date in the context of the International Comparison Project, especially from the regionalization of the project and from product (value added) inter-country comparisons.

Work in energy statistics will focus on any necessary refinements and further development of methodologies for general energy statistics and new and renewable sources of energy. In the area of international trade, research will focus on the development of concepts, definitions and guidelines for international trade in services, with a view to promoting internationally comparable data in this field of statistics. Work on transport statistics will concentrate on the improvement of methodology of deriving statistics of seaborne trade from total external trade and on the development of methodologies for other modes of transport. Experience gained in countries on work on various aspects of environment statistics and that obtained from regional seminars and technical co-operation in environment statistics will provide information for further modification, revision and possible extension of the Manual of Environment Statistics and the initiation of further methodological work on related concepts and classifications.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. APPLICATION OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN THE COLLECTION, PROCESSING AND DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICS

(a) Objectives

The objectives of this subprogramme are:

- (i) General objective of the Secretariat: (a) to disseminate statistics at an international level efficiently and effectively through the recurrent issue of compendia of economic, demographic and social statistics; (b) to disseminate international statistics through media other than recurrent publications to meet a variety of users needs as well as to respond to ad hoc requests for statistical information; and (c) the application of advanced technology in collecting, compiling, processing and disseminating international statistics, providing more efficient means of production and storage of statistics and access to statistical data bases for provision of data.

(b) Strategy for the period 1990-1995

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

Timeliness and presentation of contents of the recurrent statistical publications will have been improved but will still require further improvement to meet both continuing and new demands for useful statistical information. Most of the statistical data will be available in machine readable form, but primarily limited to magnetic tapes. Provision of data in response to ad hoc requests will be carried out primarily by means of machine readable tapes and hard-copy tables. Dissemination of data on diskettes for micro-computers either routinely or in response to ad hoc requests will be undertaken on an experimental basis. Statistical data bases of the Statistical Office will be available on-line mainly to internal users and a few of the data bases will be directly accessed by a limited number of external users;

(ii) The period 1990-1995

Through the utilization of improved data-processing techniques and advanced photocomposition technology, timeliness and contents of the regular general compendiums of statistics including, for example, the Statistical Yearbook and the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and other recurrent publications from subprogrammes 3-6 will be improved.

A wide range of new and improved technologies will be explored to compile, organize and disseminate statistics to meet the wide variety of users needs served by statistical data produced by the Statistical Office. Application of the laser printing technology will be expanded to print at a low cost appropriate publications. Advanced technology for recording a large volume of data, such as optical disk technology, will be explored to make a whole volume of a publication or one or more detailed data bases available on a single disk for efficient retrieval of data on micro-computers. Taking advantage of the availability of the low cost, easy-to-use software packages for data storage, retrieval and manipulation, a wide range of statistics will be disseminated on diskettes. Technologies now being used (for example, micro-fiche) will be reviewed to determine their continuing applicability.

Provision will be made for an ad hoc series of statistical publications to be introduced. This would permit the publication of additional useful sets of statistical data on a variety of subjects assembled by the Office which do not fit readily into the structure of the ongoing set of publications. This series can be introduced over the next few years using low-cost printing and preparation technology.

Improvements in data collection from countries will be sought by encouraging the use where possible of magnetic tapes and introducing diskettes as media for reporting data. Data exchange between the Statistical Office and international statistical agencies will be improved through the increasing use of on-line access to data bases. Efforts to standardize data exchange formats will be made.

Processing and storage of collected data will be improved through the application of advanced programming techniques, data base management and data access methodology appropriate for the different types of statistics. The scope and techniques of on-line access to the statistical data bases will be improved.

Manuals on statistical data processing for use in countries, taking special account of the processing problems of developing countries, will be developed and disseminated.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS, INDUSTRY, INTERNATIONAL TRADE
AND TRANSPORT STATISTICS

(a) Objectives

The objectives of this subprogramme are:

- (i) Intergovernmental objective: to improve national and international statistical programmes and statistics as a basis for national and international policy formulation and decision-making;
- (ii) General objective of the Secretariat: to collect, compile, evaluate and disseminate more comprehensive, reliable, useful and timely national accounts, industry (including statistics of construction, distributive trades and services), international trade and transport statistics that are as comparable as possible, to serve the needs of national and international users.

(b) Strategy for the period 1990-1995

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

The recurrent statistical publications on national accounts, industry, construction, international trade and transport statistics will have been issued. A special publication on the statistical results of the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics will also have been issued.

Official national accounts data will have become available for a larger number of countries as a result of efforts involving methodological development (see subprogramme 1) and improved national accounts capability in many countries acquired through technical co-operation projects (see subprogramme 8).

Improvements and extended coverage will have been achieved for making estimates (mainly through computerized methods) for some missing national data for internal use in developing various regional and world aggregates.

Limited studies of specialized national accounts subsets will have been initiated for selected countries, including such items as government accounts, household sector accounts, input-output tables and institutional sector accounts. These studies of specialized subsets within the national accounts framework will serve as benchmark reference for international analysis and it is not intended to publish them on an annual basis.

A review of the need to revise the base year which is used in connection with the computation of global, regional and national indices of industrial production as well as other indicators of economic activity will have taken place in consultation with other agencies, Governments and users.

An increasing number of users will have been able to gain on-line access to the Comtrade Data Bank.

(ii) The period 1990-1995

The recurrent statistical publications covered by this subprogramme will continue to be issued.

The circumstances will have been improved for official national accounts data to be expanded as a result of improved national accounts capabilities of countries resulting from activities mentioned under subprogramme 1 and the technical co-operation programme. The potential expansion will particularly include additional data on institutional sector accounts, financial flows and balance sheets. The analytical presentation of the data should be improved.

The present national accounts series on GDP/NMP used for international analysis will be expanded to include official data and, where feasible, estimates of other relevant elements of national accounts such as government data and external information covering not only imports and exports but also financial information and other relevant institutional sector information that is comparable between countries and can be used in international analysis. Attempts will also be made to promote co-ordination between international organizations regarding the methods of estimation where national accounts statistics are not immediately available (see subprogramme 1).

Country practices in the compilation of national accounts statistics will be analysed and evaluated to assess data reliability and their conformity to the international guidelines - in particular, the institutional sector accounts - and this information will be provided to users of national accounts data.

An increasing number of countries will be regularly conducting censuses and surveys of industry (including construction) and the distributive trades and services, in accordance with international standards. The results of these inquiries will be made available to a broad range of users. Countries will be offered assistance in their transition to the revised version of ISIC in the reporting of all industrial data; improvements in the coverage of inquiries, as well as the quality and timeliness of data, will be emphasized.

The coverage of industrial commodity statistics will be modified and expanded where feasible to respond to structural changes in industry and to reflect new directions in industrial technology. Similarly, work on non-energy minerals will also be expanded to take into account the increasing global demand for raw materials and the need for information on a number of variables such as foreign trade data, consumption, reserves and prices.

Work will be undertaken to keep up-to-date with national work and publications on industrial and distributive-trade statistics, including the services sector. With the expansion of international data collection in this area, publications on distributive trades and services statistics will be considered. In accordance with the revised International Recommendations for Construction Statistics (see subprogramme 1), the compilation of data on construction activity will be modified, and appropriate changes introduced in the Construction Statistics Yearbook.

Annual international trade and annual seaborne trade publications will continue to be issued regularly. However, the contents of these publications will be reviewed periodically and revised as necessary in view of the introduction of new technological improvements in the collection, co-ordination, integration and dissemination of data as well as the level of detail available, accessibility to and methods of dissemination of such data.

It is expected that developments in the collection and processing of international trade data in services will be developed so as to obtain international comparability and that national data will be available from a great majority of countries. The international trade statistics computerized data base will be maintained, its clientele will be increased and data will continue to be disseminated.

The Statistical Office will continue to produce annual matrices of goods flow along sea lanes of the world, showing a comprehensive picture of the structure of the international shipping market at the regional and national level. In addition, data on loading and unloading in international seaborne shipping will continue to be published.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. ENERGY STATISTICS

(a) Objectives

The objectives of this subprogramme are:

- (i) Intergovernmental objective: to improve national and international statistical programmes and energy data bases as a prerequisite for policy formulation and decision-making regarding all relevant energy sources and energy-related areas;
- (ii) General objective of the Secretariat: (a) to collect, compile and disseminate comprehensive and reliable energy statistics which meet the needs of a wide range of users; (b) to integrate energy data into a broader data base of energy-related statistics that are important to users, including such areas as environment, agriculture, national accounts, industrial, and social and demographic statistics.

(b) Strategy for the period 1990-1995

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

The energy statistics data base will have expanded in scope and coverage to include statistics on new and renewable sources of energy and selected data on environmental impacts of energy production, conversion and consumption, as well as information on prices and costs for an increasing number of countries. The energy balance format will have been complemented by satellite matrices and flow diagrams in order to present energy data more adequately. Through the use of micro-computers it will have become possible to start the distribution of compiled data as well as questionnaires via diskette and to promote closer linkages between statistical and energy planning activities.

(ii) The period 1990-1995

The recurrent publications under this subprogramme will continue to be produced.

It is recognized that there is the distinct possibility that energy and energy-related statistics may acquire a degree of importance in international and national economic affairs in the 1990s similar to that acquired in the 1970s and early 1980s. Efforts will be made to be responsive to that situation if it develops.

In order to respond to users' requests, the core data base on energy statistics will be further refined through seasonal and regional disaggregation on energy supply and demand and will be complemented by information on special energy-related topics of immediate relevance to the energy and development planner. Data collection will encompass a greater range of primary and secondary official sources and will be increasingly interconnected with activities of specialized agencies (e.g., the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Meteorological Organization), and, where feasible, with regional commissions. Increased use will be made of existing mechanisms, such as the decennial world programmes in industrial statistics and the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP).

Expanded use of micro-computers and the portability of their storage means should allow for improvement in the timeliness of data dissemination. This will be particularly important for energy price statistics, where timeliness is crucial to the usefulness of the information. Micro-computers will also create a wider venue for co-operation with the various specialized agencies that deal with energy or energy related issues, as well as the regional commissions. In addition, energy and energy-related data will be increasingly incorporated into software packages for data evaluation, review and analysis and general development planning.

SUBPROGRAMME 5. PRICE STATISTICS AND RELATED AREAS

(a) Objectives

- (i) Intergovernmental objectives: to improve national and international statistical programmes and statistics as a basis for national and international policy formulation and decision-making;
- (ii) General objective of the Secretariat: to develop and promote an integrated and co-ordinated approach to the collection, compilation, evaluation and dissemination of price statistics; to collect, compile, evaluate and disseminate price statistics and related data, including comprehensive and comparable data on purchasing power parities and real product for all countries.

(b) Strategy for the period 1990-1995

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

A study will have been published on the methods used in compiling the United Nations price indexes for external trade; the series of world commodity prices published by the Statistical Office will have been improved. The series on general prices indexes - started in the early eighties - owing to the low country coverage and shortage of resources - will be discontinued.

By the end of 1989 the fifth phase of the International Comparison Project (ICP) will be completed and preparatory arrangements on phase VI (presumably with 1990 as reference year) will be made. It is assumed that ICP will continue to be carried out on a regional basis and the Statistical Office will assume the responsibility for the co-ordination of the project and for the interregional (core) comparisons.

(ii) The period 1990-1995

Work in the collection, compilation, evaluation and analysis of commodity prices will continue in collaboration with FAO, the United Nations Trade and Development Board, and other interested specialized agencies and international organizations. The Statistical Office will continue to develop and publish series of such prices, including indices integrated at the world level.

In 1990 multilateral meetings will take place in all regions to discuss the methodology of the comparison and to agree on the specifications to be priced. A similar multilateral meeting will be needed for the core comparisons. The bulk of the field work will be carried out in 1991 and 1992 and the results of most of the regional comparisons will be published subsequently.

The preparation of an ICP handbook containing both the theoretical description of the comparison method and practical instructions for the participating countries is planned to start in 1990 or 1991 and be published within a two or three-year period.

Preparatory work for product-side (value added) comparisons is expected to start by 1990; a first multilateral comparison can be finalized before 1995.

SUBPROGRAMME 6. SOCIAL, DEMOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

(a) Objectives

The objectives of this subprogramme are:

- (i) Intergovernmental objective: to improve the dissemination and use of national and international social, demographic and environment statistics and indicators as a basis for national and international monitoring, analysis, policy formulation and decision-making;
- (ii) General objective of the Secretariat: to collect, compile, evaluate and disseminate on a continuous basis more comprehensive, reliable, useful and timely social, demographic and environment statistics and indicators which are as comparable as possible, to serve the needs of national and international users.

(b) Strategy for the period 1990-1995

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

The data bases for the Demographic Yearbook and the Population and Vital Statistics Report and the compendiums of social and human settlements statistics will have been completely or nearly completely automated to respond in a timely and cost-effective manner to ad hoc specialized requests, to provide flexible access and tabulation capabilities for specialized inquiries and studies, to pool information more effectively in the international statistical services and to respond to new statistical requirements established by intergovernmental bodies. Specialized data bases will have been developed to meet specific demands and initiatives, including data bases on immigrant stock, women and disabled persons. By the end of 1989 the assessment of data sources and availability of environment statistics will have been substantially completed. Selected environment statistics and indicators will have been included in various publications of the Statistical Office.

(ii) The period 1990-1995

The automation of the demographic statistics data base will be further developed taking full advantage of new developments in data processing and data base technologies, particularly micro-computers. The Demographic Yearbook and the Population and Vital Statistics Report will continue to be issued, and automation will increasingly facilitate user access to and use of the data base for a wide variety of specialized and ad hoc applications. Moreover, the structure and content of these publications will be reviewed in light of the increased capacity of certain types of users to make use of data disseminated in machine readable form. In this connection, new data base and dissemination technologies will be

reviewed with a view to providing the most detailed data on tapes, diskettes or optical disks, thereby making more detailed data available to specialists and at the same time allowing more efficient use of publications. An international programme of collection and dissemination of environment statistics will be initiated by the Statistical Office in co-operation with the regional commissions. Once a sufficient number of countries have established environment statistics programmes, international data collection will be gradually expanded in line with improved data availability in both national statistical offices and international organizations.

The social and human settlements statistics data bases will also be further developed using new technologies to incorporate the full range of social and human settlements statistics available in the United Nations system. New technologies are particularly relevant to achieve improvements in collection, co-ordination and integration, access and dissemination of statistics and indicators collected for the compendiums of social statistics and indicators and human settlements. These data bases will be maintained on a continuous basis for ad hoc dissemination in addition to use for the quinquennial preparation of the compendiums. Small-scale automated data bases will be maintained in specialized fields using micro-computer and related technologies and based on the primary data bases of the Statistical Office and other United Nations sources, in response to specific user interests, such as women, homeless, elderly and disabled persons, other special population groups, households and families, and crime and criminal justice. These will be used to generate special compilations of statistics and indicators in response to specific user demands and to meet a wide variety of ad hoc requests effectively and efficiently on a continuous basis.

SUBPROGRAMME 7. CO-ORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

(a) Objectives

The objectives of this subprogramme are:

- (i) Intergovernmental objective: to co-ordinate the international statistical work in order to achieve an integrated system in the collection, processing and dissemination of international statistics;
- (ii) General objective of the Secretariat: to promote co-ordination of the international statistical system, including technical co-operation activities, and to provide statistical services to intergovernmental bodies, units within the Secretariat and other United Nations bodies; the Statistical Office serves as a focal point for the international statistical system.

(b) Strategy for the period 1990-1995

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

By the end of 1989, documents will have been prepared for the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions of the Statistical Commission and the meetings serviced, the twelfth and thirteenth sessions of the Statistical Commission's Working Group

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on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination and the twenty-first through twenty-third sessions of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities. Implementation of decisions will have been completed or will be under way. Statistical services will have been provided to the Committee on Contributions and to meet ad hoc requests from other United Nations bodies. Consultations on planned work for the 1990-1995 plan period involving statistical services at the regional commissions, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations will have been completed. These consultations will be directed at promoting the appropriate levels and forms of co-ordination in work planned for the 1990s. A similar review involving interested non-governmental organizations will also have taken place.

(ii) The period 1990-1995

Substantive servicing of the Statistical Commission and its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities will continue.

Close working relations will be maintained with the regional commissions, specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and national statistical services on such matters as questionnaires, data banks, exchange of data and concepts, definitions and classifications and to promote overall co-ordination in the statistical programme.

The Directory of International Statistics will be published and updated and expanded as required.

The provision of statistical services to the organs of the General Assembly and other bodies on request, including the provision of data on national income, exchange rates, population, etc. to the Committee on Contributions, and the provision of substantive services and statistical expertise to various units of the Secretariat or other United Nations bodies are continuing activities.

PROGRAMME 2. TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION STATISTICS (DTCD)

SUBPROGRAMME. SUPPORT OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

(a) Objectives

The objectives of this subprogramme are:

- (i) Intergovernmental objective: to develop statistics and statistical capability needed by developing countries for planning, monitoring and directing their economic and social development;
- (ii) General objective of the Secretariat: to assist developing countries to develop their statistical capability, including application of modern computer technology for processing statistical data, through direct advisory services, fellowships, supplies and equipment, methodological material, guidelines, and through substantive support and monitoring of technical assistance projects.

(b) Strategy for the period 1990-1995

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

By the end of 1989, it is expected that there would have been some improvement in the capacity and capability of the statistical services of many developing countries. However, there would still remain a number of developing countries which cannot provide the data in terms of scope, detail, reliability or timeliness required by policy-makers and others. Some 80 developing countries will be participating in technical co-operation programmes in statistics, and 25 to 30 countries are expected to participate in the National Household Surveys Capability Programme. In addition, many of these projects would have strong data-processing components since a number of developing countries will participate in the 1990 round of the World Population and Housing Censuses Programme. This involves activities on training of national data-processing staff and installation and development of data-processing equipment and software. Guidelines, recommendations, manuals and technical reports on various fields of statistics will have been made available to a large number of developing countries as a result of work under other subprogrammes.

(ii) The period 1990-1995

The strategy is expected to draw on the various related elements of the statistics programme and on the total expertise and experience available in the United Nations Statistical Office and the regional commissions. Technical co-operation projects will be directed towards assisting developing countries to effectively improve their statistical capacity and capability, by the provision of advisory services, and the posting of international experts on a long-term basis and consultants on a short-term basis in specific fields to transfer knowledge and experience to local professionals in particular countries. Other forms of training will also be stressed. In addition, attention will be directed towards helping to improve the stature and capabilities of the national statistical offices by directing the attention of planners and policy makers to useful applications of statistics in constructing effective socio-economic programmes and in reaching policy decisions.

These projects will also provide necessary equipment such as the computer hardware and appropriate software programmes required to enable the countries to process their data as near as possible to the period to which it refers and to facilitate use of the data.

It is expected that there will be an increase in the number of country projects in various fields during the medium-term plan, particularly projects related to statistical organization in general, population, social and demographic statistics, economic and national accounts statistics and industrial, energy and related statistics. The 1990 round of population censuses will occur during this period and there will be marked statistical activities connected with census preparation, census taking and post census programmes.

Countries will be assisted, in particular, to implement national household survey programmes aimed at obtaining integrated statistics on a regular basis on a wide range of social and socio-economic topics and developing national instruments and skills for survey-taking. It is expected that by 1990 around 45 developing countries will be participating in the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP). The central co-ordinating role of NHSCP will be gradually integrated into the ongoing technical co-operation programme in statistics.

Within the context of transfer of technical expertise, instructional manuals and international classification systems, adapted to the needs of developing countries will be developed in the Statistical Office of the United Nations for a variety of statistical fields for implementation by developing countries. It is also expected that transfer of knowledge from one developing country to another developing country (technical co-operation among developing countries) will be encouraged in a number of statistical fields and in data processing.
