



STATISTICAL COMMISSION
REPORT OF THE TWELFTH SESSION

(24 April—10 May 1962)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 13

UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1962

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS
THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 13

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

Report to the Economic and Social Council on the twelfth session of the Commission,
held in New York from 24 April to 10 May 1962, inclusive

I. — Organization of the session

OPENING AND DURATION OF THE SESSION

1. The Statistical Commission held its twelfth session at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 24 April to 10 May 1962.

ATTENDANCE

2. Attendance at the session was as follows:

Members

Australia: Mr. K. M. Archer, Mr. F. B. Horner;*
Brazil: Mr. Jessé de Sousa Montello;
Canada: Mr. Walter E. Duffett, Mr. S. A. Goldberg;*
China: Mr. Jui Pao-kung, Mr. Chung-sieu Chen;*
Cuba: Mr. Mario García Incháustegui, Mr. Juan Juarbe y Juarbe,* Mr. Gilberto Mediavilla;*
France: Mr. G. R. Chevry;*
India: Mr. P. C. Mahalanobis, Mr. P. C. Mathew;*
Mr. K. M. Bashir;**
Ireland: Mr. M. D. McCarthy;
Japan: Mr. Yuzo Morita, Mr. Saburo Kawai;*
Mr. Goroku Watanabe;**
New Zealand: Mr. J. V. T. Baker;
Norway: Mr. Odd Aukrust;*
Romania: Mr. Mircea Bulgaru, Mr. Mihai Anastasescu;*
Sudan: Mr. Suleiman Taha Ayoub;*
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic: Mr. Valentin Fedorovich Burlin, Mr. Valentin Ivanovich Tsurkan;**
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Mr. Anatoly Ivanovich Yezhov, Mr. Boris Pavlovich Prokofiev;**

* Alternate.

** Adviser.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Sir Harry Campion;

United States of America: Mr. Raymond T. Bowman, Mr. Hugh H. Smythe,** Mr. Harry F. Venneman.**
*Uruguay****

Specialized agencies

International Labour Organisation (ILO): Mr. H. E. Riley;

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO): Mr. Salem H. Khamis;

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Mr. B. A. Liu;

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO): Mr. A. M. Lester;

World Health Organization (WHO): Dr. Munir Grais.

International Monetary Fund (IMF): Mr. Earl Hicks, Mr. Fred Lynn.

Non-governmental organizations

Category A

International Chamber of Commerce: Mrs. Roberta M. Lusardi;

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions: Mr. Lazar Teper, Mr. Daniel Nelson;

International Co-operative Alliance: Mrs. Mary Woodcok.

Category B

Chamber of Commerce of the United States: Mr. Earl F. Cruickshank;

Inter-American Statistical Institute: Mr. Tulo H. Montenegro, Miss Ana G. Casís, Mr. D. H. Parks, Mr. Efraim Murcia;

International Air Transport Association: Mr. Jay L. Sheppard;

*** No nomination was received.

International Association of Penal Law : Dr. Sabin Manuila;

International Conference of Catholic Charities : Mr. Louis Longarzo;

International Statistical Institute : Mr. Stuart A. Rice.

3. Mr. Roberto Mori (Italy) attended the session as an observer.

4. Mr. Philippe de Seynes, Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs, represented the Secretary-General. The following members of the Secretariat participated: *Statistical Office*: Mr. W. R. Leonard, Mr. P. J. Loftus, Mr. A. Aidenoff, Mr. W. W. Flexner, Mr. F. Leacy, Mr. W. M. L. Murray, Miss N. P. Powell; Mr. Barrie N. Davies, regional statistician for Europe; Mr. B. Ramamurti, regional statistician for Asia and the Far East; Mr. J. Royer, regional statistician for Africa; Mr. Peyton Staff, regional statistician for Latin America. *Fiscal and Financial Branch*: Mr. A. Landau. Miss R. F. Grossman acted as secretary of the Commission.

REPRESENTATION

5. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics made a statement on the representation of China in the Commission. The representative of China replied. The Chairman ruled that the Commission was not competent to deal with such questions.

ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

6. At the 190th meeting, the Commission unanimously elected the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. M. D. McCarthy (Ireland);

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Valentin Fedorovich Burlin (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic);

Rapporteur: Mr. J. V. T. Baker (New Zealand).

AGENDA

7. At the 190th meeting, the Commission unanimously adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of officers of the Commission.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Review of international statistics.
4. Industrial statistics:
 - (a) The systems of industrial statistics of five highly industrialized countries;
 - (b) Some recent problems and developments in industrial statistics;
 - (c) The 1963 world programme of basic industrial statistics.
5. Statistics of the accounts of enterprises: requirements, concepts and practices statistics of balance-sheet and profit-and-loss accounts.
6. Integrated systems of product, income and financial statistics: problems, developments and prospects.
7. Survey and evaluation of country practices in national accounting.
8. Progress report on national accounting and associated topics.
9. Methodology and evaluation of continuous population registers.

10. Progress report on developments in demographic statistics.
11. Report on 1960 world population and housing census programmes.
12. Progress report on development of statistics for social programmes.
13. Report of *ad hoc* working group of specialists in sample survey methods.
14. Classification of government accounts.
15. Progress report on balance-of-payments statistics.
16. External trade statistics:
 - (a) The implementations of the SITC, Revised;
 - (b) The international compilation of external trade statistics by computer.
17. The uses being made by the Statistical Office of electronic computers for statistical compilation.
18. Proposed master programme to permit compilation, verification, analysis and tabulation of statistical data by electronic computer.
19. Tourist statistics.
20. Priorities of the Commission's work programme and control and limitation of documentation.
21. Other business.
22. Report of the twelfth session.

II. — Review of international statistics

8. The Commission first took up a report of the Secretary-General containing a general review, in summary terms, of developments in international statistics during the two-year period since the eleventh session (E/CN.3/286). The report dealt first with matters of particular interest which had arisen, or had assumed greater importance, in the past two years. These included the considerable increase in regional activities in statistics, arising in part from resolution 823 (XXVII) of the Economic and Social Council on decentralization, General Assembly resolution 1709 (XVI) which deals with increased training activities, the statistical requirements implicit in General Assembly resolution 1710 (XVI) on the United Nations Development Decade, improvements in the tabulation of external trade statistics, new international series prepared by the Statistical Office, the new base year for indexes and other subjects not included in other documentation before the Commission. Other sections of the report concerned developments in statistical standards undertaken by the United Nations and associated agencies; other statistical activities including new statistical series, meetings and conferences and future work programmes; and the several programmes of technical co-operation carried out by the international agencies.

9. The Commission regarded the report as a useful and convenient summary of recent developments and proposed future programmes of work. It provided a general background for the discussion of the more detailed parts of the agenda and a basis for examining proposals for future programmes of work. The Commission suggested, however, that in future it might be more convenient if a summary and analysis of the work in hand were given by subject headings.

10. In this context, the Commission discussed at some length the need to obtain a judicious balance among the different programmes, both as regards the emphasis to be accorded to various subjects and as regards the regional activities in statistics of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. There appeared to be a need for continuous efforts both by the Secretariat and the Commission to achieve a much closer integration of programmes and activities, particularly because of the general tendency towards decentralization. There were many benefits to be derived through decentralization, especially in the operational sense, but at the same time measures had to be taken to ensure substantive co-ordination among programmes and agencies, realistic priorities and consistent policies. Such measures were all the more important because of the scarce resources at the disposal of the agencies and the rapidly growing requests of countries¹ for assistance in training and the development of statistical programmes adapted to their needs.

11. In the light of these considerations, the Commission concluded that it would be desirable to ask the statistical agencies, including the regional statistical organizations, if they would, before the 1964 session of the Commission, draw up in as much detail as possible, programmes of activities for at least five years ahead, and, perhaps in more general terms, programmes for the next ten years. The Commission would wish to study these programmes and comment on them at the next and succeeding sessions. This practice would facilitate the adaptation of the statistical programmes to the requirements associated with the United Nations Development Decade. It would also assist in achieving a reasonable balance among the programmes and bring to light areas of work that might have been neglected or overlooked. Some such areas already existed and means should be found to focus attention upon them. Examples of these include systems of price indexes, methods of measuring and forecasting capital formation, productivity studies and similar statistical investigations of the contribution of labour and capital to the output of specific industries. Studies of this kind are basic to development planning in order to allocate efficiently the means of production.

12. Consideration was given to the statistical advisory services which have been established in co-operation with the regional economic commissions, and to the nature of the services provided by experts assigned to individual countries for extended periods. In so far as both activities are concerned, it was the view of the Commission that the main task was to assist in creating national statistical services which could respond to governmental needs connected with planning for economic and social development. The statistical services should be equipped to supply

these special needs, but at the same time should not ignore the importance of systematic compilations of basic economic and social data which serve a wide range of purposes. The regional advisers and experts should make it one of their main duties to train national officials who could be entrusted to carry on the programmes in the future. They should also concern themselves, to the extent possible and appropriate, with the actual work of statistical development and offer practical advice. In a number of circumstances, the use of a team of advisers could be recommended, particularly when conditions called for a comprehensive programme. At the same time, the absorptive capacity of the national statistical service must be taken into account. There is a need for technical co-operation experts to encourage countries to have a systematic programme of statistical development with priorities which are consistent with the economic and social programmes.

13. In this connexion, it was pointed out that while general guides and standards served very useful purposes, they could not be applied without discrimination. Not only were the needs of countries frequently different, but conditions in a given country and its institutional arrangements required adaptation of general standards to national circumstances. This adaptation might in many cases be handled on a regional basis when countries in the region had reasonably homogeneous conditions; in other cases, general standards would have to be adjusted in the light of purely national conditions. Nevertheless, there was still a great need for additional detailed guides, mainly of a methodological nature, which would examine and comment upon the various methods used by other countries in collecting and compiling statistics on specific subjects. In addition, the exchange of information on the detailed uses of a given statistical series would be of special importance to the developing countries. The Commission therefore desired to draw the attention of the international agencies to the desirability of arranging for the preparation and distribution of detailed guides on a practical level, which would explain alternative methods and indicate specific purposes for which a given series might be used. It would be important also to show the interrelationship obtaining among different series, especially in the context of economic and social development plans. The Commission hoped that these points would be drawn to the attention of the regional conferences.

14. The Commission noted the adoption by the United Nations and several specialized agencies of a new base year (1958) for index numbers. It was considered that it would be very useful if such decisions could be made well in advance so that countries might take account of the proposed new base in preparing their statistical programmes. It was the expectation of the Statistical Office that the next base year would probably be 1963, the year in which many countries planned to conduct industrial censuses under the 1963 World Programme of Basic Industrial Statistics.

¹ Where the terms "country", "State" or "government" are used in this report, they should be interpreted as referring to States which are Members of the United Nations, of the specialized agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

15. The following resolution was adopted:

**I (XII). IMPROVEMENT
AND PUBLICATION OF STATISTICS**

The Statistical Commission,

Having reviewed the present status of international statistics,

Recommends that the Secretary-General:

1. Continue the work of improving the comparability of statistical data from countries having different social and economic systems; and

2. Take steps to extend the United Nations statistical publications, bearing in mind the responsibility of the United Nations to present as complete and reliable data as possible on individual countries.

III. — Training and assistance to developing countries

16. The Commission discussed the statistical activities implicit in General Assembly resolution 1710 (XVI) on the United Nations Development Decade. The Statistical Commission, the specialized agencies and the regional economic commissions and conferences and committees on planning have recognized that the lack of adequate statistical data has been a serious impediment to comprehensive planning for economic and social development.

17. The Commission therefore urged that, in the context of the United Nations Development Decade, statistical development should be regarded as an important requirement for economic planning and implementation and countries should be encouraged and assisted in formulating and implementing plans for statistical development as an integral part of national plans so that the necessary funds and facilities might be ensured. The Commission attached great importance to strengthening statistical training to enable the establishment of national statistical organizations adequate for the needs for planning. The Commission stressed the need of including the training of statisticians for planning and advisory statistical services as a part of the programmes of training in institutes of economic development contemplated under General Assembly resolution 1708 (XVI).

18. The following resolution was adopted:

2 (XII). ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Statistical Commission,

Being aware of the urgent needs of the less advanced countries for assistance in their efforts to achieve economic and social progress,

Requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the specialized agencies:

1. To take steps with a view to further intensifying the United Nations Statistical Office's activities directed towards the elaboration of efficient methods

for the collection, processing and analysis of the statistical data necessary for planning the economic and social development of the less developed countries, and towards the training of the requisite local statisticians, more particularly (a) by affording them broad familiarization with the experience of statistical work in other countries by arranging for the distribution, with the help of national statistical offices, of selected methodological papers, (b) by advising through the technical co-operation programme on the organization and execution of particular statistical operations, taking account of the experience gained in other countries and of the conditions prevailing in the countries of the area concerned, and (c) by extending the facilities for obtaining experts to assist the countries concerned;

2. To arrange, having regard to the forthcoming establishment, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1708 (XVI), of an Economic Projections and Programming Centre with sub-centres, as appropriate, in the regional economic commissions, as well as economic development centres, for the active participation of the United Nations Statistical Office in the work of the aforesaid centres, and report the results of this participation to the Commission at its thirteenth session; and

3. To make a special study of statistical requirements for planning economic and social development in less advanced countries including (a) types and priorities of statistical information, (b) training programmes at different levels, and (c) programmes for establishing statistical systems appropriate for national needs.

IV. — Industrial statistics

19. At its eleventh session, the Commission had requested² the Secretary-General to continue work in the field of industrial statistics with particular emphasis on the comparison of the systems of industrial statistics in selected highly industrialized countries. The Commission had stated that, to be manageable, such investigations had to be restricted to a few Member States and that it was desirable to select for study countries whose systems of industrial statistics were representative of a broad range of practice. Accordingly, the Statistical Office had selected five countries, and the results of its study were presented to the Commission in document E/CN.3/285, entitled "The Systems of Industrial Statistics of Five Highly Industrialized Countries". The countries were: the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America. The systems of these countries represented a broad range of approach and practice in the collection and compilation of statistics covering the fields of mining,

Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 12, resolution 1 (XI).

manufacturing, construction, electricity and gas, as detailed in the *International Standard Industrial Classification of 11 Economic Activities*, divisions 1-4 and major group 51.

20. The paper described the scope and character of the statistics collected and compiled in these countries, as well as the various kinds of inquiries making up the system of each country. An effort was made to determine the extent to which data gathered under widely different circumstances were internationally comparable.

21. The Commission felt that the study constituted a useful presentation of the systems of the five countries. The value of the comparisons made among the various systems would be enhanced, however, if more information were furnished concerning the economic and statistical setting of each and the broad purposes served by the various types of data. It would also be desirable to distinguish clearly the problems of collecting data on construction from those of the other areas covered. It was necessary, also, to emphasize that the descriptions of the systems of the five countries were not intended as recommendations in this field. The main value of the study lay in the descriptions and comparisons of the various systems. The question was also raised as to the appropriateness of treating statistics of profit-and-loss and balance-sheet accounts of industrial enterprises as part of the field of industrial statistics.

22. The Commission concluded that the study, revised in the light of the comments of the Commission and of the five countries concerned, should be published.

23. In the view of the Commission, a comparative study of the systems of industrial statistics of selected countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa would be of value to many less industrialized countries. In order to be most useful to these countries in evolving an appropriate and adequate system of industrial statistics, the comparative study should cover a number of related subjects in addition to presenting a description of the existing systems of the countries selected. In particular, the requirements of these countries for industrial statistics should be analysed, and deficiencies in the industrial statistics now gathered should be noted. It would also be valuable if alternative approaches and techniques were suggested for improving and extending the statistics in this field. The representatives of Brazil, India and Japan agreed to furnish detailed descriptions of the systems of industrial statistics of their countries for the study. In addition to these countries, it was thought that it would be useful to ask an African country and perhaps other countries to contribute to the study.

24. At its eleventh session, the Commission had also requested³ the Secretary-General to keep under review developments in industrial statistics in order that new concepts and methods might be the subject of international exchange of experience. A study

entitled "Some Recent Problems and Developments in Industrial Statistics" (E/CN.3/287) had been prepared in the light of this request. It consisted of a discussion of major developments and outstanding problems in selected important aspects of industrial statistics. Among the topics dealt with were the use of various types of statistical and tabulating units, extensions or improvements in basic data, such as on the value of the stock of fixed assets and costs of production in addition to those traditionally gathered in industrial inquiries, and additions of current series. It also covered the efforts to gather more adequate data on the construction industry and construction activities and the major difficulties faced by a number of countries in the field of statistics.

25. The Commission felt that document E/CN.3/287 dealt with the main recent developments and outstanding problems in the field of industrial statistics and provided a valuable description and analysis of these matters. In the consideration of the study, the Commission noted the practice and plans of some Member States on the various topics covered in the document.

26. It was agreed that further international work, in the near future, on the statistical and tabulating units employed in industrial statistics was not likely to be fruitful. Valuable and rather exhaustive international discussion of this subject had already taken place. The degree of identity that can be attained internationally in the statistical units employed in various types of inquiries is necessarily limited by the differences in national requirements and circumstances. Investigation of the implications for international comparability of the use of differing tabulating units would need to await the results of national inquiries that are to be taken as part of the 1963 World Programme of Basic Industrial Statistics. It seemed likely that as part of these inquiries a number of countries would gather and compile data on the structural and statistical relationships between various types of statistical units. This type of information would be of considerable value in international and national studies of the various statistical and tabulating units in relation to one another.

27. Concerted international work was needed on concepts, methods and techniques for gathering statistics on the construction industry and construction activities. It was evident from both documents (E/CN.3/285 and E/CN.3/287) that despite the important requirements for these statistics there were substantial gaps in the available data on construction in a number of countries. This situation reflected the special problems and difficulties involved in construction statistics. It was suggested that construction costs be included in intensified international work on statistics of construction. The Commission noted that work was proceeding under the programme of the Conference of European Statisticians on the development of a statistical programme of current housing, building and construction statistics.

³ *Ibid.*

28. The Commission also felt that it was important to keep under review developments and trends in some of the other aspects of industrial statistics dealt with in document E/CN.3/287. Some countries proposed to intensify work on the collection and compilation of data on the value of fixed assets, particularly those held by industrial units. These statistics were needed for such purposes as measuring the productivity and capacity of the fixed capital of industrial units and estimates of national wealth. Use may be made in this work of the various ways of gathering figures of the replacement value of the stock of fixed assets -namely, the direct inquiry, fire insurance and perpetual inventory approaches- and it would be useful to continue the international exchange of experience on problems and developments in this field.

29. The Commission considered it desirable to undertake a systematic review and study of the major uses to which industrial statistics are, and might be, put. It was thought that the study should deal with the types of primary data required and the derived index numbers, ratios and frequency distributions which show important relationships between the various elements of industrial outputs and inputs. Among the measures studied should be methods of estimating changes in the relationship of industrial output to input of materials, energy, labour and capital. The study should also deal with the way in which the various items of primary data and the inquiries through which these items are gathered and might be related to one another in order to form an effective and efficient system of industrial statistics. The Commission noted that the various international documents on industrial statistics and on basic statistical series for the use of the developing countries in programmes of economic and social development included valuable information and suggestions on these subjects. However, the material was scattered through various documents and was primarily in summary character. It was agreed that the study should relate to the more general requirements for, and uses of, industrial statistics.

30. The Commission also discussed document E/CN.3/288 entitled "The 1963 World Programme of Basic Industrial Statistics". The Commission was pleased to note that adaptations of the 1963 World Programme had or would be adopted by each of the regional conferences of statisticians and by the Committee on Improvement of National Statistics of the Inter-American Statistical Institute. The Commission also noted with gratification that over ninety countries or territories had indicated they would take inquiries as part of the 1963 World Programme and that technical guidance and assistance had been, and would continue to be, furnished by means of seminars and technical studies and the provision of expert assistance. In the case of a number of developing countries, the inquiries taken as part of the 1963 World Programme should provide the basis for evolving a system of the required industrial statistics.

31. The Commission was informed that following the adoption of the 1963 European Programme of Basic Industrial Statistics, the Conference of European Statisticians was convening a meeting to consider index numbers of industrial production and to review the existing international recommendations in this field in relation to their application in Europe.

32. The following resolution was adopted :

3 (XII). INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General :

1. To issue a publication based on document E/CN.3/285 entitled "The Systems of Industrial Statistics of Five Highly Industrialized Countries", revised in the light of the comments made by the Commission and the five countries concerned ;

2. To prepare a study of the industrial statistics of selected countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa ;

3. To make a detailed study of the problems of and suitable concepts, methods and techniques for gathering data on construction, with the aid of experts, and in consultation when appropriate with countries and regional statistical organizations ;

4. To undertake a systematic investigation of the major general uses of, and requirements for, industrial statistics, including the types of primary data required and the derived index numbers, ratios and frequency distributions which show important relationships between the various elements of industrial output and input, as well as the useful relationships between the various industrial inquiries through which the data are gathered ; and

5. To continue to keep under review developments in other selected aspects of industrial statistics in order that these topics may be the subject of international exchange of experience ;

Invites the Secretary-General to continue to provide technical guidance and assistance, in the planning and conduct of inquiries that are part of the 1963 World Programme, by means of technical studies and the provision of expert assistance.

V. — Statistics of the financial accounts of enterprises

33. The Commission discussed the subject of statistics of the profit-and-loss and balance-sheet accounts of non-financial enterprises based on document E/CN.3/289, prepared by the Secretary-General. This report was prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission, at its eleventh session,⁴ for a comparative study of national requirements, problems and practices in the collection and compila-

⁴ *Ibid.*, resolution 4 (XI), para. 50.

tion of statistics of assets and liabilities and revenue and expenditures of enterprises.

34. The first part of document E/CN.3/289 dealt with the major uses of statistics of the profit-and-loss and balance-sheet accounts of enterprises. Among the requirements for the data covered in the paper were the uses in compiling accounts on the national income and product and on transactions in and holdings of financial assets and liabilities and in preparing statements on the uses and sources of funds and the combined revenue and expenditure and balance sheets of various types of businesses. Also considered in the document were the uses of the data as indicators of general economic conditions and of the financial circumstances and condition of various kinds of enterprises. In discussing these uses, attention was devoted to the characteristics of the data that would best serve the various purposes. The second portion of the paper was devoted to description and analysis of the approaches being made in various countries to the compilation of statistics on the financial accounts of enterprises. This section of the paper dealt with the character, classification and definition of the items of data sought, the field of non-financial enterprises covered and the type of statistical unit employed in these inquiries, and the frequency of the various sources of information for the inquiries. In dealing with these topics, the approaches utilized to gather the required data and the problems encountered were discussed.

35. The Commission considered that document E/CN.3/289 was a very useful study of national requirements, practices and problems with respect to statistics of the profit-and-loss and balance-sheet accounts of non-financial enterprises. It furnished a comprehensive and realistic discussion of the practices and problems in this field. A number of countries were engaged in extending and improving these statistics, and the international exchange of information provided by the document was helpful in this work. In further studies, it would be useful to deal with such additional topics as the gathering of data on the financial accounts of government-owned enterprises in the case of countries with market economies, and the treatment of acquisitions of businesses and investments in subsidiaries. It would also be desirable to make a sharp distinction between the characteristics of annual and quarterly inquiries. The Commission felt that it would be valuable to continue the international exchange of information and experience on statistics of the financial accounts of enterprises by bringing up to date, from time to time, the study presented in document E/CN.3/289, with a view, *inter alia*, to the development, ultimately, of suggestions as to the type, definition and classification of items of data to be gathered from profit-and-loss and balance-sheet accounts.

36. The Commission noted that the requirements for financial statistics that received emphasis differed from one country to another, and reflected the particular circumstances of each country. The uses

of these statistics have also varied from time to time in the case of any one country. For example, concentration on the income approach to compiling national income and product accounts has given rise to a need for considerable data from the profit-and-loss accounts of businesses. Studies of the relative significance of internal and external sources of finance of business enterprises, of the nature of these sources of finance and of the impact of fiscal and monetary policies and financial-market conditions on the various sources of finance were major sources of the requirements for the statistics in a number of countries. Interest in the character, expansion and financing experiences of incorporated enterprises was also an important source of demand for these data in some countries. Extensive use was made of profit-and-loss and balance-sheet data in countries with centrally planned economies for such purposes as assessing the operations and real and financial resources of enterprises and compiling national income and financial accounts.

37. In countries with planned economies, data on profit-and-loss and balance-sheet accounts were gathered directly from enterprises on an annual and quarterly basis. The definition and standardization of these accounts in the light of the statistical and management requirements greatly facilitated these inquiries.

38. The statistical authorities in other countries obtained data on the financial accounts of enterprises from records that were a by-product of governmental administrative activities as well as through direct surveys. Reports filed under company registration laws and regulations were an important source of these data in a number of countries. Review and revision of the company registration acts had been, or would be, undertaken in some countries, and it was hoped that this would result in more useful financial statistics from statements filed under these acts. Though valuable basic data were derived from taxation and company registration records, these statistics were not always available rapidly enough or in the most suitable form. In gathering profit-and-loss and balance-sheet statistics directly from enterprises, difficulties had been encountered as a result of the reluctance of respondents to furnish these data and of the limited standardization of business accounting. In devising these inquiries, statistical authorities had therefore found it essential to consult, extensively and in detail, with the accounting profession and prospective respondents, in some cases with each respondent individually. The employment of highly qualified and skilled personnel in gathering the required data had also proved to be desirable in some countries. The changes that occurred in the population of enterprises, the variation in accounting periods among enterprises and the collection of financial data on the branches of foreign companies also raised problems.

39. The gathering of adequate data on unincorporated enterprises required the development of special approaches and techniques. Nevertheless, it

has been found essential to start and proceed with inquiries in this field. Through this course of action, not only could urgently required data be gathered, but organized and reliable information might be obtained on accounting practices, methods of valuing assets and liabilities and related questions for purposes of improving the inquiries.

VI. — Integrated accounts on income and financial statistics

40. The Commission considered the subject of integrated accounts on income and financial statistics, based on document E/CN.3/290 entitled "Problems and Developments in the Integration of Accounts on Financial and Income Statistics". The paper surveyed the major questions encountered in devising accounts on transactions in and holdings of financial assets and liabilities that were interrelated with the traditional accounts on production, expenditure and income, and described the alternatives for dealing with these matters that were being given consideration. The document dealt with such questions as the nature and classification of entries in financial accounts, the sectoring of these accounts, the extent to which the sectoring of financial accounts might be carried into income and product accounts, and the treatment, in integrated accounts, of interest, life insurance and capital gains and losses. The document had been prepared in response to the wish of the Commission to follow developments in integrated financial and income accounts and embodied the results of work done by the International Monetary Fund and the Statistical Office of the United Nations in connexion with the work of the Conference of European Statisticians on this subject.

41. The Commission felt that document E/CN.3/290 presented a useful though abbreviated survey of the problems and alternatives in compiling integrated accounts on financial and income statistics. The report was useful in particular for the statistical authorities of governments which were not members of the Conference of European Statisticians. The Commission emphasized that further detailed technical discussions and exchanges of points of view and experience among national statisticians engaged in this field of work were essential. In the case of countries with market economies, intricate conceptual and practical problems were involved in devising integrated accounts on financial and income statistics, and experience in dealing with these problems was limited. The meetings organized by the Conference of European Statisticians provided an opportunity for technical discussions among experts on this subject. It would also be useful to prepare, from time to time, surveys of national developments and experience. The value of such surveys would be enhanced if national statistical authorities engaged in such work also issued technical reports.

42. The following points were also made in the course of the Commission's discussion: (a) The use

made of the terms "institutional" and "functional" in the discussion of integrated accounts on financial and income statistics was ambiguous; (b) insufficient attention had been paid to analytical requirements in past discussions of the classification of financial assets and liabilities, the sectoring of integrated financial and income accounts, or other aspects of these systems of accounts. In some cases, the requirements for data might be met adequately through the classification of transactions and need not involve the use of separate sectoring; (c) the important needs of some countries in the field of statistics might be met by compiling interrelated financial and income statistics for certain strategic sectors. In any case, the character and detail of the financial and income accounts compiled would necessarily reflect the requirements of each country for this type of data as well as the available body of primary data; (d) the countries with centrally planned economies compiled sets of fully integrated accounts on production, income, financial transactions and balances, and on certain other aspects of economic activity.

43. The following resolution was adopted:

4 (XII). ACCOUNTS ON FINANCIAL STATISTICS

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General:

1. To continue technical co-operation with the Conference of European Statisticians on the subject of interrelated financial and income accounts; to keep under review, in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund, developments, practices and experience in the compilation of financial statistics in relation to accounts on income and expenditure and product statistics; and to report to the Commission at a future session; and

2. To request Member States which have undertaken work in this field to furnish technical reports on this work from time to time in order to enable the Secretariat to supply information to interested countries on their request.

VII. — National accounts

SURVEY OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

44. The Commission discussed a report by the Secretary-General on country practices in national accounting (E/CN.3/291). The report presented some conclusions arising from a review of material assembled for the preparation of a supplement to the *Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics*.

45. The Commission felt that the report would have gained from further consideration of the basic statistical sources and their role in compiling the individual systems of national accounts, and that variations in the uses made of such accounts, giving rise to differences in statistical design and procedure, might be taken into consideration in the future.

46. The Commission suggested that high priority should be given to the continued study of methods of estimation and that this study should take precedence over the study of conceptual differences reflected in country practices. The suggestion was also made that where there were departures from standard procedure, further analysis should be undertaken to ascertain the reasons for such departures. In addition, it was hoped that such a study would bring out the numerical significance of the adjustments made in reconciling different treatments of particular items.

47. Further examples were given of the need for examination of concepts, definitions, sources and methods in the measurement of gross product at constant prices. These included the question of the treatment of indirect taxes and other items which could not be directly deflated in the usual manner, and the conceptual as well as practical difficulties of constant price measurement in the area of services in general.

GENERAL REVIEW OF WORK IN NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

48. The Commission discussed progress at the international level in national accounting and related fields on the basis of a report by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/292). The report included an examination of the Secretariat programme of recurrent publications in these fields and a general review of work at the international level on the development of standard concepts and classifications and on the dissemination of information on methods.

49. The examination of the Secretariat programme of recurrent publications focused attention on the problems arising from the continued expansion in the volume of data published on national accounts, stemming both from an increase in the number of reporting countries and from a rise in the amount of detail provided by each country. This expansion posed a problem in the allocation of the limited resources assigned to national accounts work. It involved an increasing shift of resources to work on the publication of data at the expense of other important elements of the work programme and, within the area of data publication itself, a concentration on the tasks of collection and compilation at the expense of efforts towards evaluation. The report enumerated some measures which might be taken to improve the situation.

50. The report also discussed work on other aspects of publication. The most important project of this kind currently being undertaken was the preparation of the survey of country practices in national accounting (see paragraph 44), designed specifically as a guide to the evaluation of data published in the *Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics*. In addition to describing methods of estimation in some detail, the survey would include information on the main conceptual characteristics of each country's system of accounts and on the principal known limitations to the international comparability of the published figures. The Secre-

tariat hoped that the survey, which would be published as a supplement to the *Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics*, would serve as a general work of reference for users of the *Yearbook* and as a source of ideas to the statistically less advanced countries in improving their national accounting practices.

51. In discussing the various suggestions made in the report, the Commission stressed the desirability of maintaining, or expanding as circumstances permitted, the existing degree of detail in the country chapters of the *Yearbook*. Economies might, however, be made in part D of the *Yearbook* by reducing or eliminating altogether the processing of the primary data presented in the individual country chapters. In this connexion, attention was drawn to the controversial nature of the methods used to calculate rates of growth in real gross domestic product and other aggregates.

52. The Commission welcomed the proposal to publish a supplement to the *Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics*, devoted mainly to a country-by-country description of methods of estimation. In supporting this work, the Commission expressed the view that weaknesses in methods of estimation, rather than conceptual differences, were now primarily responsible for lack of international comparability in the published data. The supplement should include a broad description of the practices of the centrally planned economies in preparing their annual national economic balances, as well as a statement of the specific methods used by these countries in preparing the corresponding aggregates and classifications published in the *Yearbook*.

53. As a further development of its work, the Secretariat proposed to make a general investigation of the problems involved in the conversion of estimates of national income, product and expenditure to a common basis of valuation for the purposes of the international comparison of national estimates, and the formation of global, regional and other aggregates. The Commission welcomed this proposal and suggested that an important aspect of the study should be a discussion of the limitations inherent in the use of prevailing official exchange rates as conversion factors.

54. The report of the Secretary-General noted that, since the completion in 1959 of the first revision of *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables (SNA)*, work at the international level on the development of the concepts and classifications of the standard system had proceeded at a relatively modest pace. During this period, work had been carried out by the Conference of European Statisticians.

55. An important project of the Conference in this area had been the development of a European programme for the compilation of statistics of consumers' expenditure. Principal emphasis had been directed to the development of a classification of consumers' expenditure by function, supplemented by a secondary classification by item and a cross-

classification of each item by degree of durability. The programme applied to both the SNA system and the system of accounts used by the centrally planned economies. The draft programme would be submitted for approval to the tenth plenary session of the Conference scheduled for June 1962.

56. The report also noted the active interest taken by the Conference of African Statisticians in the development of national accounting in Africa. Since the previous session of the Commission, two meetings had been held by working groups of the Conference to discuss specific aspects of this work. The first of these meetings had taken place in June 1960 and had examined the question of the treatment of non-monetary transactions within the framework of national accounts. The second meeting, held in January 1961, had examined the uses of national accounts in African countries. A third meeting was scheduled for September 1962 to discuss modifications of the SNA system for use in African countries.

57. The Commission, in reviewing developments, commended the work of both the Conference of European Statisticians and the Conference of African Statisticians and also expressed support for the work recently undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in collaboration with the Conference of European Statisticians, on the preparation of index numbers of agricultural production and on the development of agricultural sector accounts consistent with SNA concepts.

58. The Commission noted with gratification the wide acceptance by countries of the principles of SNA. The conceptual differences which continued to exist in different countries were mainly of minor importance and did not present any serious obstacle to international comparability, although the important problem of linking the SNA system with the system of accounts used by the centrally planned economies remained and was under study. Among the conceptual problems for which new solutions might have to be found were such examples as the problems of the treatment of factor income payments to and from abroad, capital transfers, interest payments and imputed rent of government buildings. Moreover, the development of work on input-output flows and financial transactions might in due course call for changes in SNA to achieve an interrelated or integrated system.

59. The Commission, therefore, concluded that while further work on the refinement or amendment of concepts and classifications might be given relatively low priority at present, a revision of SNA might ultimately be necessary, and the question of such a revision should be kept on the long-term agenda of the Secretariat. The Commission welcomed the proposal to compile a national accounts manual designed to meet the need for additional guidance in interpreting and applying the recommendations of SNA.

60. The report of the Secretary-General also referred to the work of the Conference of European

Statisticians on the comparison of the SNA system with the system of accounts used in countries with centrally planned economies. Since the last session of the Commission, tables had been worked out indicating the steps necessary to adjust the concepts of each system to match those of the other system in the fields of product, income and consumers' expenditure, and work was proceeding on the establishment of similar adjustment tables for other main aggregates such as capital formation, government consumption and the external balance. The work had not been limited to conceptual studies but had also included an exchange of figures between certain countries following the different accounting systems. In addition, the possibilities had been studied of constructing a system of accounts embracing the main elements of the two systems. The Commission, in commenting on these developments, strongly endorsed the work of the Conference on this subject.

61. The following resolution was adopted :

5 (XII). NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General:

1. To complete work on a supplement to the *Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics*, describing individual country practices in the preparation of national accounts data and indicating known deviations from international recommendations;

2. To prepare, with the help of individual experts if necessary, a national accounts manual as a supplement to *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables*, including a detailed discussion of the problems of principle arising in the construction of a system of national accounts and a commentary on, and explanation of, the recommendations of SNA and their application in practice;

3. To prepare, in consultation with interested regional and international organizations and individual experts, a study of conceptual and statistical problems in the estimation of product and expenditure at constant prices;

4. To study techniques of achieving international comparability of national income, expenditure and product aggregates by the use of a common basis of valuation;

5. In co-operation with the Conference of European Statisticians, to complete the study of the relationship between the SNA system and the system of accounts used by countries with centrally planned economies, and of the adjustments needed to link corresponding concepts in the two systems; and

6. To continue to review national practices in adopting the recommendations of SNA, with particular reference to developments in the field of input-output accounts, financial transaction accounts and national balance sheets.

VIII. — Methodology and evaluation of continuous population registers

62. The Commission had before it a report (E/CN.3/293) presenting the findings of a study of the methodology of continuous population registers and an evaluation of their usefulness as statistical mechanisms.

63. The members of the Commission expressed the belief that the document served a useful purpose in bringing together current information on continuous population registers and that it should be circulated for review and possible additions before its issuance as a technical study.

64. It was, however, the opinion of the Commission that, while continuous population registers established for administrative purposes might yield certain statistical data, the difficulties of keeping such registers up to date, the costs involved and the potentially unreliable nature of the data outweighed their usefulness as sources of statistical data only. It was felt that, with the exception of information on internal migration, adequate demographic statistics could more efficiently be obtained from other sources and that, in countries where no register was yet established, it was therefore inadvisable to establish such a register solely for the provision of demographic statistics. However, it was believed that where continuous population registers already existed, countries should examine their potentialities for statistical use.

65. The Commission considered that, with recent developments in electronic computers, it would be both simpler and more economical to undertake, as required, the direct linkage of records to bring together information from such sources as vital events registers and other *ad hoc* registers so as to provide data for scientific studies. The view was expressed that it might be useful if the Secretary-General were to assemble country experience in this area and to disseminate information on such direct record-linkage techniques in the future.

66. The following resolution was adopted :

6 (XII). STUDY OF CONTINUOUS POPULATION REGISTERS

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General :

1. To circulate the document on continuous population registers for review of the statements made and for revision of and possible additions to the study;

2. To make any necessary changes based on the results of such reviews and the comments of the Commission; and

3. To issue the final document as a technical study and make it available to Member States, the specialized agencies and other interested bodies.

IX. — Demographic statistics

1960 WORLD POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS PROGRAMMES⁵

67. A report of activities carried out during 1960-1961 in connexion with the 1960 World Population and Housing Census Programmes was set before the Commission in document E/CN.3/295.

68. The Commission was informed that critical reviews of the experience of countries in conducting censuses of population and housing in the period 1955-1964 are now under way as the first step towards the formulation of recommendations for the 1970 cycle of censuses.

69. Members of the Commission expressed satisfaction with the results of the 1960 World Census Programmes. It was generally felt that the activities of the international bodies have resulted in both quantitative and qualitative improvements in census data, but that much still remains to be done, especially in evaluation of results. In this connexion, it was noted that the Secretariat planned to study national experiences with post-censal field checks of population censuses with a view to evaluating their effectiveness.

70. Emphasis was placed on the continuing importance of giving special consideration to the needs and problems of developing countries. It was the view of the Commission that in the preparation of the programmes for the 1970 censuses, increasing attention must be paid to those areas which are not yet able to take full advantage of the most recent technical developments in census-taking but where the need for current census data is very great. Accordingly, the desirability of simplifying the international standards for such areas and the provision of additional information on the uses and techniques of sampling were stressed.

71. The universal importance of advance planning for careful evaluation of the accuracy of the census results was also emphasized, as was the need for dissemination of information on experience with electronic data processing.

72. The need for continuing and intensifying at the proper time work leading to the development of the international recommendations for the 1970 series of censuses was pointed out. Several members of the Commission stressed the fact that the concept of the census of population should be changed from that of an isolated activity occurring once a decade to one of a continuous programme of data collection which could provide intercensal estimates or statistics on demographic factors, in addition to the elaboration of techniques for the next census. Advance planning should also take account of ways in which the population census could support or provide information useful for other types of inquiries.

⁵ For other housing statistics, see chapter X.

73. The following resolution was adopted :

7 (XII). POPULATION AND HOUSING
CENSUS PROGRAMMES

The Statistical Commission,

Having in mind the importance of ensuring that final recommendations, training materials and technical assistance for the 1970 censuses of population and of housing would be available when needed by the countries and that these recommendations should take full account of experiences gained during the 1960 World Census Programmes,

Requests the Secretary-General :

1. To complete the *Handbook of Housing Census Methods* now in preparation and issue it as soon as possible for the guidance of States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies;

2. To proceed with the examination now under way of the experience of countries in connexion with population and housing censuses held during 1955-1964 and report to the Commission at its next session; and

3. To prepare, in consultation with the specialized agencies and the regional bodies, a time-table of international activities proposed in connexion with the 1970 population and housing census programmes and present this for the consideration of the Commission at its next session.

OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

74. A review of activities in the collection, publication and promotion of improvement in current population, vital and migration statistics during 1960-1961 was set forth for consideration of the Commission in document E/CN.3/294.

75. The Commission noted with satisfaction the progress made in developing and publishing the body of population and vital statistics described in the memorandum and expressed the hope that the amount of data would continue to increase as well as the quality. The system introduced in the *Demographic Yearbook* of indicating the quality of the series by codes and type face was pointed out as a major step forward since it not only assists the user of the data but tends to encourage improvements.

76. Special reference was made during the discussion to the needs of developing countries. Several members emphasized that plans for economic development and social advancement depend on a sound knowledge of current population growth rates and that, because of differences in the degree of accuracy attained by the censuses and because of real changes in fertility and mortality, it is unsafe to assume that the rates of growth observed between two successive censuses of population will continue unchanged in the future. In the absence of reliable vital statistics based on civil registers, it is essential

to obtain intercensal estimates of natural increase by the sample survey technique or other methods. Such methods should be viewed as part of a continuous programme of demographic data collection, which would ultimately include periodic population censuses as well as vital records and statistics.

77. In connexion with the problems encountered in developing countries, the Commission was informed of plans, under the technical assistance programme, aiming at starting an experimental programme in Kenya which would develop vital records and statistics for the population of a representative sample of local civil registration units. The Commission expressed interest in plans to initiate a similar experiment in Latin America when funds become available. Other activities suggested as part of a programme to develop improvement in demographic statistics include (a) the assignment of regional advisers in demographic statistics (as was initiated in Africa in 1961 and is to be begun in Latin America in 1962); (b) the organizing of seminars or workshops for training of personnel at all levels; (c) the carrying out of pilot projects designed to demonstrate the importance of evaluating the quality of vital records and statistics and the methods of doing so; and (d) the demonstration by case studies of the major uses of vital records and statistics. In connexion with the latter, the Commission took note of the consensus of opinion of the experts participating in the UN/WHO Seminar on the Use of Vital and Health Statistics in Genetic and Radiation Studies⁶ and called attention to the possibility of accomplishing some of the aims listed without the introduction of population registers (see chapter VIII).

78. The need for the evaluation of the quality of population and vital statistics was repeatedly emphasized by members of the Commission. Analysis of the relative quality of successive population censuses and of intercensal estimates based on the balance of births, deaths, emigration and immigration was considered essential; several members noted that methodological work on intercensal estimation procedures, especially for local areas and selected population segments, was assuming more importance in their own programmes.

79. In connexion with the production of intercensal estimates of population and of post-censal projections, the Commission emphasized the need for more quantitative information on international and internal migration. It was noted that improvement in international migration statistics would probably need to begin with consideration of the basic definition of a migrant. In this connexion, the Commission was informed that it had recently become possible to divert some secretariat resources to this problem and that it was hoped publication of migration statistics might therefore be resumed.

⁶ *Proceedings of the Seminar sponsored by the United Nations and the World Health Organization, held in Geneva, 5-9 September 1960* (United Nations publication, Sales No. : 61.XVII.8).

80. The following resolution was adopted:

8 (XII). DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

The Statistical Commission

Recommends to the Secretary-General:

1. That methods of improving international migration statistics be studied;
2. That the current status of conventional registration systems be surveyed in order that the *Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods* may be revised;
3. That work be continued on assembling information on techniques of population projections with a view to developing standards for the guidance of countries;
4. That close attention continue to be paid to the demographic needs of developing countries with a view to advising and assisting them in every possible way, including provision of regional advisers, regional seminars, training programmes, fellowship grants and dissemination of pertinent documentation; and
5. That study be intensified on methods of obtaining and improving vital statistics in countries and territories where conventional registration methods are not yet able to supply reliable data on population growth rates, required for planning purposes.

X. — Statistics for social programmes ⁷

81. The Statistical Commission had for consideration in document E/CN.3/296 a progress report on the development of statistics for social programmes in accordance with the plan set forth by the Commission at its tenth session. The report noted that two of the projects could be considered completed for the time being. At its eleventh session, the Commission had considered a report on the international definition and measurement of levels of living and had recommended that the Social Commission might consider whether the report had reached a stage at which the Secretary-General might be requested to distribute it to Member States for their interim guidance. The Social Commission at its thirteenth session noted with satisfaction the work done in this difficult and important field and, while realizing many of the shortcomings of the indicators, recognized that the process of improving specific components and indicators would be a continuous one. Hence, the Social Commission concurred with the recommendation of the Statistical Commission and the *International Definition and Measurement of Levels of Living: An Interim Guide* ⁸ was published in 1961 jointly by the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned.

82. The Commission noted that a second project had attained a measure of completion during the interval since its eleventh session: the development

of statistical indicators of housing conditions, one of the twelve components which are to be taken into consideration in measuring levels of living. At its eleventh session, the Commission had considered a technical report on this subject and had referred it for further study to the inter-agency Working Party on Statistics for Social Programmes at its 1960 meeting, as well as by the regional bodies concerned with housing statistics. The document, incorporating the views of the Statistical Commission and the inter-agency Working Party and taking account of the comments made by the Working Party on Housing and Building Statistics of the Economic Commission for Europe and the corresponding body of the Inter-American Statistical Institute, was published in 1962 as *Statistical Indicators of Housing Conditions*. ⁹

83. The Commission was informed that the outline of the proposed content of the first issue of the *Compendium of Social Statistics*, which the Commission had considered at its tenth and eleventh sessions, had now, with the assistance of the specialized agencies, been developed into a set of draft tables which would be available in July 1962. In accordance with the programme approved by the inter-agency Working Party on Statistics for Social Programmes at its session in 1961, this working draft (comprising fifty-nine tables in eight chapters covering population and vital statistics, health, food consumption and nutrition, housing, education, labour force, social security, and income and expenditure) would be circulated to the specialized agencies concerned for amendment and revision, with a view to publishing the first issue of the *Compendium* early in 1963.

84. The Commission noted that the project was moving forward on schedule and in accordance with the guide-lines which the Commission had suggested. It was noted also that the origin of the *Compendium* had been a need to supplement the *Report on the World Social Situation*, the third issue of which will include, *inter alia*, a detailed and comprehensive review of changes in levels of living throughout the world.

85. Since the sources of the series to be presented in the *Compendium* are so varied, several members emphasized the need for including comprehensive, explanatory notes concerning reliability, comparability and other factors necessary for proper interpretation, especially for statistics for which no internationally accepted standards have as yet been drawn up. It was also noted that although more complex cross-classification of data or other indexes which might facilitate analysis was desirable, questions of space and practicability must be recognized as limitations on the amount of detail which could readily be published.

86. In general, the Commission agreed to await the first issue of the *Compendium* before recommending a time schedule for publication of future issues.

⁷ For housing census programmes, see chapter IX.

⁸ United Nations publication, Sales No.: 61.IV.7.

⁹ *Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 37* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 62.XVII.7).

87. The Commission was informed that the third draft of the *Handbook of Household Surveys* was nearing completion and that a provisional publication was scheduled for 1963. This latest revision would reflect the views of the inter-agency Working Party on Statistics for Social Programmes which, at its third session, had examined twelve revised draft chapters submitted by the specialized agencies on subjects roughly paralleling those of the *Compendium of Social Statistics* (see paragraph 83) as well as an introduction and a brief chapter on sampling methodology. It was also pointed out that the revision in process would reflect the observations of the *ad hoc* Working Group of Specialists in Sample Survey Methods which had considered the second draft at its meeting in 1961 (see chapter XI). The Commission noted that the revised draft chapters would be set before the inter-agency Working Party at its session in September 1962.

88. The Commission was also informed of regional work in the field of household surveys namely, (a) the convening of a Working Group of Consultants on Household Surveys in Addis Ababa in 1961, to clarify objectives and to propose methods of developing survey programmes as part of the regular work of national statistical offices in Africa; (b) the convening of an ILO/UN Regional Seminar on Household Surveys in Vienna in 1961 for the purpose of exchanging experience in the operation and administration of household surveys; (c) the convening in April 1962 of a Working Group on Family Budget Inquiries, jointly by the ILO and the Conference of European Statisticians, which had drawn up a European statistical programme in this field; and (d) the convening in October 1961 of a meeting on food consumption surveys, jointly by FAO and the Conference of European Statisticians, to consider FAO's draft programme on food consumption surveys and the consideration of the programme by the fourth session of the Conference of Asian Statisticians in November-December 1961.

89. Several members of the Commission drew attention again to the fact that the *Handbook of Household Surveys* is designed primarily to give guidance to developing countries in using the household survey to obtain information on living conditions. As it was felt that the *Handbook* should constitute a guide to countries which wished to use household surveys, the Commission felt that it was important that it reflect the views of its members and other selected experts. It was therefore agreed that the *Handbook*, as revised by the inter-agency Working Party on Statistics for Social Programmes, should be circulated for comment to the members of the Commission and to other experts selected by the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies. It was also suggested that the deliberations of the regional meetings on the subject of household surveys should be taken into account.

90. At its eleventh session, the Commission had considered a note prepared by the Secretariat regarding methods of estimating housing needs (docu-

ment E/CN.3/274). The Commission was informed that in accordance with its recommendation, the technical paper had been circulated to statistical offices and housing agencies of Member States and to the regional economic commissions for their comments, and the comments received had been set out in document E/CN.3/296. In the course of the discussion, several members of the Commission emphasized that caution was required in connexion with international activity in this area and pointed out that, especially in developing countries, estimating housing needs might be somewhat illusive. Too much emphasis on this subject might lead to a danger of resources being diverted from more important projects. The potential utility of such estimates in more advanced countries was noted. It was stressed that regional and national work would probably prove most effective in this field but, to stimulate such activity, the Commission agreed that the proposed methods set forth in document E/CN.3/274, revised to take account of the comments received, might be issued as a technical guide.

91. The Commission was informed of the regional activities in developing a standard programme of current housing statistics undertaken by the Economic Commission for Europe and by the Inter-American Statistical Institute, and of the Latin American Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes to be held in Copenhagen in September 1962. The latter is one of the projects designed to improve statistical data on housing conditions and housing programmes, included in the United Nations long-range programmes of concerted international action in the field of housing and related community facilities. It was the consensus of opinion that the national and regional levels were the most suitable places for activities designed to develop current housing statistics and that activity at the international level should be primarily one of stimulation and co-ordination.

92. In connexion with the *Compendium of Social Statistics* and the *Report on the World Social Situation*, the Commission noted the need for the study of the socio-economic structure of populations and of changes over time. To meet this need the Statistical Commission at its eleventh session had recommended¹⁰ that the Secretary-General study the nature and uses of socio-economic classifications currently in use in various Member States with a view to the possibility of achieving greater uniformity in the future.

93. The Commission was informed that in accordance with this resolution, the classifications used in over 100 population censuses had been examined and that a working paper based on this study had been brought before the third session of the inter-agency Working Party on Statistics for Social Programmes.

¹⁰ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 12, resolution 10 (XI).*

94. It was agreed that there was a need for a classification which would be of use on a national basis. Regional standards were also considered feasible but considerable doubt was expressed over the possibility of developing a single international standard classification which would meet the needs of all regions. It was the feeling of the members that discussions among experts, and study of the success achieved with the Conference of European Statisticians' classification proposed for the 1960 censuses of population, might provide the best chance of achieving progress in this area. It was also agreed that countries should be encouraged to develop classifications for national use which divide the population into relatively homogeneous groups and to make and publish cross-tabulations of economic and social statistics series, using the classification.

95. The following resolution was adopted:

9 (XII). STATISTICS FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMMES

The Statistical Commission,

Having in mind the importance of developing statistics for social programmes and the continuing nature of such activities,

Requests the Secretary-General:

1. To complete the current revision of the *Handbook of Household Surveys* and circulate the draft for comment to members of the Statistical Commission and such other experts as he may select or may be selected by the specialized agencies concerned;
2. Taking into account the comments of the members of the Statistical Commission and other experts, to revise, as necessary, the draft *Handbook* and publish it as a technical manual;
3. To proceed with the publication of the first issue of the *Compendium of Social Statistics* and to bring it to the attention of the Statistical Commission at its thirteenth session, together with proposals for revision, including additional subjects and classifications;
4. To study further, in co-operation with regional organizations and other interested agencies, the possibilities of developing methods for the construction of socio-economic classifications which would suit national needs and improve international comparability;
5. In consultation with regional groups and taking account of the comments received from the members of the Statistical Commission and other bodies, to revise the document on proposed methods of estimating housing needs, and to issue it as a provisional technical study to stimulate national and regional research on this subject; and
6. To continue efforts, in collaboration with the regional economic commissions and national governments, on the development of standards for a system of current housing statistics.

XI. — Ad Hoc Working Group of Specialists in Sample Survey Methods

96. The Commission considered document E/CN.3/284 and the attached report of the expert group appointed by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 12 (XI) of the Commission entitled "Report of the *ad hoc* Working Group of Specialists in Sample Survey Methods" (ST/STAT/CONF.11/1).

97. The Commission noted that the terms of reference given to the Working Group ranged over a wide area of statistics and that consequently, the recommendations of the Working Group were necessarily of a general nature, although special attention was paid to the draft chapters of the *Handbook of Household Surveys* (see chapter X). The Commission generally endorsed these recommendations and expressed the view that the technical problems connected with household survey should be examined in depth by the Secretary-General with the advice of experts from different regions. It was emphasized that the Secretary-General, before issuing such studies as standard recommendations to countries, should seek comments from individuals and institutions engaged in the field of household surveys. In this connexion, the Commission felt that countries engaged in conducting household surveys would benefit greatly if experience in this field was exchanged among them and that the Secretary-General should encourage such exchange of experience.

98. The Commission expressed the view that household surveys represent a powerful tool for statistical investigations of conditions of living and social conditions, particularly in the less developed countries, inasmuch as household surveys afford the possibility of combining different types of information into integrated sample surveys. The Commission considered that, besides household surveys, there are other types of statistical investigations for collecting statistics for social programmes and that all these alternative methods should be examined for any given country in the light of the available human and material resources.

99. The Commission emphasized that it was of the utmost importance to bear in mind the object of any large-scale household survey both before embarking on the survey and at every stage of the planning process. It is usually neither possible nor necessary to attain uniform accuracy of results for all variates under investigation in a multi-subject household survey, as the user may be prepared to tolerate errors of very different magnitudes, depending on the purpose or purposes for which survey results are intended. In this connexion, it was felt highly desirable that the permissible error that the user of the results of a given survey was willing to accept should be specified. The view was expressed that it is not necessary to refine statistical techniques for a given survey beyond what is needed to aid the user in arriving at a correct decision.

100. The Commission commented at some length on the preparation of the *Handbook of Household*

Surveys, a joint project undertaken by the Statistical Office of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. For a summary of the discussion and the decisions adopted by the Commission concerning the *Handbook*, see chapter X.

101. The Commission strongly endorsed the view of the Working Group that a comprehensive review of sampling terminology should be undertaken and that the report entitled *The Preparation of Sampling Survey Reports*¹¹ could serve as a starting point for such a review. The report was prepared by the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling of the Statistical Commission and was published in February 1950.

102. The following resolution was adopted:

10 (XII). REVIEW OF SAMPLING TERMINOLOGY

The Statistical Commission,

Considering that the document entitled *The Preparation of Sampling Survey Report* had widespread use in national sampling activities and that, with the passage of time, further developments in many methodological aspects of sampling have rendered the original report somewhat out of date,

Recommends that the Secretary-General appoint a group of experts to undertake the preparation of a revised set of recommendations of sampling terminology, to be issued by the Secretary-General to supersede the document entitled *The Preparation of Sampling Survey Reports*.

XII. — Classification of government accounts

103. The Commission reviewed the progress report on classification of government accounts (E/CN.3/297) which described the work carried out by the Secretariat under Economic and Social Council resolution 378 D (XIII) and General Assembly resolution 407 (V) and, further, the progress made by various countries in the reclassification of government transactions according to economic and functional categories along the lines presented in the *Manual for Economic and Functional Classification of Government Transactions*.¹²

104. The Commission was informed that, since its eleventh session, two more regional workshops on problems of budget reclassification and management had been held, one in Bangkok (Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East) in August-September 1960 and the other in Addis Ababa (Economic Commission for Africa) in September 1961. Another budget workshop for South American countries will be held in Santiago (Economic Commission for Latin America) in September 1962. Among other matters, this workshop will review

the progress made by the countries of the region in reclassification work.

105. The Commission noted that the budget workshop in Bangkok, while reviewing the progress made by the countries of the region in the field of budget reclassification, recommended the extension of budget reclassification work to the transactions of provincial or state governments, local authorities and government enterprises. The workshop also considered the feasibility of establishing a uniform system of reporting on government transactions and came to the conclusion that this would not be practical for some time in view of the institutional and structural disparities prevailing in the region. The Commission further noted that the *Manual* was submitted to the ECA budget workshop as the basic working document and was considered to provide valuable guidance in the reclassification work. It noted that the workshop recommended a simplified scheme of current and capital accounts presented in its report to the countries of the region for their consideration, feeling that this classification might be appropriate for a first attempt in undertaking such work. The main items of these accounts represent a simplified version of those included in the *Manual* and could, in the opinion of the workshop, be adopted by the African countries without impairment of the flexibility they need to meet their own internal requirements. The workshop also recommended certain modifications in the functional classification of the *Manual* for the consideration of the countries in the African region. The Commission further took note of the recommendation made by the ECA budget workshop that it should consider the possibility of preparing a standard cross-classification of government transactions by economic and functional categories.

106. During the discussion in the Commission, reference was made to the considerable work undertaken by various countries in the field of reclassification and the use made of the *Manual* in this work, resulting in significant improvements in the presentation of government financial data. The Commission recognized that the actual application of the *Manual* schemes varied from country to country to suit their own needs and their institutional set-up.

107. A number of statements in the course of the discussion related to questions such as the practical problems of obtaining uniform data on the transactions of local government authorities, securing a larger degree of international comparability in reporting on government transactions, the feasibility of adopting an economic and functional classification of government transactions as an integral part of the basic system of accounts, the question of obtaining fiscal data for the same accounting year as national income and product accounts where these differ, and the importance of an economically meaningful classification of public debt transactions.

108. The Commission observed that the *Manual* had served as a useful guide to countries in their budget reclassification work, but noted that some

¹¹ Statistical Papers, Series C, No. 1, Revised.

¹² United Nations publication, Sales No.: 58.XVI.2.

countries felt the need for developing more simplified schemes for practical application. It was recommended that the work of the Secretariat in this field should be continued on its present basis. The particular usefulness of holding regional budget workshops at regular intervals was recognized in this context.

109. The Commission suggested that the Secretary-General might wish to prepare a model simplified cross-classification of government expenditures by economic and functional categories, taking into account the modifications suggested by the ECAFE budget workshop held in 1960 in Bangkok and the ECA budget workshop held in 1961 in Addis Ababa, as well as the views on the subject expressed by the South American Workshop in 1959. The Secretary-General may further wish to supplement this cross-classification of government expenditures by a simplified economic classification of receipts. The Secretary-General may wish to circulate such a draft to the national statistical offices for their comments. The Commission, further, expressed the hope that the Secretary-General would initiate, within the resources available for this purpose, work on classification of public debt transactions. Finally, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its thirteenth session a progress report on these subjects and on further developments in the field of reclassification of government accounts.

XIII. — Balance-of-payments statistics

110. The representative of the International Monetary Fund introduced document E/CN.3/298, a progress report on balance-of-payments statistics. The document describes the third edition of the Fund's *Balance of Payments Manual*, points out that this will be available in French and Spanish as well as in English, and reviews the Fund's training programme on balance-of-payments statistics.

111. The Commission commended the Fund's work. Members agreed that while there were a few remaining points involving balance-of-payments concepts and methodology on which there was not yet general agreement among all experts, work should now be directed to the practical problems associated with the collection and compilation of the figures, including the reconciliation of the capital and current accounts of individual countries and in particular the comparison of sources and methods of countries having important trading relations with one another.

XIV. — External trade statistics

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARD INTERNATIONAL TRADE CLASSIFICATION, REVISED

112. The Commission took note of a report (E/CN.3/299) on the implementation by govern-

ments of the SITC, Revised, which had been approved at its eleventh session. Sufficient countries were now providing data according to the SITC, Revised, to permit the compilation and presentation of international statistics on that basis. Certain countries whose national statistics are based on classifications other than the SITC, and who currently report to the Statistical Office at the 3-digit level of the SITC, Revised, would have difficulty in recompiling their data at the 5-digit level for the whole range of commodities, though they would often be able to provide this detail for the commodities most important in their trade.

113. The Commission noted that New Zealand had recently carried the use of the SITC a stage further than most countries by adopting a new customs tariff in which commodities were classified according to the SITC, Revised, and that this classification would be used for statistical purposes as well as for customs and other administrative purposes.

114. The need for economic classifications supplementary to the SITC was also stressed, particularly the need for keying the SITC items to the International Standard Industrial Classification in order to show the industrial origin of the goods entering external trade and the sector of use of commodities imported.

PROCESSING OF EXTERNAL TRADE STATISTICS

115. The Commission considered a proposal (E/CN.3/300 and Add.1) for increasing the availability to governments and international organizations of trade-by-commodity-by-country statistics while, at the same time, decreasing the burden on governments which now have to report their detailed data simultaneously to a number of international organizations of which they are members. The data involved in this field are very voluminous and the different rearrangements and presentations desired for various purposes extremely numerous. Regular printed publications could not meet the growing needs of both international organizations and national institutions.

116. The Commission had given some consideration to this problem at its eleventh session and had requested the Secretariat to experiment with the use of electronic computers to facilitate the rapid processing, verifying and printing of those statistics¹³ and, since that time, the work had increased substantially. As a result of the Secretariat's experimental work in this field, the Secretary-General had called a meeting of experts from governments and international agencies interested in external trade statistics. The meeting took place at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations from 26 February to 2 March 1962, and its report was before the Commission as annex II to document E/CN.3/300. Having reviewed

¹³ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 12, resolution 6 XI*, para. 6.

the current supply of, and demand for, international trade statistics, the experts felt that:

(a) There was substantial need for a new effort towards the rationalization of the collection, processing and publication of statistics on external trade-by-commodity-by-country at the international level;

(b) Steps should be taken towards such rationalization through the provision of an international servicing and computational centre for processing and making available those data;

(c) The centre should be attached to the Statistical Office of the United Nations.

117. The centre should undertake to assemble trade-by-commodity-by-country data quarterly (or, when that was impossible, at less frequent intervals) from governments, in the form of tables, punched cards or magnetic tape, as was most convenient in each individual case. These would be summary data in terms of value and, where appropriate, of quantity also, based on a commodity classification convenient to the country, preferably the SITC, Revised, but, where this was not possible, on any classification for which an adequate key to the SITC, Revised, was available and which did not require the centre to process an unmanageably large number of individual items of information.

118. The processing work of the centre should be designed to yield a basic array of data on world trade, classified in SITC terms and expressed in United States dollars and metric units, which will meet the needs of users of international trade data at all levels of commodity analysis except the more detailed and specialized. The data would be made available to governments and international agencies participating in the work of the centre in the form of tabulations, punched cards or magnetic tape. The centre would probably not be able to bear the entire cost of the distribution in printed form (made by photographic or other process) of the full detail available each quarter, but it was hoped that arrangements could be entered into with other participants to make available regularly a limited number of copies of tabulations containing most, if not all, the data available on the tapes. Arrangements should be made to permit participants to purchase duplicate magnetic tapes, punched cards based on the tapes and special tabulations of the data. As a library of magnetic tapes was built up by the centre, it would be possible to make tabulations by computer in a variety of special aggregates and comparisons as required, thus giving access, in a way never before possible, to the voluminous detail available in external trade statistics.

119. The Commission was in agreement with the view of the experts that the technical development of electronic computers had reached the stage at which their use could make a major contribution to a much needed rationalization of the international collection and dissemination of trade statistics and that, because of the experience already acquired in this field by the Statistical Office, a central computing

service for the purpose should be attached to the Office. After examining the recommendations made by the group of experts as to the operation of the centre, the Commission reached the following conclusions, based on the views of the experts.

120. The Commission agreed with the experts that the project should aim at assembling commodity data principally at the 5-digit level of the SITC, Revised. It was recognized that many users, for example, those specializing in particular commodities, required greater detail, and that governments and organizations would have to make or continue other arrangements to meet their needs. It was also recognized that a number of governments would wish to supply data at other levels of detail, such as the 4-digit or 3-digit level, and the project should be capable of utilizing these.

121. In order to ensure the full utilization of existing experience, the centre should obtain the technical co-operation of those participating organizations at present engaged in the collection, compilation and publication of external trade statistics. The Secretariat was requested to consult with the international organizations expected to participate, and with the secretariats of the regional economic commissions, in order to ensure that the services of the centre be so arranged as to meet their needs in this field. The statistical services of Member States would have a substantial interest in the work of the centre and their views should be obtained on the nature of the statistics to be provided by the centre.

122. The following resolution was adopted:

11 (XII). CENTRALIZATION OF EXTERNAL TRADE STATISTICS

The Statistical Commission,

Aware of the need to rationalize the collection and dissemination of statistics of international trade,

Noting that advances in the technique of electronic computation would not only permit speedier and more efficient processing of international data, but would give access to the full range of the data to a degree not previously possible,

Recalling the request made at its eleventh session that the Secretary-General "experiment with the use of high-speed, large-memory, stored-programme computing machines in facilitating the rapid processing, verifying and printing of the data",

Noting the experience acquired by the Statistical Office in the large-scale processing of statistical data by computer,

Noting the report of the Expert Group on the International Compilation of External Trade Statistics,

Requests the Secretary-General:

1. To establish a centre, attached to the United Nations Statistical Office, for the collection and publication of international data on external trade,

and to arrange for the processing of the data by electronic computer;

2. To provide Member States, specialized agencies and other organizations, at their request, with statistical information resulting from the work of the centre in the form of publications, tabulations, punched cards or magnetic tape, it being understood that special operations would be undertaken at the expense of the requester in response to any request;

3. To consult with the specialized agencies and other organizations interested in international trade statistics, including the regional economic commissions, in order to eliminate as far as possible duplications of requests to national offices by these organizations for full trade statistics, and to ensure that the centre may be able to meet appropriate requests by these organizations for international trade data.

123. In considering the above resolution, the Commission took note of a statement of financial implications (see annex I). The Commission was of the opinion that, while the proposal involved additional costs, there would be savings to governments as a result of the reduction of demands for data at present being made by a number of international organizations and as a result of economies that would arise from the central processing of the basic data, as well as through the greatly increased use of the data which centralized processing by computer would make possible.

XV. — Data processing by electronic computer

124. The Commission considered three documents presented to it for information and comment: one, entitled "Draft Proposal concerning an Inter-Agency Project for the Large-scale Processing of Statistical Data", submitted jointly by the secretariats of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and two submitted by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/301 and E/CN.3/302) describing the data processing which has been undertaken by the Statistical Office on computers.

125. In considering the ITU-UNESCO project, the Commission wished to be informed how much of the work specifically mentioned in the document represented a firm commitment on the part of the specialized agencies for which it was to be done and how much of the work was to be undertaken on behalf of individual countries. The representative of UNESCO informed the Commission that, of the 1,090 hours per year of computer time listed in the document before it, thirty-six represented work already being done by the Statistical Office of the United Nations on service bureau computers in New York, 104 represented work on frequency allocation which ITU was definitely committed to doing by computer and, of the rest, 500 hours was an estimate for research and training, and 486 was for work

that might arise if a computer was available. Of this figure, 360 hours per year represented work which might be done if countries wished their agricultural censuses to be processed by the Inter-Agency Project, and seventy-two hours were for work which FAO might wish done on its own behalf. The representative of UNESCO felt that, once a computer was available, much more work would arise and he gave examples of work which might be done for UNESCO in addition to the three hours per year listed in the document.

126. The Commission felt that further clarification was necessary as to the relation between the Inter-Agency Project and the International Computation Centre (ICC) in Rome, an intergovernmental organization with eleven members, whose establishment had been fostered by UNESCO.

127. The Commission noted that the governing bodies of the agencies which might co-operate in the project had not yet considered the financial implications of the project. The representative of UNESCO explained that it was hoped that firmer estimates could be made for presentation to the governing bodies after a meeting of agency officials scheduled to be held in Geneva at the time of the thirty-fourth session of the Economic and Social Council.

128. The Commission noted that the draft plans for the ITU-UNESCO project had been presented for information and comment. On the basis of the information it had received, the Commission felt that the need for an inter-agency project for the provision of computer services covering a wide range of statistics had not been fully demonstrated.

129. Members of the Commission conveyed to the Secretariat the views of government experts in their countries on the two papers describing the use of computers by the Statistical Office. In particular, the scheme for a master programme to permit varied statistical processing by computer with minimum recourse to experts on programming (E/CN.3/302) was thought unlikely to succeed to the extent hoped by the Statistical Office. It was mentioned that much experimentation in this area was proceeding in national offices and would be of assistance to the Secretariat. Since the Conference of European Statisticians had a Working Group on Electronic Data-processing Machines, it was hoped that it would study the problem of programming methods.

XVI. — Tourist statistics

130. The Commission was informed (E/CN.3/303) that a group of experts convened by the Secretary-General had made recommendations, for consideration by the Economic and Social Council at its thirty-third session, on the scope and location of a conference on international travel and tourism and that it had prepared a provisional agenda. The experts had agreed that such a conference would not concern

itself with the technical problems of statistics, but had felt that it would be of assistance to the Commission to know the views of the Statistical Commission on the definition of "tourist" or "temporary visitor". The International Union of Official Travel Organisations (IUOTO) has, in this connexion, agreed to prepare a document for the conference on current definitions used by governments for (a) administrative purposes and (b) statistical purposes, and to suggest a definition which would serve both purposes.

131. The Commission emphasized the importance of considering the movement of tourists as part of the total movement of persons across frontiers and therefore drew attention to the need of consistency between tourist statistics and statistics of migrants.¹⁴ The Commission was aware of the work of IUOTO on tourist statistics and of the work done by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on methods of estimating tourist expenditure and of the consequent interest of the IMF in the definition of the word "tourist" and in methods of obtaining data on the number of tourists.

132. The Commission noted with approval the plan that IUOTO, in consultation with IMF and the Statistical Office—and taking into account the interests of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Chamber of Commerce and other appropriate non-governmental organizations in the definition of tourist—draw up agreed proposals for the improvement of tourist statistics, including the definition of the word "tourist", to be submitted to Governments and, after comment by Governments, to the Commission for consideration.

XVII. — Programme of work and priorities

133. In considering its programme of future work, the Commission noted that a number of projects which it had recommended for study at its eleventh session had not so far been carried out because of staff shortages in the Statistical Office. The programme of work which the Commission envisaged for the next few years was a heavy one and many of the projects related to highly specialized subjects on which international study and guidance, and ultimately recommendations, by the Commission were badly needed. The Commission noted that it was within its terms of reference to offer advice on the staff problems posed by the work programme.¹⁵

¹⁴ See *International Migration Statistics*, United Nations publication, Sales No.: 53.XVII.10.

¹⁵ The Commission's original terms of reference stated, *inter alia*, that it "should assist in the development of the statistical unit of the Secretariat by making recommendations regarding its staffing, organizational structure and functions, and by providing continuing advice on operational problems" (*Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, First Year, Second Session, Annex 3, document E/39, para. 18*).

134. The Commission was informed of the existing rules concerning the staffing of the Organization as a whole, which involved the application of a formula by which the nationality distribution of the internationally recruited staff was made approximately proportionate to the contribution to the budget by each Member State. The establishment of the Statistical Office of approximately sixty posts of professional and higher grades was not large enough to accommodate nationals of all Member States. A substantial number of United Nations statisticians had left the Statistical Office on promotion in their own countries or elsewhere, at a time when the problem of geographical distribution in the Organization as a whole was most difficult. The shortage of statisticians in the newly independent countries and in most of the under-developed countries made it very difficult to recruit from those countries statistical personnel of the required level of training and experience.

135. In the circumstances, the Statistical Office was unable to reflect in its staff composition the variety of experience of the statistically developed countries and was severely limited in its ability to provide training and experience for the personnel of the statistically backward countries. This was the case even though frequent exceptions to the rules relating to geographic distribution had been made in favour of the Statistical Office.

136. The Commission was informed of the geographical distribution of the staff of the Statistical Office and noted that certain countries with long experience in statistics, which might normally be expected to provide statisticians for periods of international service, were not represented, or were insufficiently represented. In all the circumstances, the Commission felt that special measures would be necessary to enable the Statistical Office to carry out the work programme over the next few years. Recourse might be had to obtaining the services of well-qualified experts in specific subjects for limited periods of one or, in some cases, two years, on loan from governments or academic institutions. In addition, small groups of experts employed for very short periods might be used for certain types of study. On the assumption that such means would be found to offset the staff shortages over the next few years, the Commission approved the work programme set out below, noting, however, that a measure of discretion is reserved to the Secretary-General in accordance with the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 402 B (XIII).¹⁶

137. It was noted that a number of projects would require collaboration and co-ordination with related work of the specialized agencies, regional secretariats and other bodies. It is understood that, in carrying out these projects, the Statistical Office, as hereto-

¹⁶ "(f) The Secretary-General, within his existing authority, should have discretion as to the scheduling of work in order that the best use may be made of existing staff and resources and to take account of unforeseen circumstances which may arise."

fore, would observe the agreements on responsibility for international statistical work which had been entered into a number of years ago.

138. *Continuing projects and activities of high priority:*

(1) Continuation, as appropriate and necessary, of the systematic publication of international statistics, together with appropriate index and bibliographies.

(2) Establishment of a centre, attached to the Statistical Office, for the collection and publication of international data on external trade, and arrange for the processing of the data by electronic computer.

(3) Maintenance and development of publications dealing with statistical methods, with particular reference to the need for the inclusion in these publications of material concerning the practices of national offices in solving problems of collection and analysis, taking into account differences in practice arising from differences in economic and social systems.

(4) Maintenance and development of arrangements for regional consultations and for regional advisers on statistical questions, especially in connexion with the statistical needs of the less developed countries, in co-operation with the specialized agencies and other institutions concerned.

(5) Intensification of activities connected with the training of middle-level and higher professional personnel in the less developed countries in co-operation with intergovernmental and national institutions.

(6) Maintenance of other activities designed to assist in the more rapid development of national statistics required for the planning of economic and social development (a) by means of increased utilization of the facilities of the technical co-operation programmes, and (b) by active participation in the proposed economic development centres and in the Economic Projections and Programming Centre and regional centres envisaged in General Assembly resolution 1708 (XVI).

(7) Continuation of the work of improving the comparability of statistical data of Member States having different economic and social systems.

(8) Advice and assistance in giving effect to existing standards or guiding principles for the improvement of national and international statistics, in collaboration with the specialized agencies, together with the exchange of information on problems of methods and applications in the following fields:

- (a) Population and housing censuses;
- (b) Vital statistics;
- (c) Statistics for social programmes;
- (d) Basic industrial statistics;
- (e) Index numbers of industrial production;
- (f) External trade and transport statistics;
- (g) Distribution statistics;
- (h) National accounts;

(i) Capital formation statistics;

(j) Price statistics;

(k) Classification of industrial and related data according to kind of economic activity;

(l) Basic statistical series for use in programmes of economic and social development;

(m) Energy statistics;

(n) Questions of methodology, including sampling, and information on electronic data processing.

139. *Ad hoc projects of high priority:*

(1) The undertaking of a special study of statistical requirements for planning economic and social development in less advanced countries.

(2) Revision and issuance of the document dealing with the systems of industrial statistics of highly industrialized countries.

(3) A systematic investigation of the major general uses of, and requirements for, industrial statistics, including the types of primary data required and the derived index numbers, ratios and frequency distributions which show important relationships between the various elements of industrial output and input, as well as the useful relationships between the various industrial inquiries through which the data are gathered.

(4) Revision, with appropriate expansions, of the publication *Patterns of Industrial Growth*, for re-issue in 1963.¹⁷

(5) Preparation of a detailed study of the problems, suitable concepts, methods and techniques for the collection of data on construction (including housing construction) in consultation with the organizations concerned.

(6) Preparation of a study of the industrial statistics of selected countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

(7) Preparation of a study relating the items of the SITC, Revised, to the groups and items of the ISIC and to commodity classifications for use in industrial and related statistics.

(8) Completion of the special supplement to the *Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics*.

(9) Preparation of a manual as a supplement to *A System of National Accounts, and Supporting Tables*, including a discussion of practical methods of application of the SNA principles and other principles.

(10) Study of the conceptual and statistical problems in the estimation of product and expenditure at constant prices.

(11) Study of techniques for improving international comparisons of the main aggregates of the national accounts by the use of common methods of valuation.

(12) Preparation of a detailed study of methods, concepts and definitions for estimating capital

¹⁷ For a statement of the financial implications, see annex II.

formation, with discussion of the main uses of the resulting data.

(13) The completion, in co-operation with the Conference of European Statisticians, of the study of the relationship between the SNA system and the system of accounts used by countries with centrally-planned economies, and of the adjustments needed to link corresponding concepts in the two systems.

(14) Consultation with specialized agencies and regional organizations concerning the longer-term plans for work in statistics, including the 1970 programme of censuses, with a view to improving the co-ordination and balance of the international statistical programme as a whole.

(15) Necessary revisions to the document on continuous population registers and its issuance as a technical study.

(16) Completion of the provisional issue of the *Compendium of Social Statistics* being prepared by the inter-agency Working Party on Statistics for Social Programmes.

(17) Completion of the *Handbook on Household Surveys* being prepared by the inter-agency Working Party on Statistics for Social Programmes.

(18) Study of possible methods to improve international migration (including tourist) statistics in consultation with the organizations concerned.

(19) Examination of the status of conventional registration systems for vital statistics preparatory to a revision of the *Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods* and, in co-operation with the organizations concerned, study methods to obtain vital statistics for countries where conventional methods are inapplicable.

(20) Further study, in co-operation with regional organizations and other interested agencies, of the possibilities of developing methods for the construction of socio-economic classifications, which would suit national needs and improve international comparability.

(21) Continuation of technical co-operation with the Conference of European Statisticians on the subject of interrelated financial and income accounts; keeping under review, in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund, developments, practices and experience in the compilation of financial statistics in relation to accounts on income and expenditure and production statistics, and reporting to the Commission at a future session.

(22) Appointment of a group of experts to undertake the preparation of a revised set of recommendations of sampling terminology, to be issued by the Secretary-General to supersede the document entitled *The Preparation of Sampling Survey Reports*.

140. Ad hoc projects of lower priority:

(1) Preparation of a technical publication on the subject of collecting and compiling representative and comparable wholesale price statistics; formulation of a draft set of guiding principles for consideration by the Commission.

(2) Keep under study national requirements, practices and problems in the collection and compilation of statistics of the revenue and expenditure and assets and liabilities of non-financial enterprises, with a view to the development, ultimately, of suggestions as to the items of data to be gathered from the profit-and-loss and balance-sheet accounts, and as to their definition and classification, in consultation with the International Monetary Fund.

(3) Continuation of the review of national practices in adopting the recommendations of SNA, with particular reference to developments in the field of input-output accounts, financial transaction accounts and national balance sheets.

(4) Assembling materials for the ultimate preparation of a handbook on housing census methods, based, as far as possible, on the experience and evaluation of the 1960 censuses.

(5) Continuation of the assembling of information on techniques of population projections with a view to developing standards for the guidance of countries.

(6) Collaboration with the Conference of European Statisticians in its work on current housing statistics.

XVIII. — Control and limitation of documentation

141. The Commission considered a memorandum by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/L.58/Add.1) on control and limitation of documentation and noted that, in line with General Assembly resolution 1272 (XIII) and Economic and Social Council resolution 742 II (XXVIII), documentation had been reduced from 1,052 pages (eleventh session) to 664 pages (twelfth session). The Commission was of the opinion that this reduction was generally satisfactory but asked that the Secretariat, in future, keep in mind the need for sufficient detail in documents that might be of particular value to the less developed countries.

XIX. — Other business

142. The Commission wishes to be assured of close collaboration between the Statistical Office and the members of the Commission on the items to be included on the agenda of the thirteenth session. An opportunity should, therefore, be sought for consultations between the Secretariat and the officers of the Commission sufficiently in advance of the next session to permit the necessary proposals to be considered. For this purpose, the Statistical Office might assemble the suggestions of Commission members in advance of the proposed consultation.

XX. — Adoption of the report

143. At the 213th meeting, the Commission unanimously adopted the report of its twelfth session.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I

Financial implications of decisions taken by the Statistical Commission at its twelfth session : the international compilation of external trade statistics by computer

1. The Statistical Commission at its eleventh session recommended that the United Nations Statistical Office "experiment with the use of high-speed, large-memory, stored-programme computing machines in facilitating the rapid processing, verifying and printing of the data" on international trade analysed by countries and commodities.^a

2. Pursuant to this recommendation the Statistical Office has for a year been using electronic computers on a limited basis for processing the trade data of some thirty-six countries in each of the 177 commodities of the *United Nations Standard International Trade Classification, Revised* (SITC, Revised). This information, converted into standard units, arranged so that data for each commodity are grouped together, and covering about 80 per cent of world trade is published in *Commodity Trade Statistics*, a publication of some 800 pages of tabular matter issued quarterly. The figures published in *Commodity Trade Statistics* are used by governments, international agencies and private firms and individuals as a source of data for the study of economic and tariff questions. The necessity of extracting figures by hand from this publication has, however, greatly limited the use which can be made of the voluminous data.

3. The experience gained by the Statistical Office in the use of electronic computers for the compilation of commodity trade statistics appeared to point the way to the removal of this difficulty and, at the same time, to reduce the burden under which governments now find themselves supplying detailed trade data simultaneously to a number of international agencies of which they are members. Accordingly the Secretary-General convened a meeting of experts in Rome from 26 February to 2 March 1962 to advise him, preparatory to the twelfth session of the Statistical Commission, on: (a) the extent to which the use of electronic computers would make possible an improvement in the availability of external trade statistics for analysis of commodity-by-country trade, increase their timeliness and efficiency; and (b) the organizational arrangements which would best draw the maximum benefit, if the use of computers was considered advantageous.

4. Having reviewed the current situation of the supply of and demand for international trade statistics, the group of experts felt that:

(a) There was substantial need for a new effort towards the rationalization of the collection, processing, and publication of statistics on external trade by commodity-by-country at the international level;

(b) Steps should be taken towards such rationalization through the provision of an international servicing and computational centre for processing and making available the data;

(c) The centre should be attached to the Statistical Office of the United Nations.

5. The report of the experts was circulated to the Statistical Commission as annex II to document E/CN.3/300. The purpose of annex I to the present report is to present financial estimates for implementing during 1963, and in a limited manner, the

^a *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 12, resolution 6 (XI), para. 6.*

recommendations of the group of experts for establishing a central service for processing and making available data on commodity trade statistics. These estimates assume that:

(a) The centre would receive quarterly trade-by-commodity-by-country statistics from each government on the basis of the 1,312 commodity items of the SITC, Revised;

(b) The centre would utilize an electronic computer to convert the data into United States dollars and metric units of quantity, to identify them by standard commodity and country codes, to verify their accuracy and to store the data on magnetic tape;

(c) The centre would be reimbursed for costs of any special tapes, cards or print-outs requested by governments or international organizations;

(d) The centre would make arrangements for the processing and publication in limited quantities of data by country, as they are received and perhaps for an annual publication. The detailed publication arrangements required to be discussed and agreed with the other participants, in order both to avoid duplication of effort and to keep costs to a reasonable level.

6. On the basis of the foregoing assumptions, expenditures will arise under three headings: (a) staff in the United Nations Statistical Office, (b) rental of machine time for processing data and programming, and (c) publication of the data.

7. In so far as staff is concerned, it is anticipated that it will be possible to meet the major portion of the requirements in 1963 from within the authorized level of the present establishment. Provision needs to be made only for a statistical clerk (G-4 level) for the twelve months of 1963 (= \$6,000). In addition a provision for travel will be necessary: \$2,000 in 1962 and \$4,000 in 1963.

8. As regards programming and processing of data, it will be necessary to incur expenditures on programming in the last months of 1962 in order to be in a position to make a start with processing data without any delays in the beginning of 1963. It is estimated that the 1962 requirements will be \$32,000 for machine time for preparing and testing computer programmes. The machine costs for 1963 will be \$180,000, as shown below:

(a) Computer (machine) time costs \$135,000

The estimate is based on a requirement of some twenty hours per month of 7090-time and thirty hours per month of 1401-time, and on the current standard rates for the use of these IBM machines. Mainly because of the increased detail in which data would be processed by the computer, the number of items processed would rise from about 300,000 at the present time, to nearly 1 million in 1963. This work will be performed by outside contract.

(b) Costs of converting data in the form suitable for use on the computer \$36,000

This work will also be performed by outside contract and would involve punching of cards from tabulations or other printed sources, as submitted by reporting countries.

(c) Related supplies, e.g., tabulating paper, magnetic tapes, punch cards, etc. \$9,000

TOTAL \$180,000

9. As regards printing, it has already been pointed out that the details of the publications programme and the way in which the participants will share in its costs have yet to be discussed

and agreed with them. However, it is clear that the annual amount of \$26,000 currently available for the publication of the quarterly *Commodity Trade Statistics* will require to be increased. For the purposes of this annex, it is assumed that this increase would be of the order of 50 per cent. Consequently, an amount of \$39,000 is proposed for this purpose.

10. In summary, the costs for implementing the recommendations of the experts will, for 1962-1963, be the following:

	1962	1963
(a) (i) Staff costs (one post of statistical clerk)	\$ —	\$ 6,000
(ii) Staff travel	2,000	4,000
(b) Machine time (programming and processing costs)	32,000	180,000
(c) Printing	—	39,000
TOTAL	34,000	229,000

11. The estimate of \$229,000 as shown above for 1963 represents the total annual foreseeable cost of the project. Credits which would in any event be requested in the 1963 initial budget estimates to maintain the present programme in this field would amount to \$116,000 (\$90,000 for machine tabulation costs and \$26,000 for printing). The additional requirement arising from the new expanded project would therefore be \$113,000.

ANNEX II

Financial implications of decisions taken by the Statistical Commission at its twelfth session: *Patterns of Industrial Growth*

1. In the Programme of Work and Priorities (chapter XVII, para. 139 (4)), there appears a project for the revision, with

appropriate expansion, of the publication *Patterns of Industrial Growth*, for re-issue in 1963.

2. The existing publication, *Patterns of Industrial Growth, 1938-1958* (Statistical Papers, Series P, No. 1) was issued in September 1960. This publication was designed to furnish comparable data on the growth and structure of the industrial sector of countries and on the dimensions and pattern of the expansion and distribution of industrial activity in the various regions of the world and countries of differing degrees of industrial development, as well as the world as a whole.

3. The publication was very favourably received and has been so much in demand that it is almost out of stock at the present time. Within the resources of the Statistical Office, a revision and expansion of this publication has been under way for some time now and it is hoped that the work can be completed in time for the revised version to be published during 1963.

4. It is estimated that the revised version will be a substantially larger one and will need to be published in two volumes. Volume I will consist of 300 printed pages, comprising 113 pages of bilingual text, 25 pages of charts and about 160 pages of tables. Volume II will consist of about 500 printed pages, comprising 130 pages of bilingual text and 370 pages of tables.

5. Assuming a print order of the same magnitude as the original 1960 version (5,300), it is estimated that the cost of commercially printing the revised version would be about \$55,000. This figure assumes that part of the type standing from the preparation of the original version can be used for the publication of the revised version. Every effort will be made to reduce the net charge to the regular United Nations budget through the use of internal reproduction facilities, both at Headquarters and Geneva, specifically in regard to volume I.

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