

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
REPORT ON THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

(7-16 March 1983)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS, 1983

SUPPLEMENT No. 2



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1983

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STATISTICAL COMMISSION

REPORT ON THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

Corrigendum

Annex I, section A, delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

For M. A. Korolev read V. I. Guryev

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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I. MATTERS REQUIRING ACTION BY OR BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION
OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

A. Matter requiring action by the Council

1. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

DRAFT DECISION

Report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-second session and provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-third session of the Commission

At its ___ plenary meeting, on ___ May 1983, the Council:

(a) Took note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-second session; 1/

(b) Decided that the tenth session of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination should take place at Geneva from 7 to 9 September 1983;

(c) Approved, in accordance with its resolution 1979/41 of 10 May 1979, the report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-second session, 1/ and the following provisional agenda for the twenty-third session of the Commission, together with the documentation listed, bearing in mind the views expressed in Chapter XIV of the report of the Commission on the work of its twenty-second session:

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION FOR THE TWENTY-THIRD
SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters
3. Special issues

(a) Meeting user needs for international statistics and improving the dissemination of international statistics

Documentation

Report on the identification of users and the establishment and development of closer contact between users and producers of international statistics, including the improvement of dissemination of international statistics

(b) Future direction of work on social indicators

Documentation

Report on the future direction of work, including the related issues of co-ordination, methodological development and the international compilation and dissemination of indicators

(c) Publication policy for statistics

Documentation

Report on the broad aspects of the publication policies of statistical agencies

4. National accounts and balances

Documentation

Report on the revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the elaboration of the conceptual framework of SNA and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) comparisons

5. International economic classifications

Documentation

Progress report on the harmonization of international economic classifications

Revised draft of the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3

Draft revision of the part of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) covering transportable goods-producing activities

Draft of the combined trade/production goods classification

6. Price statistics

Documentation

Report on the inter-agency price statistics programme, as well as on phases IV and V of the International Comparison Project (ICP) and the roles of the organizations involved therein

7. Energy and Environment statistics

Documentation

Report on standards, methods and classifications of energy statistics and on the environment statistics programme, including the methodological work carried out

8. Demographic and social statistics

Documentation

Report on the development of social indicators and the integration of social, demographic and related statistics

Report on recent developments in national population registration systems and their statistical use

Report on national practices in coding country of birth or citizenship in compiling international migration statistics

Report on the 1985-1994 World Population and Housing Census Programme

9. Technical co-operation

Documentation

Overall report on technical co-operation in statistics rendered by the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries

Report on the assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics

Report on the development of national capabilities in statistics

Report on several aspects of training in statistics

Report on several aspects of technical co-operation in statistical data processing

10. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes

Documentation

Report on the tenth session of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination

11. Programme implementation

Documentation

Overall review of the statistical work of the international organizations for the period 1983-1984

12. Programme objectives and planning

Documentation

Report on the plans in statistics of the international organizations concentrating on important planned changes and the reasons for them, that is, new activities and activities to be cancelled or significantly modified

Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1986-1987, including broad resource information, and revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989

13. Draft provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth session of the Commission
14. Report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

2. The Statistical Commission draws the attention of the Economic and Social Council to the decisions and recommendations of the Commission which appear in paragraphs 7, 15, 19, 27, 36, 42, 44, 51, 60, 67, 75, 81, 86, 93, 96, 104, 109, 112, 120, 122 and, in particular, 118 and 124 below.

II. SPECIAL ISSUES

3. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 377th to 379th meetings, on 7 and 8 March 1983.

A. Administrative records

4. For its consideration of agenda item 3 (a) the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Use of administrative records for statistical purposes" (E/CN.3/1983/2). The Commission considered the subject to be one of great importance to national statistical offices. As a result of technological developments, administrative records in countries at all stages of statistical development were becoming increasingly accessible. In addition, in many countries, the increased costs of direct statistical inquiries (i.e., censuses and surveys) and the burden on respondents arising from those direct inquiries were causing renewed emphasis to be given to the role of administrative record systems as part of the overall system of national statistics. In some fields, such as external trade, international capital flows and external debt, administrative records were the only possible data source. In other fields, it was essential to use them in conjunction with censuses or surveys. The Commission considered that the report of the Secretary-General presented a useful summary of the uses of administrative records for statistical purposes and of the technical administrative and policy issues that countries must deal with when using those records for statistical purposes.

5. The Commission stressed the great divergency of national experiences and needs in the field of administrative records. It noted that in some countries the administrative and statistical agencies and personnel worked in close co-operation, with the result that specialized administrative and general-purpose statistical uses were both well served. In other countries the situation was more difficult. In that context, the exchange of experience among countries, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, was very useful. Many members of the Commission stressed that there were problems involved in the use of administrative records for statistical purposes. Those problems related to concepts, definitions and classifications, coverage and reliability, and questions of confidentiality and access. In some countries, there were also institutional and organizational problems as well as problems related to available technology. However, the importance was stressed of bringing to the notice of administrative authorities the need to consider the potential of their records for statistical purposes, particularly when those records were being computerized. The need for statistical offices to work in close co-operation with administrative units, especially at an early stage of development, was also stressed

6. With respect to further work by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, there was some support for a general technical report based on an expansion and revision of the above-mentioned report to include the experiences of other countries and to take into account the various points raised during the discussion. However, there were different views on whether further methodological work relating to administrative records in general was called for. Some members felt that general methodological reports on record linkage, quality control and statistical adjustment could be usefully prepared by the Statistical Office, resources permitting. Other members considered that, because of the wide

variations among countries, further general methodological work on this subject at the international level would not be productive. A majority of the members of the Commission stressed the need for the Statistical Office to continue to promote the co-ordination of work in that field and to give special attention to the needs of developing countries in any further methodological work.

Action taken by the Commission

7. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed in broad terms the proposals for further work at the national level, contained in paragraphs 50-63 of the report of the Secretary-General on the use of administrative records for statistical purposes (E/CN.3/1983/2) and placed particular emphasis on the leading role that national statistical offices should play in this field working in close co-operation with the concerned administrative agencies;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to revise the above-mentioned report to take into account the discussion of the Commission at its twenty-second session and the responses received from a few other countries to the study of national experiences undertaken in 1982 and to publish the revised document as a technical report;

(c) Proposed that specific kinds of administrative record systems, such as customs systems, taxation registers and population registers, could be suitable illustrative topics for methodological research by the Statistical Office, resources permitting but otherwise did not consider administrative records to be a useful subject for general treatment at the international level;

(d) Noted that the ongoing methodological work carried out by the Statistical Office and other international organizations in individual fields of statistics should continue to deal, when appropriate, with the use of administrative records for statistical purposes, including its use in population censuses and population statistics in general.

B. Information technology

8. For its consideration of agenda item 3 (b), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Implications of new developments in information technology" (E/CN.3/1983/3), chapter II of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Evaluation of co-ordination in international statistical programmes" (E/CN.3/1983/26) and the progress report of the Secretary-General on statistical data processing (E/CN.3/1983/23).

9. It was agreed that information technology was of considerable importance to statistical activities. It was clear that adjustments in statistical systems in response to technological changes were inevitable. However, in view of the many differences in the statistical environment among countries, it was not possible to be very precise in predicting the way in which technological innovations would have an impact on official statistical systems in the future.

10. Several issues were highlighted by the Commission:

(a) The role of meta-data systems at both the national and international levels, not only as an element of computerized information systems but also as a co-ordinating tool;

(b) The needs of end-users and the involvement of end-users in the design of both ordinary statistical information systems and meta-information systems;

(c) The growing importance of on-line access with flexible retrieval;

(d) The need for further investment in standards for identifying, defining, classifying and exchanging data;

(e) The impact of technological innovations on the organization of statistical processes;

(f) The exchange of data in machine-readable form from countries to international agencies and among international agencies;

(g) The potential role of computer service enterprises, in the dissemination of statistics in a machine-readable form;

(h) The need for training in computer-related matters and enhanced skills in the management of computing facilities;

(i) The need to apply modern technology in data collection more intensively, for example, in field enumeration;

(j) The selection of technology appropriate to the level of statistical development in a country.

11. The Commission agreed that there was a need for the Statistical Office to give more attention to the dissemination of generalized statistical software suitable for use on mini-computers and micro-computers, the use of which was rapidly increasing. Such an activity would be of special assistance to developing countries and should be accompanied by appropriate attention to training.

12. The Commission noted that in order to maximize the usefulness of information systems at the national level, it was of critical importance that statisticians be involved in the development of national information policies and systems.

13. The Commission discussed the potential development of an international statistical network, as described in the report of the Secretary-General on information technology (E/CN.3/1983/3). Whilst recognizing that there were already some elements of a potential system in place, the Commission agreed that the Statistical Office should not at the present time invest resources in the development of such a network. There were several reasons for that. Some representatives noted that there was already a gap between the statistical systems of many developing countries and those of many developed countries. The Statistical Office should not endorse or support any development that might widen that gap. Although access to a global network might make powerful systems and extensive data bases available to developing countries with modest facilities, there would still be a need for extensive training in the use of such systems.

Moreover, it was suggested that a global network of the type described in the report might be used by only a small group of the more advanced countries, and it was not appropriate for the Statistical Office to expend resources in the pursuit of such a system. However, the linking of the international statistical agencies by communication facilities for the exchange of, and access to, aggregated data was seen as a potentially powerful means of improving the efficiency of the international statistical system and of reducing duplication. It was suggested that, at the national level, networks should grow "from the bottom up", based on existing data and distributed processing centres.

14. The view was expressed by some members of the Commission that the concept of a fully integrated comprehensive statistical system, although a worthy goal, was not realizable, based on the experience of the past 30 years. That was certainly true, it was suggested, at the national level, and such a goal could not be considered on a global basis.

Action taken by the Commission

15. The Commission:

(a) Urged the Statistical Office not to expend resources in work towards a global statistical network but to pursue a co-ordinated linking of the data bases of the international statistical agencies;

(b) Urged the Statistical Office to follow up closely the further development, and to assist in the dissemination of statistical software, particularly that relevant to the developing countries, suitable for use on mini-computers and micro-computers.

C. Publication policy for statistics

16. For its consideration of agenda item 3 (c), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Publication policy for statistics" (E/CN.3/1983/4), which had been prepared in response to the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination that there should be a review and evaluation of the general policy of publishing statistics that were more than three years old. ^{2/} That recommendation was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1981/180 of 23 July 1981.

17. The Commission was of the opinion that it was not possible to apply fixed rules to such matters as the length of the time series in publications or the issuance of national data that became available only after a long period of time. What was desirable might vary depending upon the subject-matter, the type of publication and the needs of the users. The limiting of time series to a 10-year period was considered to be generally acceptable but, in some cases, longer series would be called for and from time to time the publication of a historical supplement covering a 20-year period might be desirable. The detailed decisions on what data should be published should remain a management responsibility of the Statistical Office. The point was made that a cost-effective approach to publications was needed but that it was important to continue to satisfy the needs of a variety of users.

18. The Commission agreed that a discussion of the broader aspects of the publication policies of statistical agencies would be extremely interesting and useful, provided the figures of costs and revenues could be made available to help the discussion.

Action taken by the Commission

19. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the publication activities of the Statistical Office;

(b) Decided to consider the general publication policy for statistics at its twenty-third session on the basis of a more comprehensive report to be prepared by the Statistical Office.

III. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES

20. The Commission considered item 4 of its agenda at its 380th meeting, on 8 March 1983.

A. System of National Accounts (SNA)

21. For its consideration of agenda item 4 (a), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Review and development of the System of National Accounts (SNA)" (E/CN.3/1983/5), the progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the guidelines and the establishment of international data series in national accounts and related statistical fields (E/CN.3/1983/6) and chapter IV, sections D and E of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Evaluation of co-ordination in international statistical programmes (E/CN.3/1983/26).

22. The Commission commended the report contained in document E/CN.3/1983/5 as a comprehensive inventory of issues that were relevant to a future revision of SNA. The Commission agreed that a revision of SNA was called for. It favoured giving more emphasis to the clarification of SNA rather than to the modification and extension of the system. Clarification would be an important contribution to the further implementation of the system. Modifications to and extensions of the system might be introduced if resources permitted, provided the existing time series were not seriously affected. In view of changing economic conditions, some disaggregation of existing concepts, such as balance-sheet items and government consumption, might be desirable in order to allow for new types of analyses. It was agreed that the revision should be accomplished by 1990.

23. Some caution was expressed on the number of issues to be included in the revision. In that respect, the Commission felt that it was important to give higher priority to some issues than to others. Specifically, the delegations representing the developing countries were of the opinion that attention should be given to the household sector, particularly to non-market imputations and the distribution of income. The Commission noted that the measurement of final consumption in terms of the treatment of government expenditures and subsidies needed to be examined. Furthermore, it indicated that the treatment of pensions and life insurance and the development of balance sheets and reconciliation accounts were particularly important for the developed countries.

24. The harmonization of SNA with related statistical systems was also accorded high priority. There was strong support for the elimination, to the maximum extent possible, of differences between SNA and the manuals on government finance and balance-of-payments statistics issued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). IMF was willing to participate actively in that exercise. A similar harmonization should be attempted with regard to monetary statistics following completion of the draft IMF guidelines that were in preparation and would be circulated in the near future.

25. The Commission expressed its support for the inter-secretariat working group created by the statistical offices of the United Nations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the European Economic Community, which would plan an overall work programme for the revision of SNA. The inter-secretariat

group would arrange a series of expert group meetings with an adequate representation of experts from national statistical offices and interested international organizations. Those meetings would be planned to form an ordered sequence and the timing would be fixed only after close consultation among the organizations involved. The resulting proposals would then be brought together in order to show their implications for the system as a whole and considered in a final expert group meeting.

26. The Commission urged that assistance should be given to the developing countries for the implementation of SNA or the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) in those countries. That could be done by preparing the handbooks on national accounting, describing sources and methods, and by organizing regional meetings at which common problems could be discussed. In addition, countries should be more adequately informed of the analytical use of the systems.

Action taken by the Commission

27. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Review and development of the System of National Accounts (SNA)" (E/CN.3/1983/5);

(b) Expressed continued support for the revision of SNA and agreed that that should be accomplished by 1990;

(c) Emphasized that the clarification of SNA and its harmonization with related statistical systems, rather than its modification or further extension, were required;

(d) Decided that high priority should be assigned to selected non-market imputations and the distribution of income, which were relevant to developing countries, and recommended that priority should also be given to the treatment of final government consumption, the development of balance sheets and reconciliation accounts, as well as to the treatment of pensions and life insurance;

(e) Welcomed the establishment of an inter-secretariat working group on national accounts which would plan the work programme and arrange for adequate participation of statistical experts of national offices and interested international organizations in expert group meetings;

(f) Urged that assistance should be given to developing countries for the implementation of SNA or the equivalent system of MPS.

B. System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) and links between the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)

28. For its consideration of agenda items 4 (b) and (c), the Commission had before it the note by the Secretary-General in which he transmitted to the Commission a progress report on the development of the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) (E/CN.3/1983/7) and the progress report of the Secretary-General on SNA/MPS comparisons and related topics (E/CN.3/1983/8).

29. The Commission was informed of the work carried out by the Statistical Office, by international organizations and by countries. It was informed, in particular, of: (a) the progress made on the illustrative calculations carried out to test the conceptual framework of inter-system comparisons; (b) a successful bilateral comparison made by France and Hungary; (c) an interregional seminar for Latin American countries; (d) activities of the Statistical Office directed towards the revision of the methodology of inter-system comparisons contained in Comparisons of the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy, Part One, Conceptual Relationships. 3/

30. The Commission was also informed of the activities of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) on the elaboration of MPS. Views were expressed that it would be desirable that that work be taken into account in the future work on the revision of SNA and the methodology of the inter-system comparisons.

31. The Commission emphasized that the study of SNA/MPS links was an important component of the overall activities of the United Nations in the field of international comparisons. Many members of the Commission were of the view that the Commission should assign high priority to that project.

32. The Commission noted with satisfaction the growing interest in the project and the readiness of many countries and organizations to participate more actively in the study. In particular, it welcomed information on the plan by Finland and Bulgaria to organize a bilateral comparison, as well as on the intention of France and Hungary to continue their bilateral calculations.

33. The need for broader international co-operation in that work was emphasized, and the more active participation of the regional commissions and, above all, of the Conference of European Statisticians was urged.

34. The Commission broadly endorsed the basic directions for future work outlined in the progress report of the Secretary-General on SNA/MPS comparisons and related topics (E/CN.3/1983/8). It was agreed that priority should be given to the revision of the methodology of inter-system comparisons published by the United Nations in 1977. 3/ The Commission emphasized that the revised methodology should take into account the results of empirical illustrative calculations, especially those carried out on a bilateral basis. The revised publication should be more practical than the previous version.

35. Among the directions for future work on the topic, the Commission favoured the revision of the SNA/MPS glossary as well as the continuation of work on the total consumption of the population, capital formation flows and the adaptation of the System of Indicators of Non-material Services (SINS) developed by CMEA for inter-system comparisons.

Action taken by the Commission

36. The Commission:

(a) Requested that the work on further elaboration of the conceptual framework of SNA/MPS comparisons should continue;

(b) Requested that work on the revision of the publication on the methodology of inter-system comparisons, 3/ taking into account the views of the Commission concerning its content and format, should be accelerated;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on that topic to the Commission at its twenty-third session.

IV. INDUSTRIAL, TRANSPORT, ENERGY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS

37. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 381st and 387th meetings, on 9 and 14 March 1983.

A. Industrial and transport statistics

38. For its consideration of agenda item 5 (a), the Commission had before it the document entitled "Draft revision of International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics" (Provisional ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/48/Rev.1), the report of the Secretary-General on the draft revision (E/CN.3/1983/9) and chapter I of the progress report of the Secretary-General on the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics (E/CN.3/1983/10).

39. There was general agreement that the recommendations were a good framework for improving industrial statistics and satisfying the needs of the users of industrial statistics at both the national and international level. A number of specific improvements were suggested, including: (a) inclusion of an additional table listing only the first-priority items to be collected; (b) better alignment of the definitions and standards with the related definitions used in other fields, especially national accounts; (c) acknowledgement of the role of infrequent surveys (5-10 year interval) in obtaining benchmark data; and (d) fuller reflection of the experiences of countries with different economic and social systems and different levels of statistical development.

40. Some delegations expressed reservations about the ability of countries, including developed countries, to implement the recommendations in complete detail. It was noted that some countries would require assistance in order to implement the recommendations, and suitable assistance should include regional workshops and seminars.

41. Several members noted with satisfaction the progress made towards the implementation of the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics and supported the regional training workshops that were organized to meet the needs of the programme more effectively. The desirability of conducting a similar workshop for the Latin American region was also expressed.

Action taken by the Commission

42. The Commission:

(a) Approved the revision of the International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics, 4/ subject to the comments and suggestions made during the discussion of the Commission;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to issue and distribute the revised publication;

(c) Urged the Secretary-General to hold regional training workshops in Latin America on the implementation of the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics, as was the case in other regions, resources permitting.

B. Transport and energy statistics

43. For its consideration of agenda items 5 (a) and (b), the Commission had before it chapter II of the progress report of the Secretary-General on transport statistics (E/CN.3/1983/10), and the progress report of the Secretary-General on energy statistics (E/CN.3/1983/11). Supplementary information on both subjects was provided by the United Nations Statistical Office and several other international organizations.

Action taken by the Commission

44. The Commission:

(a) Considered that shipping and energy statistics were of special relevance and interest to the developing countries;

(b) Agreed that further methodological work related to shipping and energy statistics should be carried out.

C. International trade statistics

45. For its consideration of agenda item 5 (c), the Commission had before it a report of the Secretary-General entitled "Draft of the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3" (E/CN.3/1983/12) and the draft of the third revision of the Standard International Trade Classification (Provisional ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/34/Rev.3). The report contained a description of the draft classification, the principles and other factors considered in its construction and circumstances affecting its application.

46. The Commission was informed that, in the process of revision, consideration had been given to the need for harmonization between a classification of commodities and a classification of industries according to the kind of economic activity, but that every effort had been made to maintain the character and structure of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC). The Commission was also informed that the draft of the revision had been prepared in consultation with experts on trade statistics and classification. A number of comments which had been received too late to be taken into account in the preparation of the draft were summarized and made available to the participants.

47. Some delegations were satisfied with the content and extent of detail of the draft. They agreed with the general principles followed in the SITC revision, supported the maintenance of the structure, and indicated that, although there was sympathy for harmonization with the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), that should not be done without consideration of the usefulness of continuity in statistical series and should not destroy the structure of either SITC or ISIC.

48. Other delegations thought that the draft SITC was too detailed and should not go below the five-digit level, since it was designed not for customs purposes but as a statistical classification for economic analysis. In addition, the view was expressed that there should be greater harmonization between SITC and the Integrated System of Classifications of Activities and Products (known as ISCAP or SINAP) which was still being constructed.

49. The representative of the Customs Co-operation Council informed the Commission of certain developments regarding the launching of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) and indicated that it was unlikely that HS would come into force before 1986. That statement was corroborated by the representative of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) who explained that, because of certain necessary negotiations with Governments, it was unrealistic to think that either HS or the revised Customs Co-operation Council Nomenclature (CCCN) would come into force in 1985.

50. There was agreement that further work should be done on the third revision of SITC. The Commission urged the Statistical Office to develop a timetable that would give the opportunity to national statistical offices to consult users on the draft.

Action taken by the Commission

51. The Commission requested the Statistical Office:

(a) To undertake further work on the third revision of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), taking into account the comments and suggestions made by the Commission, the additional comments to be received from countries and the comments of users, and bearing in mind the need for harmonization with the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) and the Integrated System of Classifications of Activities and Products (known as ISCAP or SINAP) but maintaining the character and structure of SITC;

(b) To submit the revised draft to the Commission at its twenty-third session.

V. PRICE STATISTICS

52. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 382nd and 383rd meetings, on 9 and 10 March 1983.

A. Inter-agency price statistics programme

53. For its consideration of agenda item 6 (a), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Development of an inter-agency price statistics programme" (E/CN.3/1983/13).

54. The Commission was informed of the work carried out by the United Nations and by other international organizations in the field of price statistics. In particular, it was informed of the nature of recent work on the development of an inter-agency price statistics programme in terms of the conceptual framework proposed and of the steps being taken to implement the proposed framework as a co-ordinating scheme for the inter-agency work. The Commission was also informed that 35 countries had responded to the price statistics questionnaire, providing figures for four to five tables in the case of developed countries and for three tables in the case of developing countries, on the average.

55. The Commission welcomed the report as timely and emphasized the importance of the programme in developing the framework for the improvement of national price statistics and thereby of international comparisons.

56. Some members of the Commission recommended that the priorities to be assigned to each of the subprogrammes should be determined by a cost-benefit analysis and/or by judging which subprogrammes might bring the quickest results. Other members of the Commission felt that the inter-agency price statistics programme was too comprehensive and that the subprogrammes should be implemented sequentially rather than simultaneously. The proposed joint price statistics data bank was welcomed.

57. The Commission recognized that the programme required the support of the regional commissions and the specialized agencies and endorsed the proposal to involve them in a rational and co-ordinated manner, the Statistical Office playing the central co-ordinating role. The detailed roles of the regional commissions and the specialized agencies should be jointly worked out at a later stage.

58. The need for more assistance to the developing countries in the field of price statistics was emphasized. Clear concepts and methods as well as manuals, particularly in the field of consumer price indexes, were considered to be of special importance and especially useful.

59. It was felt that work on price statistics should start at the national level and that the Statistical Office should seek to co-ordinate and harmonize national efforts. The importance of manuals and guidelines was recognized. Seminars were seen as a major way of exchanging information on country experience in difficult areas, such as output per man-hour and unit labour costs.

Action taken by the Commission

60. The Commission:

(a) Decided that the inter-agency price statistics programme should be assigned a low priority, given the existing limited resources;

(b) Requested that work should continue on manuals and guidelines on price statistics;

(c) Requested that the inter-agency price statistics programme be reviewed at a technical meeting to be held after the first provisional price statistics yearbook became available;

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the topic to the Commission at its twenty-third session.

B. International Comparison Project (ICP)

61. For its consideration of agenda item 6 (b), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Long-term organization of the International Comparison Project (ICP)" (E/CN.3/1983/14).

62. The Commission was informed of the long-term plan for ICP as developed at the meetings held since its twenty-first session and of developments in the various regions and in some agencies after the report was finalized. The Commission was further informed that about 70 countries were expected to complete full-information surveys by the end of 1983.

63. The Commission expressed its continuing support for the project but found the long-term programme outlined in the report of the Secretary-General ambitious in the light of the resources expected to be made available on a continuing basis. The Commission strongly endorsed the completion of the phase IV comparisons on a world-wide basis by the Statistical Office. The extension of the project to phase V with as wide a participation of countries as possible was urged by some members of the Commission. The Commission suggested that ICP should be put on a sound footing through further methodological research on comparison-resistant services and construction, and on reduced-information and short-cut methodologies, with input from the Statistical Office, regional bodies and agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO and WHO, and from universities and research institutions. This should be given a very high priority since otherwise, the results of ICP might be misleading. The Commission suggested an indefinite postponement of the product-by-industry approach.

64. The Commission endorsed the view that the data requirements for the world-wide comparisons should be integrated with those of the regional commissions, and organizations such as the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities. The Commission expressed the view that the publication of conflicting sets of estimates should be avoided and the results should be published on a more timely basis. The Commission recognized the need to improve the methodology and endorsed the view that great care should be exercised in the use of the ICP results obtained to date and that their general use at the world level must await greater geographical coverage, better data and the emergence of a generally accepted methodology.

65. It was decided that an expanded role should be assigned to the regions, reflecting the way that the work on international comparisons had developed. The Commission expressed support for a meeting to define more clearly the use of sets of estimates and the role of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, regional groups, specialized agencies and other organizations in the completion of phase IV, taking into account regional results. The Commission stressed that the Statistical Office should continue to play a strong co-ordinating role.

66. Some members urged that the Statistical Office complete the proposed manual on the practical problems of carrying out purchasing power comparisons. Several members also stressed the importance of integrating the ICP work with other national statistical programmes.

Action taken by the Commission

67. The Commission:

(a) Requested that work be continued by the Statistical Office on co-ordinating and producing world-wide comparisons for as large a number of countries as possible for phases IV and V of the International Comparison Project (ICP);

(b) Requested continuation of work on the further elaboration of the proposed manual by the Statistical Office;

(c) Endorsed the division of responsibilities between the Statistical Office and the regional commissions. The Statistical Office should play a co-ordinating role, and carry out methodological work and analysis on a world-wide basis. Regional commissions should carry out data collection and adjustments and take account of practical elements of the comparisons;

(d) Requested that emphasis be given by the Statistical Office to keeping in touch with work on comparison-resistant services, construction and other difficult areas of comparison being done by other relevant groups;

(e) Stressed that the results of ICP should not be used at the world level for policy purposes until such time as a generally accepted methodology is evolved;

(f) Requested that the Statistical Office convene meetings on the completion of phase IV, the planning of phase V and the completion of arrangements for the sharing of responsibilities between the Statistical Office and the relevant parties, and submit a report on that matter to the Commission at its twenty-third session;

(g) Requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to obtain extrabudgetary resources for the work from countries and that other international agencies be urged to contribute, especially those which would benefit from the results;

(h) Endorsed the work of the World Bank and other international agencies in conducting research into reduced-information methods.

VI. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS

68. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at its 381st meeting, on 9 March 1983.

69. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the progress report of the Secretary-General on the harmonization of international economic classifications (E/CN.3/1983/15) and chapter IV, section B of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Evaluation of co-ordination in international statistical programmes" (E/CN.3/1983/26).

70. The Commission was informed of efforts being made bilaterally to develop and test a conversion key between the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) 5/ of the United Nations and the Classification of the Branches of National Economy of the CMEA Member Countries (CBNE) 6/ and of the work of the International Labour Organisation on the revision of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) 7/. The Secretariat confirmed that the work on harmonization was being pursued in accordance with the strategy previously approved by the Commission which had as its goal a combined trade/production goods classification and associated classifications of non-transportable goods and services. Those classifications were to be closely linked to a revised ISIC, and the trade/production classification was to use the subheadings of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System of the Customs Co-operation Council as building blocks. All of those classifications taken together would form an Integrated System of Classifications of Activities and Products (known as ISCAP or SINAP). Another objective of the work was to harmonize ISIC and the other major international activity classifications, particularly the General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities within the European Communities (NACE) 8/ and, if possible, CBNE.

71. The Commission was also informed that since completion of the progress report of the Secretary-General on the harmonization of international economic classifications (E/CN.3/1983/15), work had continued in the Statistical Office of the European Communities, within the framework of the tentative "identification headings" for international activity classifications, on the preparation of proposals for more detailed categories of activities for inclusion in ISIC and NACE, and on the preparation of proposals for categories of transportable goods that could be included in the combined trade/production goods classification. Proposals thus existed, at least in a preliminary draft form, for the full range of transportable goods. The Commission agreed that those proposals should be discussed in May 1983 at the meeting of the United Nations Statistical Office/Statistical Office of the European Communities Joint Working Group on World Level Classifications, funded by the Statistical Office of the European Communities. The Group could also give initial consideration to the most appropriate structure for the revised ISIC and the trade/production classification.

72. The Commission agreed that it would be desirable for the work to be carried forward and reviewed by an expert group convened by the Statistical Office in late 1983, with a view to having available for the Commission at its twenty-third session (in 1985) a draft of the part of the revised ISIC covering transportable goods-producing activities and a draft of the trade/production classification. It was suggested that the membership of the expert group could be similar to that of the Joint Working Group on World Level Classifications. The Commission stressed that the work on the harmonization of classifications should take account of the

special needs of the developing countries and that the bilateral practical work referred to in paragraph 70 above should be kept in mind.

73. The Commission was informed that the work relating to non-transportable goods and services had not progressed as far as the work on transportable goods, and that it would seem that drafts could not be prepared for consideration by the Commission before its twenty-fourth session in 1987.

74. The Commission considered that in the preparation of a further draft of the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3, for submission to the Commission at its twenty-third session (see para. 51 above), the present structure of SITC should be generally maintained but that, as far as possible within that constraint, attention should be given to improving the harmonization of SITC with ISIC and the trade/production classification.

Action taken by the Commission

75. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the continuation of the work of the Statistical Office, in conjunction with appropriate international organizations (particularly the Statistical Office of the European Communities), towards the harmonization of international economic classifications;

(b) Requested that a draft of the part of the proposed revised ISIC covering transportable goods-producing activities and a draft of the proposed combined trade/production goods classification be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-third session;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the harmonization of international economic classifications to the Commission at its twenty-third session.

VII. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

76. The Commission considered item 8 of its agenda at its 387th meeting, on 14 March 1983.

77. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the progress reports of the Secretary-General on national experiences and emerging issues in population and housing censuses (E/CN.3/1983/16), the improvement of international migration statistics (E/CN.3/1983/17), and on national and international work on social indicators and on related concepts and classifications for general use (E/CN.3/1983/18).

78. The Commission considered that the three reports were comprehensive and helpful reviews of developments in the respective fields.

79. Many members stressed the importance and usefulness of the work being carried out by the Statistical Office in the broad field of demographic and social statistics and offered specific suggestions as to how this work might be strengthened. It was observed that the information contained in the report on population and housing censuses (E/CN.3/1983/16) concerning the relationship between population censuses and population registration systems, census confidentiality, census editing and imputation and dissemination of data could be expanded and that a number of topics could be added, including the role of sampling, methods of census evaluation and the frequency of the population census. With respect to the report on international migration statistics (E/CN.3/1983/17), some of the technical limitations of the data derivable from the immigrant stock matrix were described, although the value of the international co-operative programme of collecting census-based immigrant stock data was recognized, particularly for the developing countries that had experienced large flows of emigration. The desirability of supplementing the methodological documents of the Statistical Office in that field with advisory assistance was also mentioned.

80. The Commission was informed of the social and related indicators programmes of various international organizations, including FAO, UNESCO, WHO, IMF, OECD and CMEA (see E/CN.3/1983/18). The Commission emphasized the importance of its co-ordinating role and that of the Statistical Office in view of the many national and international indicator programmes at present under way. Many Commission members stressed the importance of work on the links among social and related demographic, economic and environment statistics, and particularly the role that common classifications could play in that regard. Caution was also expressed concerning the use of inappropriate economic classifications for social statistics. The importance of giving special attention in that methodological work to the needs of the developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, was also stressed.

Action taken by the Commission

81. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its broad support for the continuing work of the Statistical Office in the field of demographic and social statistics;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to revise and expand the information contained in the progress report on population and housing censuses (E/CN.3/1983/16), taking into account the views of the Commission, and to disseminate the revised report widely;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to continue to keep abreast of national and international work on social indicators and social statistics and to submit a report on the subject to the Commission at its twenty-third session.

VIII. ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

82. The Commission considered item 9 of its agenda at its 383rd and 384th meetings, on 10 March 1983.

83. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the progress report of the Secretary-General on environment statistics (E/CN.3/1983/19) and chapter IV, section C of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Evaluation of co-ordination in international statistical programmes" (E/CN.3/1983/26).

84. The Commission was informed of further developments in the environment statistics programme since the preparation of the progress report. They were: (a) the Directory of Environment Statistics had been finalized and would be published shortly; (b) the Survey of Environment Statistics: Frameworks, Approaches and Statistical Publications 9/ had been published in 1982, and (c) the framework for environment statistics had been reviewed by an expert group and was in the process of being revised. The Commission was further informed that the financial support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had been discontinued as of January 1983. The Commission recognized that the loss of these extrabudgetary resources would seriously impair the implementation of the methodology developed, at a time when country-level work had just been initiated.

85. The Commission noted with appreciation the progress that had been achieved in environment statistics since its twenty-first session. The high priority of the subject was reconfirmed, and the Commission requested that the methodological tools developed so far be disseminated and applied. The Commission stressed the need for continued close collaboration between the Statistical Office and UNEP and regretted that UNEP was not represented at the session. Some members of the Commission drew attention to the need for testing, promoting and applying theoretical work at the regional and country level. Some planned regional activities were described; the Commission stressed that that was an important element of the work, which should be maintained.

Action taken by the Commission

86. The Commission:

(a) Noted with satisfaction the progress that had been achieved since its twenty-first session, in particular, the publication of the Survey of Environment Statistics: Frameworks, Approaches and Statistical Publications, 9/ the completion of the Directory of Environment Statistics and the revision of the framework for environment statistics;

(b) Deeply regretted the loss of financial support from UNEP and strongly urged UNEP to reconsider its action;

(c) Requested that efforts be made to find appropriate resources to implement the programme;

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to publish the revised framework for environment statistics;

(e) Requested the Secretariat to continue its methodological work on environment statistics and to test, apply and promote the methodology developed by means of workshops, seminars and country studies;

(f) Recommended that the Statistical Office should continue to co-ordinate international activities relating to environment statistics;

(g) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on environment statistics to the Commission at its twenty-third session.

IX. TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

87. The Commission considered item 10 of its agenda at its 384th and 385th meetings, on 10 and 11 March 1983.

A. Development of country capabilities: The National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)

88. For its consideration of agenda item 10 (a), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "The National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP)" (E/CN.3/1983/20), the report of the World Bank entitled "The Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)" (E/CN.3/1983/21) and chapter III of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Evaluation of co-ordination in international statistical programmes" (E/CN.3/1983/26).

1. National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP)

89. The Commission was informed of developments since the completion of the report on NHSCP. The Commission noted that two studies dealing with data processing and the control of non-sampling errors had been published and widely disseminated and that three more studies were under preparation. The Commission noted with appreciation the considerable progress made in the implementation of the Programme and expressed its satisfaction with the arrangements made for the management of the Programme, particularly for the promotion of co-ordination at the national and international levels. A major constraint in programme implementation was, however, the availability of the external component of resources in sufficient time and quantity.

90. The Commission reaffirmed its strong support for the Programme and stressed that the highest priority should be given to the implementation of those country projects already approved by Governments and for which resources had been secured or would be forthcoming shortly. The Commission expressed the view that the implementation of country projects should be consistent with each country's capabilities and circumstances, bearing in mind that the basic objective of NHSCP was to develop the survey capability of the national statistical services. In the development of survey capabilities, care should be exercised before undertaking complex and comprehensive survey activities. Simplicity and relevance should be strived for in order to produce timely and user-oriented survey results.

91. The Commission stressed the need to secure adequate external assistance for the implementation of the Programme and urged the participating countries and donor agencies to give high priority to the Programme in their technical co-operation activities.

92. The Commission attached great importance to technical studies for promoting appropriate standards and procedures for data collection, analysis and use, and expressed the view that that work should be continued and developed further; it emphasized, however, that the main focus of the work of NHSCP must be clearly operational.

Action taken by the Commission

93. The Commission:

(a) Recommended that high priority be given to the implementation of country projects;

(b) Emphasized the urgency of securing financial support from donor agencies for country programmes;

(c) Stressed the importance of continued co-ordination within the United Nations system and with other multilateral and bilateral agencies in the execution of the Programme;

(d) Emphasized the importance of technical studies and the need for further work in that area;

(e) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on NHSCP to the Commission at its twenty-third session.

2. Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)

94. The Commission was informed of the aims of LSMS in identifying ways in which Governments could best monitor progress in raising living standards. It noted the progress made by LSMS in its three main areas of concern: (a) the specification of the data required for the analytical study of living standards of various socio-economic groups, (b) the means of collecting the data and (c) their analytical uses.

95. The Commission welcomed the opportunity to discuss LSMS. It commended the objectives of LSMS as being of great importance for statisticians and planners alike in providing an improved analysis of living standards, including an analysis of differences among socio-economic groups and changes over time. The Commission endorsed the integrated approach to data collection and analysis described in the report, since LSMS would provide a conceptual framework for bringing together micro- and macro-data by relating the results of household sample surveys to national accounts and other analytical studies. While ambitious in scope, LSMS provided a significant approach for the efficient use of data. The Commission emphasized the need for the adequate testing and experimentation of the proposed methods of data collection and analysis before finalizing the recommendations. The relevance of community-level surveys in supplementing data collected at the household level was welcomed. The Commission underlined the complementarity of LSMS work with NHSCP.

Action taken by the Commission

96. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the initiative taken by the World Bank in launching LSMS and recommended that further work on it should be continued;

(b) Emphasized the need for continued close co-ordination between the activities of LSMS and NHSCP;

(c) Encouraged the World Bank to test LSMS methodologies in different developing countries in the light of their needs and capabilities;

(d) Requested the World Bank to submit a progress report on LSMS to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-third session.

B. Training in statistics, statistical data processing and technical co-operation in statistics

97. For its consideration of agenda items 10 (b), (c) and (d), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Technical co-operation in statistics by the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries" (E/CN.3/1983/25), and the progress reports of the Secretary-General on training in statistics (E/CN.3/1983/22) and statistical data processing (E/CN.3/1983/23).

98. The Commission was informed that the Statistical Office had prepared the draft of a directory containing descriptions of the kinds of technical co-operation in statistics available from individual bilateral and multilateral agencies. The Commission suggested that the directory should be updated annually in a simpler form and issued on a timely basis. The Commission was also informed that the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development through the Statistical Office, had instituted an on-the-job training programme that provided, in a developing country, practical training for statisticians and computer programmers in specialized fields from another developing country. The Commission was also given a table that showed the statistical priority needs of the least developed countries.

99. A number of participants provided the Commission with information on their bilateral programmes of technical assistance in statistics, including the programmes being initiated.

100. The Commission stressed the value of the report of the Secretary-General on technical co-operation in statistics (E/CN.3/1983/25) and noted that its preparation had imposed burdens on the contributing agencies. However, because of the importance of obtaining as complete a picture as possible of the technical assistance being rendered to developing countries, the Commission urged that the coverage and content of the report should be significantly improved. The Commission suggested that future reports should include a geographical breakdown of the recipients of technical assistance and the amount given.

101. It was suggested that future progress reports on statistical data processing should include information on user-friendly packages for micro-computers, the use of data-base management methodologies and the process for deciding which of the large variety of small computers best suited the needs of a country.

102. With regard to statistical training activities, the Commission emphasized the need to continue to train statisticians and computer programmers and stressed the importance of the training of trainers.

103. The Commission generally agreed that an assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics would be very useful. Considerable concern was expressed regarding the substantial reliance on a questionnaire approach to basic data collection for such an assessment. Several participants suggested that a qualitative approach would be more appropriate, including in-depth case studies in a sufficient number of countries to provide a representative geographical distribution. It was also suggested that independent experts might be used to undertake the assessment.

Action taken by the Commission

104. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on technical co-operation in statistics, including contributions from the United Nations system, other international organizations, and countries, to the Commission at its twenty-third session, taking into account the suggestions made during its twenty-second session and considering also the priority needs of least developed countries;

(b) Requested that a report containing an assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-third session, taking into account the comments contained in paragraph 103 above.

X. CO-ORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL
STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

105. The Commission considered item 11 of its agenda at its 386th meeting, on 11 March 1983.

106. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it chapter I of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Evaluation of co-ordination in international statistical programmes" (E/CN.3/1983/26), which dealt with the collection of statistics from countries by international organizations. The other chapters of the report were considered under other agenda items (see chap. II, sect. B; chap. III, sect. A; chaps. VI and VIII; and chap. IX, sect. A above).

107. The Commission expressed its appreciation of the work done by the Statistical Office, regional commissions, specialized agencies and other international organizations on the co-ordination of their regular data collection activities. The Commission recognized that considerable success had been achieved but stressed that continued attention should be given to the matter to ensure that the gains made were retained. Information was provided by some delegations on the number of statistical returns that they had completed for international organizations.

108. The Commission stressed that requests for new statistics in ad hoc statistical questionnaires should be studied in order to determine which statistics were already available in international organizations. Maximum use should be made of those statistics so as to minimize the additional data to be collected directly from countries. Data collection should be restricted to that for which there was a demonstrable need.

Action taken by the Commission

109. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the approach to the co-ordination of data collection activities of the international organizations outlined in chapter I of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1983/26);

(b) Requested that special attention be given to reviewing new ad hoc questionnaires with a view to maximizing the use of the data that had already been collected and limiting the burden on respondents.

XI. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

110. The Commission considered item 12 of its agenda at its 387th meeting, on 14 March 1983.

111. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the progress report of the Secretary-General on the statistical work of the international organizations (E/CN.3/1983/27). The point was made that it would be helpful for central statistical offices to be informed when specialized agencies were about to begin new activities, although it was recognized that the agencies had their own particular contact points in various countries.

Action taken by the Commission

112. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its satisfaction with the progress made by the international organizations in implementing their work plans;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report to the Commission at its twenty-third session.

XII. PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING

113. The Commission considered item 13 of its agenda at its 386th and 387th meetings, on 11 and 14 March 1983.

114. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Future plans in statistics of the international organizations" (E/CN.3/1983/28), the note by the Secretariat entitled "Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1984-1985 and the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989" (E/CN.3/1983/29) and the note by the Secretary-General entitled "Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1984-1985" (E/CN.3/1983/CRP.1). The Commission considered that the documentation for this item was superior to that which had been provided at its twenty-first session. However, on documentation in general, the Commission regretted that not all documents, including those in the official languages, had been made available sufficiently in advance of the session.

A. Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1984-1985 and the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989

115. The Commission agreed that the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1984-1985 was well balanced and appropriate. Several delegations suggested additions to and modifications of the work programme in terms of content and timing, mainly reflecting the conclusions reached by the Commission in discussing other agenda items. Other changes were suggested in order to clarify the description of planned work, especially as regards training under subprogramme 9 (Support of technical co-operation).

116. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the provision of indicative figures of the number of Professional staff assigned to each programme element, and stressed that that information was essential for the proper review of the work programme and priorities of the Statistical Office.

117. The Commission endorsed in general the priorities proposed to various programme elements in the note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1983/CRP.1). However, the Commission wished to give a higher priority to the following programme elements: 1.1 (Development of the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA) and linkage with the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)), and 1.4 (Development of concepts, classifications and methods for international trade, transport and related statistics). A number of other programme elements were mentioned by some delegations as having highest priority, namely, 1.5 (Development of concepts and methods for statistics of prices and purchasing power comparisons), 1.6 (Development of concepts, classifications and methods for demographic, housing and human settlements statistics), 5.1 (Collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics for international comparisons of real gross domestic product and purchasing power of currencies).

Action taken by the Commission

118. The Commission:

(a) Approved the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office, as contained in the note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1983/CRP.1), subject to the comments made by the Commission and the priorities set;

(b) Specified a number of programme elements as having highest priority within the work programme (see para. 117 above);

(c) Requested that all documents be distributed and made available to countries sufficiently well in advance of future sessions of the Commission.

B. Future plans in statistics of the international organizations

119. In relation to the report of the Secretary-General on future plans in statistics of the international organizations (E/CN.3/1983/28), the Commission was informed of the results of the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, held at Geneva in October 1982, and of the future work plans of the International Labour Organisation resulting from that Conference. The Commission was also informed of changes in the programme of the World Health Organization .

Action taken by the Commission

120. The Commission:

(a) Agreed that the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1983/28) satisfied its needs for information on the future plans in statistics of the international organizations;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a similar report to the Commission at its twenty-third session.

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination

121. At its 388th meeting, on 15 March 1983, the Commission heard a statement by the Chairman on the composition of its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination and on the dates for the tenth session of the Working Group, as recommended by the Bureau.

122. At the same meeting, the Commission agreed that the composition of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination at its tenth session should be as follows:

(a) Members of the Bureau of the twenty-second session of the Statistical Commission:

Chairman: Vera NYITRAI (Hungary)

Vice-Chairmen: Lelia Boeri DE CERVETTO (Argentina)
Thomas P. LINEHAN (Ireland)
E. Oti BOATENG (Ghana)

Rapporteur: KHOO Teik Huat (Malaysia)

(b) Members of the Statistical Commission:

M. A. Korolev (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
W. J. Tawfik (Iraq)

(c) Members of the Statistical Commission who would act as alternates:

K. C. Seal (India), alternate to Khoo Teik Huat (Malaysia);
Jessé Montello (Brazil), alternate to Lelia Boeri de Cervetto (Argentina).

123. The Commission recommended that the tenth session of the Working Group should be held at Geneva from ~~7 to 9~~ September 1983 (see chap. I above, para. 1, draft decision).

B. Date and place of the twenty-third session of the Statistical Commission

124. The Commission recommended to the Economic and Social Council that the twenty-third session of the Statistical Commission should be held in New York from 25 February to 6 March 1985.

XIV. DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION
OF THE COMMISSION

125. At its 388th meeting, on 15 March 1983, the Commission discussed the draft provisional agenda for its twenty-third session (E/CN.3/1983/CRP.2), pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1894 (LVII) of 1 August 1974 and 1979/41 of 10 May 1979 and other relevant decisions of the Council.

126. The Commission had before it information on recent General Assembly and Economic and Social Council decisions on the control and limitation of documentation (E/CN.3/1983/L.1).

127. The Commission felt that, although its documentation must be adequate for it to carry out its responsibilities and to guide the substantive and co-ordination work of the Statistical Office, the documents must be succinct and would not necessarily have to reach the maximum page limit set for documents submitted in the name of the Secretary-General or of the Secretariat. The Commission was of the view that special attention should be given to designing a set of brief progress reports to cover the full range of activities undertaken by the Statistical Office. All documents, and particularly those related to the future programme of work of the Statistical Office, should be made available in advance of the session and should contain an indication of the resource requirements for each programme element.

128. The Commission discussed the question of combining into an overview report some of the documents that were listed as separate reports in document E/CN.3/1983/CRP.2, but felt that the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination would be able to consider that question further when the Secretariat had had more time to analyse carefully the wishes of the Commission.

129. The Commission decided that the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination should finalize the documentation for the twenty-third session of the Commission along the lines suggested at its twenty-second session, bearing in mind that some of the documents should be merged in the overview reports to be submitted under the relevant agenda items and that some of the other documentation should form parts of other documents and should not be published as separate reports.

130. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/41 of 10 May 1979, the Commission submitted to the Council its provisional agenda and documentation for the Commission's twenty-third session, bearing in mind chapter XIV of the present report (see chap. I above, para. 1, draft decision).

131. A number of corrections, clarifications and additions were made to the agenda items and planned documentation, reflecting the decisions made during the session. Several delegations supported the preparation of a document or part of a document on the special problems faced by the less developed among the developing countries in the area of statistics. There was general agreement on the three subjects to be included for consideration under item 3 (Special issues), namely: (a) meeting user

needs for international statistics and improving the dissemination of international statistics; (b) the future direction of work on social indicators; and (c) the publication policy for statistics.

132. One delegation felt that the problems to be solved in estimating the costs of statistical systems in relation to their various output were most suitable for discussion between national directors of statistics at a future session.

133. The Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination was requested to discuss the utility of identifying documents as "discussion" and "information" documents in the light of the experience of the Commission at its twenty-second session.

134. At its 388th meeting, on 15 March 1983, the Commission decided that some of the documentation listed in the draft provisional agenda should be merged in the overview reports to be submitted under the relevant agenda items and that some of the other documentation shown should form parts of other documents and should not be issued as separate reports. The Commission decided that the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination should therefore finalize the documentation for the twenty-third session of the Commission, along the lines suggested at its twenty-second session.

135. At the same meeting, the Commission, bearing in mind the above, recommended that the Economic and Social Council approve the provisional agenda and documentation for its twenty-third session (see chap. I above, para. 1, draft decision).

XV. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

136. The Statistical Commission held its twenty-second session at United Nations Headquarters from 7 to 16 March 1983. The Commission held 14 plenary meetings (377th to 390th meetings).

137. The session was opened by K. C. Seal, Vice-Chairman of the Commission at its twenty-first session in 1981.

138. The Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development addressed the Commission.

B. Membership and attendance

139. All States members of the Commission were represented at the session, except Kenya and Nigeria. Observers for Member States, and representatives of the Secretariat and of United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations also attended the session. A complete list is given in annex I to the present report.

C. Tribute to the memory of William R. Leonard

140. At its 377th meeting, on 7 March 1983, the Commission observed a minute of silence in memory of William R. Leonard, former Director of the Statistical Office of the United Nations.

D. Election of officers

141. At its 377th meeting, on 7 March 1983, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Vera NYITRAI (Hungary)
<u>Vice-Chairmen:</u>	Lelia Boeri DE CERVETTO (Argentina) Thomas P. LINEHAN (Ireland) E. Oti BOATENG (Ghana)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	KHOO Teik Huat (Malaysia)

E. Agenda

142. At its 377th meeting, on 7 March 1983, the Commission adopted its agenda as contained in document E/CN.3/1983/1 (see annex II to the present report).

143. The Commission also approved the organization of its work as contained in the note by the Secretariat (E/CN.3/1983/L.1).

F. Documentation

144. The documents that were before the Commission are listed in annex III to the present report.

G. Adoption of the report of the Commission

145. At its 389th and 390th meetings, on 16 March 1983, the Commission adopted the report on its twenty-second session (E/CN.3/1983/L.3 and Add.1-21), as orally amended during the discussion.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1983, Supplement No. 2 (E/1983/12).

2/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/36/38), para. 484 (a).

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

4/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.XVII.10.

5/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.XVII.8.

6/ Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, Standing Commission on Statistics, Moscow, 1975.

7/ International Labour Office, Geneva, 1968.

8/ Statistical Office of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 1970.

9/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.XVII.4.

Annex I

ATTENDANCE

A. Members a/

ARGENTINA

Representative: Lelia Boeri de Cervetto

AUSTRALIA

Representative: R. J. Cameron

Alternates: D. W. Anderson
G. F. Quinlan

AUSTRIA

Representative: Josef Schmidl

BRAZIL

Representative: Jessé de Souza Montello

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Representative: Vladimír Micka

Alternate: Jaroslav Ceska

ECUADOR

Representative: Wilson Ruales

FINLAND

Representative: Olavi E. Niitamo

Alternates: Tapio Leppo
Aarno Laihonon

FRANCE

Representative: Edmond Malinvaud

Alternate: Jean-Marie Nivlet

a/ Kenya and Nigeria were not represented at the session.

GHANA

Representative:

E. Oti Boateng

HUNGARY

Representative:

Vera Nyitrai

Alternate:

György Vukovich

INDIA

Representative:

K. C. Seal

IRAQ

Representative:

Wisam Jamel Tawfik

IRELAND

Representative:

Thomas P. Linehan

JAPAN

Representative:

Saburo Kawai

Alternates:

**Hiroyuki Ieda
Mitsuru Ide
Shigenobu Kobayashi
Makoto Wakasugi**

LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

Representative:

Mohamed Shelliid

MALAYSIA

Representative:

Khoo Teik Huat

MEXICO

Representative:

Jaime Alatorre

SPAIN

Representative:

Francisco Azorín Poch

Alternates:

Carmen Arribas

TOGO

Representative:

Dzigbodi Bouaka

UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

Representative:

A. I. Troyan

Alternate:

I. M. Turyanskiy

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Representative:

M. A. Korolev - should be V.I. Guryev
see corrigendum

Alternate:

A. A. Konevsky

Adviser:

A. Y. Bugrov

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND
NORTHERN IRELAND

Representative:

Sir John Boreham

Alternates:

D. Ramprakash
R. M. Allen

B. States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Canada, China, Cuba, Egypt and the United States of America.

C. United Nations Secretariat

Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

Department of Technical Co-operation for Development

Economic Commission for Europe

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic Commission for Latin America

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic Commission for Western Asia

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

D. United Nations bodies

United Nations Children's Fund

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Fund for Population Activities

United Nations International Research and Training Institute
for the Advancement of Women

E. Specialized agencies, IAEA and GATT

International Labour Organisation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

World Health Organization

World Bank

International Monetary Fund

* * *

International Atomic Energy Agency

* * *

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

F. Intergovernmental organizations

African Development Bank

Commonwealth Secretariat

Customs Co-operation Council

European Economic Community

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Organization of the Islamic Conference

G. Non-governmental organizations

Category I

International Chamber of Commerce

Category II

Inter-American Statistical Institute

Roster

Data for Development

Annex II

AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters
3. Special issues
 - (a) Administrative records
 - (b) Information technology
 - (c) Publication policy for statistics
4. National accounts and balances
 - (a) System of National Accounts (SNA)
 - (b) System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)
 - (c) Links between the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)
5. Industrial, transport, energy and international trade statistics
 - (a) Industrial and transport statistics
 - (b) Energy statistics
 - (c) International trade statistics
6. Price statistics
 - (a) Inter-agency price statistics programme
 - (b) International Comparison Project (ICP)
7. International economic classifications
8. Demographic and social statistics
 - (a) Population and housing censuses
 - (b) International migration statistics
 - (c) Social indicators and links among social, demographic and related economic and environment statistics

9. Environment statistics
10. Technical co-operation
 - (a) Development of country capabilities: the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)
 - (b) Training in statistics
 - (c) Statistical data processing
 - (d) Technical co-operation in statistics
11. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes
12. Programme implementation
13. Programme objectives and planning
14. Other business
15. Draft provisional agenda for the twenty-third session of the Commission
16. Report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE COMMISSION AT ITS
TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1983/1	2	Provisional agenda
E/CN.3/1983/2	3 (a)	Use of administrative records for statistical purposes: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/3	3 (b)	Implications of new developments in information technology: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/4	3 (c)	Publication policy for statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/5	4 (a)	Review and development of the System of National Accounts (SNA): report of Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/6	4 (a)	Progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the guidelines and the establishment of international data series in national accounts and related statistical fields
E/CN.3/1983/7	4 (b)	Progress report on the development of the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS): note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/8	4 (c)	Progress report of the Secretary-General on SNA/MPS comparisons and related topics
E/CN.3/1983/9	5 (a)	Draft revision of the International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/10	5 (a)	Progress report of the Secretary-General on the 1983 World Programme of Industrial Statistics and on transport statistics

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1983/11	5 (b)	Progress report of the Secretary-General on energy statistics
E/CN.3/1983/12	5 (c)	Draft of the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/13	6 (a)	Development of an inter-agency price statistics programme: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/14	6 (b)	Long-term organization of the International Comparison Project (ICP): report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/15	7	Progress report of the Secretary-General on the harmonization of international economic classifications
E/CN.3/1983/16	8 (a)	Progress report of the Secretary-General on national experiences and emerging issues in population and housing censuses
E/CN.3/1983/17	8 (b)	Progress report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of international migration statistics
E/CN.3/1983/18	8 (c)	Progress report of the Secretary-General on national and international work on social indicators and on related concepts and classifications for general use
E/CN.3/1983/19	9	Progress report of the Secretary-General on environment statistics
E/CN.3/1983/20	10 (a)	The National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP): report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/21	10 (a)	The Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS): report of the World Bank
E/CN.3/1983/22	10 (b)	Progress report of the Secretary-General on training in statistics

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1983/23	10 (c)	Progress report of the Secretary-General on statistical data processing
E/CN.3/1983/24	11	Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination: report on the ninth session
E/CN.3/1983/25	10 (d)	Technical co-operation in statistics by the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/26	11	Evaluation of co-ordination in international statistical programmes: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/27	12	Progress report of the Secretary-General on the statistical work of the international organizations
E/CN.3/1983/28	13	Future plans in statistics of the international organizations: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/29	13	Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1984-1985 and the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989: note by the Secretariat
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/ 34/Rev.3	5 (c)	Draft of the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/ 48/Rev.1	5 (a)	Draft revision of the International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics
E/CN.3/1983/L.1	2	Organization of the work of the session: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1983/L.2	15	Draft provisional agenda for the twenty-third session of the Commission: note by the Secretariat

<u>Document symbol</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1983/L.3 and Add.1-21	16	Draft report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council
E/CN.3/1983/CRP.1	13	Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1984-1985: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/CRP.2	15	Draft provisional agenda for the twenty-third session of the Commission: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1983/CRP.3	2	Proposed Bureau of the Statistical Commission

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