

14 January 2000
Original: English

Statistical Commission

Thirty-first session

29 February-3 March 2000

Item 13 of the provisional agenda*

Programme questions and related matters

Draft medium-term plan of the United Nations Statistics Division for the period 2002-2005

Note by the Secretariat

1. The draft medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 for the United Nations subprogramme on statistics, which is contained in the annex, is submitted for the consideration of the Statistical Commission pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/207, section I, paragraph 4, in which the Assembly stressed the role of the relevant intergovernmental bodies in the consideration of the medium-term plan, as well as the necessity for reviewing and improving the quality of the medium-term plan.
2. The draft medium-term plan has been formulated within the framework of subprogramme 7.5 (Statistics) of programme 7 (Economic and social affairs).
3. The Commission is invited to comment and make recommendations, as appropriate, on the draft medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, bearing in mind that it will be reviewed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, which will submit their recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.
4. The subprogramme will be carried out by the United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The orientation of the Department is towards strengthening the role of the Organization in the promotion of international cooperation for development in the economic, social and environmental and related fields, especially in the context of globalization.

* E/CN.3/2000/1.

Annex

Programme 7 (Economic and social affairs)

Subprogramme 7.5 (Statistics)

7.5.1 The subprogramme seeks to develop statistical methodologies as well as their application in the international collection, standardization, analysis and dissemination of economic, social and related data. In this regard, the subprogramme will promote international comparability of statistics through the standardization of statistical methods, classifications and definitions used by national statistical agencies. The subprogramme will also address relevant concepts and methods in order to obtain international agreement on their use and usefulness.

7.5.2 The subprogramme will enhance the position of the United Nations as a global centre for statistical data on international trade, national accounts, energy, environment and demographic and social statistics through the collection, processing, evaluation and dissemination of international statistics, and at the same time to further improve the usefulness and accessibility of international economic and social data to policy makers, both international and national. The subprogramme will promote the use of geographical information systems for modern surveying and mapping activities at the national and local levels. The United Nations Economic and Social Information System (UNESIS) Common Database will be fully implemented as a unifying framework for international statistics dissemination. The subprogramme will facilitate closer collaboration with other international organizations to continue to improve economic, social, demographic, environment, trade and other related statistics.

7.5.3 The subprogramme will work with developing countries and countries in transition to improve their statistical capacity and their ability to routinely produce relevant accurate and timely statistics and indicators. The subprogramme emphasizes capacity-building/strengthening, including through training and other forms of technical cooperation.

7.5.4 The subprogramme will promote a coordinated system of international statistical programmes and activities, particularly by emphasizing new Internet and information management technologies and the coordination and development of international statistical standards and classifications across a broad spectrum of statistics, and will provide for improved coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and other relevant statistics-producing intergovernmental organizations.

7.5.5 By the end of the plan period, it is expected that the subprogramme will have contributed to:

- (i) Enhancing comparability of statistics among countries and improving methods and procedures for the measurement of economic and social phenomena;
- (ii) Effectively responding to new and critical issues in the field of statistics;
- (iii) Improving the availability, usefulness and accessibility of international economic and social data to policy makers, both international and national;

- (iv) Improving the quantity and quality of statistical data submitted to international organizations and agencies;
- (v) Improving the capacity of national statistical offices in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to routinely produce statistical data;
- (vi) Enhancing participation of countries in the global statistical system;
- (vii) Reducing duplication and overlapping of activities among international organizations and agencies in the field of statistics;
- (viii) Improving the rationalization and harmonization of development indicators, based on decisions made by the Economic and Social Council, requested by international agencies;
- (ix) Achieving an increased cooperation level among international organizations on the questions of standards, classifications, definitions, concrete national data sets, data collection and data processing.

7.5.6 The subprogramme will be implemented by the Statistics Division.
