

E/1987/19
E/CN.3/1987/26

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

REPORT ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

(23 February-4 March 1987)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS, 1987

SUPPLEMENT No. 6



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1987

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

E/1987/19
E/CN.3/1987/26

ISSN 0251-9976

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Chapter I

MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Draft decision

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

Report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-fourth session and the provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-fifth session of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-fourth session;

(b) Approves the provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Commission set out below, together with the documentation listed.

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

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

(Two special issues to be determined by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination (see para. 218 below)).

4. National accounts and balances:

(a) System of National Accounts (SNA);

Documentation

Progress reports on revision of the System of National Accounts and related national accounts and balances matters, including issues relating to evaluation of the basic data (see E/1985/26, para. 33 (a))

First draft of the revised System of National Accounts (see para. 35 below)

(b) Links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy.

Documentation

Progress report on the links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy (para. 56 (c))

5. Service statistics.

Documentation

Report on plans for the further development of service statistics (para. 75 (e))

6. International economic classifications.

Documentation

Report on the revision and harmonization of international economic classifications; draft of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities; draft of the Central Product Classification (para. 75 (c); see also E/1985/26, para. 50)

7. Price statistics.

Documentation

Report on the finalization of phase V and on the preparatory work of phase VI of the International Comparison Project, with particular reference to the financial resources necessary for the continuation of the project (para. 86 (d))

8. Demographic, social and environment statistics:

(a) Population and housing censuses;

Documentation

Report on national, regional and global activities in connection with the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme

(b) Social statistics and indicators;

Documentation

Report on international co-ordination of social statistics and indicators and development of statistics and indicators on special population groups (para. 132 (e))

Report on the development of guidelines on national accounts for women's contribution to development (para. 209 (a))

(c) Environment statistics;

Documentation

Progress report on environment statistics

(d) Patterns of consumption: qualitative aspects of development.

Documentation

A report setting forth the views of Governments and containing a small number of case studies or national monographs on the preparation of a basket of indicators in the fields identified in paragraph 2 and the indicative patterns of consumption referred to in paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 40/179, to be drawn up by the Secretary-General and UNRISD, with the support of the Statistical Office and in consultation with other appropriate bodies in the United Nations system, including the World Bank, the regional commissions and other appropriate research organizations (para. 140 (e))

9. General development and integration of methodological work.

Documentation

Report on the general development and integration of methodological work (para. 209 (a))

10. Technical co-operation.

Documentation

Report on technical co-operation in statistics (para. 148 (c))

Report on proposals on the long-range future of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (para. 162 (e))

Report on the current state of statistics and statistical development in developing countries and summary of recent evaluations of statistical projects by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (para. 154 (c) and (d))

Report on the methodology used in the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) prototype surveys, together with an evaluation of the results achieved, as well as on the best way of integrating the LSMS methodology into continuing survey programmes, such as those carried out under the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) (para. 165 (b))

11. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

Documentation

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

12. Programme implementation.

Documentation

Report on the statistical work of the international organizations
(para. 172 (b))

Updated information on the work of the Statistical Office (para. 209 (a))

13. Programme objectives and planning.

Documentation

Report on plans in statistics of the international organizations
(para. 198 (b))

Draft work programme of the Statistical Office and information on the
medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995 (General Assembly resolution
37/234)

14. Provisional agenda for the twenty-sixth session of the Commission.

15. Report of the Commission on its twenty-fifth session.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

2. The attention of the Council is drawn to the recommendations of the Commission (para. 169 (c)) regarding the convening of the twelfth session of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination at Geneva from 6 to 9 October 1987.

3. The attention of the Council is also drawn to the decisions and other recommendations of the Commission (paras. 14, 24, 31, 32, 46, 51, 56, 74, 75, 86, 92, 94, 102, 108, 113, 124, 132, 140, 148, 154, 162, 165, 169, 172, 177, 198, 209, 213, 214, 218, 220 and 221).

4. The attention of the Council is drawn to the views and conclusions of the Commission to be submitted to the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields, established by the Council in decision 1987/112 (see paras. 175-196 below).

Chapter II

SPECIAL ISSUES

5. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 405th, 406th and 414th meetings, on 23 and 27 February 1987.

A. Communications between national and international statistical agencies and the development of data bases

6. For its consideration of item 3 (a), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on issues of communication between national and international statistical agencies and data base development (E/CN.3/1987/2).

7. The Commission considered that the report provided much useful information on the issues of communication between national and international statistical agencies and data base development. It emphasized that continual efforts had to be made in improving relationships and communication between national and international statistical organizations and between international organizations themselves. The Commission expressed its appreciation of the efforts to co-ordinate data collection made by the international statistical agencies under the guidance of the Commission and its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination. It also commended the extensive sharing of statistics obtained from Member States among the statistical services of the various international agencies and stressed that the practice should be continued. Only in that way could duplication be avoided and the reporting burden placed on Member States minimized. Several representatives reported that there had been a growth in ad hoc requests to Member States for statistical information from non-statistical units of the United Nations and other international organizations. It was recommended that more attention be given to that problem by those organizations and the Economic and Social Council. The statistical services of the international organizations should be asked to screen requests to eliminate requests for data which had already been provided.

8. The view was expressed that the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/2) would have been more useful if it had described the nature and causes of problems in communication between national and international statistical agencies. For instance, it would be useful to know whether non-communication or late or incomplete communication was the problem. It would also be useful to know if delays occurred in preparing and sending data to the international statistical offices because national statistical offices faced delays in the collection and processing of the data or faced administrative collation problems. It was possible that the lack of adherence to international standards was also a problem; if so, it would be useful to know whether the problem was due to the standards being either too detailed, or not well suited to national needs or not within their statistical capability.

9. In respect of data collection and dissemination activities of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, several representatives asked what criteria were used in determining which statistical series were included in the statistical publications of the United Nations. The Commission was informed that the decisions were made following the receipt of requests from and consultation

with users in the Secretariat, intergovernmental bodies and other users and reflected assessments of the comparative priority of needs.

10. The Commission recognized that national and international users of statistics were in great need of internationally comparable data from as many countries as possible. For that reason, national statistical offices had, for some time, generally recognized that the provision of internationally comparable series, in addition to statistical series produced for national purposes, was one of their important responsibilities. The Commission stressed that the use of standard international statistical concepts and classifications was an important factor in preparing such series. It noted, however, that some countries, finding that international standards could not be directly adopted, had had to supply data to international agencies based on the use of their own national standards. Nevertheless, it was agreed that over the past 20 years considerable progress had been made with respect to the availability of internationally comparable data from countries in various parts of the world. However, important gaps remained, and it was suggested that the reporting of statistical data by countries might be improved by examining existing international standards with a view to improving their applicability to individual countries. Alternatively, countries could be asked to provide data on fewer topics to obtain more complete coverage and possibly ensure more timely reporting and better comparability of data. In addition, it was suggested that incomplete responses might be reduced and the rate of response increased through improved personal contacts between the heads of national statistical offices and international statistical agencies.

11. The Commission agreed that the use of communication and computer technologies could make data collection and dissemination more efficient, although the enhanced use of technology alone would not improve the basic availability of data at both the national and international levels. Many representatives supported the suggestion that efforts should be made to use microcomputer diskettes in the collection of statistics as well as in their dissemination. This was seen as a cost-effective way of gathering many kinds of statistics from both developing and developed countries. The Commission also agreed that the utilization of microcomputers for statistical data processing would be a way of promoting the technical harmonization required by computerized communication.

12. In respect of statistical data base development and, in particular, communication through the linking of such data bases, the critical importance of developing technical standards was stressed. It was noted that such standardization was not easy to achieve and consequently would be resource demanding. Several representatives described their experiences in the development of statistical data bases. The importance of incorporating meta-data, including footnote information, within statistical data bases was stressed. On-line access to international statistical data bases was also discussed. The point was made that the report would have been more useful if it had discussed the availability of privately operated data bases. The Commission noted that as statistical data bases were developed, the problems of maintaining confidentiality and preventing data theft needed to be addressed by national and international statistical agencies. Some representatives stressed the importance of statistical data base development at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for improved communication.

13. Many representatives stressed the importance of the Technical Working Group on Data Bases. The Commission was informed that the Working Group had been

established by the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and comprised technical staff of the member organizations. The Commission considered that the terms of reference of the Working Group and its future work plan should be revised so as to strengthen the Working Group's role in promoting statistical data base development and achieving the early formulation of standards for the exchange of data among international statistical agencies. It was also considered that the results achieved by the Working Group should be shared with national statistical offices.

Action taken by the Commission

14. The Commission:

(a) Requested international organizations to continue their efforts to improve the co-ordination of their data collection activities with a view to eliminating duplication and minimizing the reporting burden placed on Member States;

(b) Reiterated the request made at previous sessions that more effective action be taken to achieve co-ordination of ad hoc requests to Member States for statistical information from non-statistical units in the United Nations and other international organizations;

(c) Expressed its support for improving the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of data collection and dissemination through the adoption of communication and computer technology, in particular the appropriate use of diskettes;

(d) Endorsed the work of the Technical Working Group on Data Bases of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities and considered that steps should be taken to make its role more effective.

B. Special problems in the statistically least developed among the developing countries

15. For its consideration of item 3 (b), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the special problems in the statistically least developed among the developing countries (E/CN.3/1987/3).

16. The Commission was pleased to note that the Statistical Office, in co-operation with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, had convened an Interregional Workshop on Statistical Development in the Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries at Addis Ababa from 23 to 29 May 1986, in line with the request made by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-third session. Representatives of 16 developing countries had participated, as well as representatives of eight organizations from within and outside the United Nations system. The Commission noted that the report before it was based on the conclusions of the Workshop.

17. The Commission emphasized that the situation of the statistically least developed among the developing countries was particularly difficult since they required, as did other developing countries, statistics for planning and economic development but frequently lacked resources to establish and maintain adequate

statistical infrastructure. The Commission recognized that those difficulties had existed for some time and that there were no simple solutions to the diverse and complex problems of those countries. Furthermore, the Commission stressed that for the statistically least developed countries, which were a heterogeneous group, there was no single appropriate definition.

18. The Commission considered a number of the issues discussed in the report that were of relevance to the statistical development of those countries, namely, statistical priorities and requirements, special problems relating to organizational and operational issues, personnel development and training and recommendations for action by national and international organizations.

19. The Commission agreed in general with the conclusions of the Workshop, especially with regard to the establishment by the statistically least developed countries of committees of producers and users of statistics to guide the determination of the main priorities of a national statistical service, as well as the monitoring of the execution of its work programmes. A few representatives expressed the view that the report might have been clearer if there had been separate sections for the different types of statistically least developed countries. However, the Commission noted that the Workshop had specifically decided that the issues for all the countries involved should be presented in a unified way in its report.

20. The Commission welcomed the proposal for the establishment and/or strengthening of permanent regional advisory services to serve groups of small island countries in such regions as the South Pacific and the Caribbean. The proposal was considered much more technically effective and cost-effective than locating statistical experts in each island country. The Commission requested the Secretariat, including the regional commissions, to collaborate in that effort and in other initiatives directed towards the promotion of statistical development in the least developed countries.

21. In connection with training, the advantages and cost-effectiveness of the use of video tape as a training aid were mentioned. In addition, the Commission noted that the kind of training required by generalist statisticians operating in small island countries was different from that required by specialized statisticians working in a large statistical service.

22. In its consideration of the question of the statistical "brain drain" in the least developed countries, the Commission emphasized the fact that ways needed to be found for those countries to make careers attractive and to provide promotion opportunities and job satisfaction in order to retain competent statisticians in the national statistical service.

23. Finally, the Commission urged individual Member States to endeavour to assist the statistically least developed countries to improve their statistical services in the most economical manner. However, it was agreed that the final responsibility for the improvement of the statistical services in the countries rested with the Governments of those countries.

Action taken by the Commission

24. The Commission:

(a) Broadly endorsed the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the special problems in the statistically least developed among the developing countries (E/CN.3/1987/3);

(b) Requested the Statistical Office to give particular attention to the needs of the statistically least developed among the developing countries in its ongoing work of preparing methodological manuals and draft recommendations;

(c) Expressed its strong support for the provision of assistance to the statistically least developed countries to enable those countries to improve their statistical services to meet urgent needs for statistics to promote their economic development, and urged the Statistical Office, together with the regional commissions, the specialized agencies, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and other multilateral and bilateral organizations to initiate actions necessary to provide such assistance.

Chapter III

DISSEMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICS

25. The Commission considered item 4 of its agenda at its 406th meeting, on 23 February 1987. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the dissemination of international statistical data (E/CN.3/1987/4).

26. The Commission considered that the report provided an informative basis for its discussion. In particular, it found useful the review of current practices in the production of recurrent publications of the Statistical Office, as well as the comments and experiences of national statistical offices and other statistical offices of the organizations of the United Nations system.

27. Timeliness was considered to be extremely important in the release of international statistics and the Secretariat was urged to continue to give that matter high priority. A number of suggestions were made concerning ways to further improve the timeliness and other aspects of the dissemination of those statistics, in particular the reduction of the time-lag between the receipt of information and its release. However, it was also recognized that, where improved timeliness could be achieved only at additional cost, a judgement had to be made whether the benefits to users justified the extra costs. The Commission welcomed the plans of the Statistical Office for the increased use of new technology, which would allow the inclusion of more up-to-date statistics in its publications, and the efforts to identify the causes of delay in the distribution process. It was proposed that recipients be given the choice of having publications delivered by surface or air mail or by air freight, with the recipient bearing any additional expense. A further proposal was made that national statistical offices be given print-outs from the United Nations Statistical Information System of the latest available range of national statistics before they were issued in the publications of the Statistical Office.

28. The Commission stressed the importance of the accuracy and consistency of international statistics, both for comparative studies and the assessment of trends. For that purpose the provision of adequate technical notes and descriptions in the publications was essential. The Commission recognized that considerable documentation was provided with the data in the Statistical Office publications, but was of the view that it could be further improved. In particular, priority should be given to updating the Supplement to the Statistical Yearbook and the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics. Additional current descriptive material could also be included in the annex to the Bulletin. It would be helpful to many developing countries if methodological publications and descriptive notes in regular publications were issued in languages other than English, French and Spanish.

29. The Commission requested the Statistical Office to continue the ongoing evaluation of its publications and to carry out surveys regarding the usefulness of those publications, especially for users in the private sector. It was suggested that the regional commissions could play an increased role in achieving a higher response rate to those market-survey questionnaires by countries in their regions. One aspect of the evaluation should be a review

of the balance in the range of statistics in some of the publications, as data might be too detailed in some cases and not detailed enough in others. A proposal was made that the usefulness of some of the non-recurrent publications should be carefully evaluated, as their usefulness might be limited. The content of the publications should also be reviewed in terms of the relevance to information needs arising from current economic and social concerns.

30. It was pointed out that in many developing countries the price of some of the Statistical Office publications was very high. A proposal was made that a lower price should be charged in developing countries and that mailing lists of free publications should be expanded in those countries. The Commission recalled the discussion at previous sessions relating to price-setting and free distribution of publications, during which the Commission (a) endorsed the principle that achievement of a profit should not be the primary consideration in undertaking publication and dissemination activities, but that such publication activities should be conducted in the most effective and economical manner possible, and (b) cautioned that free distribution lists should be updated frequently to ensure that the publications continued to reach only those users most needing them and that the level of free distribution did not become excessive.

31. The Commission considered that Statistical Office publications were generally under-utilized and an effort should be made to expand their dissemination and use. It was proposed that marketing techniques be employed where appropriate and additional sales outlets be established in Member States. The proposal to use national statistical offices for marketing Statistical Office publications, made at the twenty-third session of the Commission, had not been acted on and the proposal was made once again. The Commission strongly endorsed the effort of the Statistical Office to disseminate international statistical data through media other than publications and recommended that dissemination through microfiche, magnetic tapes, diskettes and on-line access should be expanded.

Action taken by the Commission

32. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the collation and dissemination of international statistics by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat as meeting a well-established and justified need;

(b) Requested that special attention continue to be given to the quality of data published, including the provision of appropriate technical notes and explanatory material;

(c) Requested that efforts be continued towards improving the timeliness of data published but noted that consideration should be given to the cost-effectiveness of any measures proposed;

(d) Requested that the content of statistical publications be reviewed periodically to assess current usefulness and relevance in relation to information needs arising from economic and social developments;

(e) Requested that additional efforts be made to make potential users aware of the statistical publications of the United Nations.

(f) Requested the Statistical Office to disseminate international statistical data through media other than publications, making expanded use of microfiche, magnetic tapes, diskettes and on-line access.

Chapter IV

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES

33. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 407th and 408th meetings, on 24 February 1987.

A. System of National Accounts (SNA)

34. For its consideration of item 5 (a), the Commission had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on progress in the revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA) (E/CN.3/1987/5);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the state of the basic economic information used in the System of National Accounts in developing countries (E/CN.3/1987/6);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on links between the System of National Accounts (SNA) and related fields of statistics, with particular reference to balance-of-payments statistics (BOP), government finance statistics (GFS) and money and banking statistics (MBS) (E/CN.3/1987/7);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1987/23).

35. The Commission commended the report of the Secretary-General on progress in the revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA) (E/CN.3/1987/5) as a valuable and comprehensive description of the progress made in the review of SNA since its twenty-third session. The organizational arrangements and work plans for the review of SNA, with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (composed of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT)) having a central role in the review process, were endorsed. The Commission welcomed the active participation of the regional commissions and national statistical offices in the work accomplished so far. This situation is not, however, general, since some regional commissions have not participated sufficiently in this revision process. It noted that approximately 180 experts throughout the world would comment on the main documents, giving the SNA review a wider audience than the experts who participated in the individual expert group meetings. The Commission considered it essential that experts in national statistical offices and other organizations in developing countries be involved in the review process at every stage. Emphasis was placed on the importance of fuller participation by the regional commissions in the review, including participation in the Working Group. If that participation was to become a reality, resources would have to be provided for that purpose.

36. There was broad agreement on the general coverage and proposed outline of the

revised version of A System of National Accounts ^{1/} (hereinafter referred to as the "Blue Book"). The revised version should be (a) more comprehensive than the present one, (b) applicable to both developed and developing countries and (c) indexed and referenced to related statistical standards which might be elaborated in other manuals. It was also agreed that French and Spanish versions of the English drafts should be made available simultaneously with the English version to avoid terminological and substantive differences. The Commission endorsed the list of handbooks proposed and agreed that they should supplement the revised Blue Book in giving practical guidelines and clarification of details which could not be dealt with in the Blue Book. Additional handbooks were recommended on such topics as financial flows and balance sheets, regional accounts, quarterly accounts, the measurement and valuation of informal sector activities, handicrafts and the contribution of women to economic activity, and the needs of developing countries, including the use of basic economic statistics, which could be used for training in national accounts. The number of handbooks to be produced and their timing would depend on the availability of resources, and the relative priority of the various handbooks would need to be determined. A suggestion was made that individual national statistical offices, as well as other international organizations, might be able to assist the Statistical Office in the preparation of the handbooks.

37. A number of comments were made on the various technical issues concerning the proposed revision of SNA described in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/5). The comments were intended as inputs into the continuing elaboration of the Blue Book and the handbooks and the work of the future expert groups, culminating in the eventual approval of the revised SNA.

38. With regard to the main classifications of the system, the Commission considered that the conclusion of the group of experts that the distinction between marketed goods and services and non-marketed goods and services should remain a basic principle in any use of classifications by activity and by product should be fully accepted. Some representatives considered:

(a) That that distinction might be incorporated as a criterion within the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC);

(b) That in formulating the definitions of institutional sectors, special attention should be paid to the treatment of non-profit institutions serving households, given their importance in a number of developed and developing countries and the fact that their behaviour was often very similar to that of enterprises.

39. With regard to the accounting structure, a number of representatives supported the introduction of the additional balancing items described in paragraph 31 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/5). However, one representative suggested that they might be more appropriately placed in the supporting and supplementary tables rather than in the accounts themselves as their inclusion in the main accounts could be a source of confusion to users.

40. The proposal that gross domestic product (GDP) should continue to play a central role among the production concepts of SNA was supported. In addition, many

^{1/} United Nations publication, Sales No. E.69.XVII.3.

representatives considered that gross national product (GNP) deserved a larger role than it had in the present SNA. Views differed as to whether or not the aggregate "gross national product" could be renamed "gross national income". It was proposed that if estimates of informal activities within households were to be made, that should not be taken as an extension of the production boundary, but as supplementary data for the use of those with a need for such estimates, for example, those interested in the analysis of women's activities. The possibility of developing augmented estimates of GDP towards that end was suggested by some members.

41. Many representatives stressed the importance of real income growth indexes adjusted so as to incorporate the effect of terms-of-trade changes and changes of net factor incomes from abroad expressed in real terms. Many representatives noted that no conclusions had been reached in earlier discussions of the treatment of interest and imputed service charges of banks. Those problems would require further consideration by the expert group on production accounts and input-output tables. If interest flows were to be treated as the payment for a service, the conceptual distinction between the quantity component and price component of those flows would need to be clarified. Several representatives supported the proposal to prepare production accounts for the household sector. One representative expressed the view that the unincorporated enterprises of the household sector should be shown as a subsector. There would also be considerable advantage to bringing macro- and micro-household statistics closer together and reducing to a minimum imputations and attributions for that sector so as to facilitate the expanding role of household statistics in economic modelling.

42. The preliminary findings of a survey on the basic data used in national accounts in developing countries were presented in the report of the Secretary-General on the state of the basic economic information used in the System of National Accounts in developing countries (E/CN.3/1987/6). Some representatives remarked that the report provided a useful overview of the situation, which reinforced the need to improve the ability of developing countries to prepare the basic statistics necessary to support the preparation of national accounting statistics. None the less the Commission stressed the need to assess in greater depth the quality of the basic data on which SNA depended, as it did at its twenty-third session. There was a need to increase the country coverage of the survey presented in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/6). Replies from additional countries should therefore be obtained and the comments on the document from national statistical offices and regional commissions examined. The results should be made available for incorporation in the SNA review process.

43. It was generally agreed that emphasis should be given to the uses of national accounts in economic analysis and economic modelling to help the policy formulation and review processes of Governments. Several representatives stressed the importance of training programmes in national accounts through bilateral and multilateral technical co-operation projects and the provision of training manuals to prepare developing countries for the future utilization of the revised SNA.

44. Most representatives welcomed the efforts carried out in the context of the SNA review to reconcile and harmonize SNA standards with those of related statistical systems, as discussed in the report of the Secretary-General on links between the System of National Accounts and related fields of statistics, with particular reference to balance-of-payments statistics (BOP), government finance statistics (GFS) and money and banking statistics (MBS) (E/CN.3/1987/7). The

Commission agreed that those efforts should be continued. Several representatives emphasized the need for all systems to be open to change, so that the SNA review could result in further harmonization of concepts and classifications. It was recognized, however, that full harmonization might not be feasible because of differences in the analytical objectives of different statistical systems. It was agreed that the primary aim should be the establishment of links at an aggregate level of SNA and related systems. Bridge tables were thought to be useful in bringing out differences in concepts and classifications between the systems. They should identify not only differences in the transaction definitions but also those in the transactors. It was further recognized that conceptual bridges developed between SNA and other systems served as the basis for the preparation of basic matching statistics.

45. Priorities should be established in that reconciliation effort. The first priority should be harmonization between SNA and the European System of Accounts (ESA), between SNA and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) and between the different subsystems of SNA. The next priority should be further efforts to reconcile SNA with related systems, such as balance of payments, government finance statistics and money and banking statistics. Finally, further harmonization with concepts in industrial, agricultural and employment statistics should be carried out if sufficient resources were available. Some representatives stressed the need to harmonize SNA concepts with those of enterprise statistics. Particular mention was made of the need to use the SNA value added concept in addition to the present census value added concept used in industrial statistics. It was recognized that household surveys were a potential source of data for the preparation of household sector accounts in the national accounts, even though many conceptual and data issues needed to be resolved before that source could be fully used. The Commission noted that joint work had been initiated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to establish a system of labour accounts consistent with SNA production accounts standards.

Action taken by the Commission

46. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the organizational arrangements and work schedules for the review of the System of National Accounts, noting the central role of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts;

(b) Gave high priority to strict adherence to the timetable established for the review and emphasized that high priority should be accorded to the work in the Statistical Office;

(c) Requested that the needs of developing countries be given full attention in the concepts, classifications and tabulations elaborated in the future Blue Book and handbooks through adequate representation of experts from developing countries and regional commissions in the SNA review process and further requested that the possibility of the regional commissions formally establishing the Inter-Secretariat Working Group be considered;

(d) Requested that efforts should continue to harmonize SNA with related systems of statistics, with particular emphasis on harmonization with the European System of Accounts, the System of Balances of the National Economy and also on reconciliation with balance-of-payments statistics, government finance statistics, and money and banking statistics;

(e) Requested that the review of basic statistical information suitable for the preparation of national accounts in developing countries be continued in the context of the SNA review by incorporating information from the regional commissions, especially on assessing the quality of data.

B. System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)

47. For its consideration of item 5 (b), the Commission had before it a note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/8 and Corr.1) transmitting the report of the secretariat of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) on the improvement of a methodology for compilation of the statistical balances of the national economy, and a document prepared by CMEA entitled "Draft basic methodological principles governing the compilation of the System of Statistical Balances of the National Economy" (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/17/Rev.1, vols. I and II).

48. The Commission noted that the document represented an improved, updated and expanded version of the description of the previous system published by the United Nations in 1971 under the title Basic Principles of the System of Balances of the National Economy. 2/

49. Several representatives expressed the view that the new document on MPS considerably expanded the scope of economic analysis and facilitated international comparisons between the SNA and MPS concepts. In order to widen knowledge of MPS, it was recommended that training courses be organized for interested countries to study MPS and its links with SNA.

50. It was also agreed that the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the Statistical Office of the CMEA secretariat should co-operate in the preparation of a revised United Nations questionnaire for countries using MPS.

Action taken by the Commission

51. The Commission agreed that the document entitled "Basic methodological principles governing the compilation of the System of Statistical Balances of the National Economy" should be issued as a publication of the United Nations and be given wide circulation.

C. Links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy

52. For its consideration of item 5 (c), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the elaboration of the conceptual framework for the

2/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.71.XVII.10.

System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy comparisons and related experimental calculations (E/CN.3/1987/9).

53. The Commission broadly endorsed the basic directions for future work outlined in the report of the Secretary-General. It agreed that priority should be given to the revision of the methodology of SNA and MPS comparisons published by the United Nations in 1977. ^{3/} Results of discussions at earlier sessions of the Commission on the subject should be incorporated in the revised publication, which should be more practical in nature than the previous version. The revised publication and other work on links between SNA and MPS should be discussed at a meeting of the expert group on intersystem links, to be held in 1988 as one in the series of expert group meetings on the SNA review.

54. 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. It welcomed, in particular, plans by Finland and Czechoslovakia to initiate a bilateral comparison and the intentions of France and Hungary and of Bulgaria and Finland to continue their bilateral calculations. It also welcomed the intention of the Statistical Division of EEC to continue to participate actively in the project.

55. The view was expressed that it would be desirable to introduce some new topics in the publication, Comparisons of the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy, Part One, Conceptual Relationships, when it is revised. In particular, the impact of institutional differences on the comparisons of SNA and MPS aggregates should be discussed in the publication. The value of using the short-cut method for the SNA and MPS comparison between countries as a means of obtaining quick results was also stressed.

Action taken by the Commission

56. The Commission:

(a) Requested that work continue on the further elaboration of the conceptual framework of SNA and MPS comparisons and that priority be given to the revision of the publication entitled Comparisons of the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy, Part One, Conceptual Relationships;

(b) Endorsed the holding of a meeting on links between SNA and MPS as a part of the SNA review, to further harmonize the concepts and classifications of the two systems;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session a report on the progress achieved in linking the two systems.

^{3/} Comparisons of the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy, Part One: Conceptual Relationships (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.XVII.6).

Chapter V

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS

57. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 408th to 410th meetings, on 24 and 25 February 1987.

58. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on the harmonization of international economic classifications (E/CN.3/1987/10) and containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1987/23), together with the following draft classifications, "First complete draft of the revised International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)" (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/4/Rev.3) and "First draft of the Central Product Classification (CPC)" (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/77(Rev.ed.)).

59. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for the amount of work completed in respect of those two major classifications since the previous session, as well as for the preparation of the supporting documentation on the issues and problems involved. The overall structures of those classifications as developed were approved, and it was agreed that they were in accordance with the strategy previously approved. The Commission noted, however, that much work still remained to be done and many detailed technical issues had to be resolved.

60. The Commission reviewed the proposed timetable for completing the final drafts of ISIC and CPC and expressed concern at the prospect that final drafts of the classifications might not be available for consideration by the Commission at its twenty-fifth session, scheduled for 1989. The Commission stressed the need to adhere to the timetable and requested the Statistical Office to take every action needed to ensure that the final drafts were ready for the twenty-fifth session of the Commission even if changes to the current drafts were needed.

61. The Commission stressed that, as world-level classifications, their content could not exactly reflect circumstances in every individual country. However, national experts and others reviewing the draft classifications should show flexibility and, in particular, recognize the needs of developing as well as developed countries. The Commission noted that the current revised drafts of ISIC and CPC had already been discussed at two expert group meetings, one at United Nations Headquarters and one at the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

62. Some representatives expressed the view that the current definitions of statistical units to which the classification would apply were inappropriate or not sufficiently articulated in many countries. They considered that those definitions should be more specific and updated so as to comply with differing structures and relationships of units producing goods and services and reporting data in censuses and surveys. Ideally, such units should be defined in an integrated way to ensure that duplications and omissions in coverage in surveys did not occur. The view was also expressed that the conceptual bases for the classifications and the classification processes in relation to them should be fully explained. However, it was recognized that classifications were complex and it was difficult to construct them on the basis of a uniform application of a single principle.

63. Regarding the level of detail of hierarchical categories of ISIC, a pragmatic approach was suggested. The point was made that any acceptance of the stated need

for more detail, especially in the emerging services industries, should be balanced against the difficulties of being able to reach broad agreement at such level of detail in a world-level classification, as well as the capacity of developing countries to apply the classification at a too detailed level. It was emphasized that, no matter what level of detail was used, the classification categories should be specified in such a way that ambiguities in their applications would be avoided.

64. Considerable opposition was expressed to the proposal to introduce an alpha-numerical coding system at the primary level of classification in ISIC. Many representatives considered that the introduction of such a system would disrupt historical time series, would increase the non-sampling errors in cases where the system would be used in the field, and would involve considerable retraining costs for personnel in national statistical offices and of users, including those in developing countries. Several other representatives, however, considered that an alpha-numeric system could be useful by providing a finer first-level classification, in line with the increasing breadth and sophistication of producing units. That would be useful for analytical purposes and policy needs. Such a system could also provide for classification categories at the secondary and tertiary levels of the classification. It was noted that the same end could be achieved, however, by retaining a numeric system and using a two-digit numerical coding system for the highest level of ISIC or by the adoption of five-digit categories at the most detailed level. The Commission decided that no final decision would be made at that time and that it should be discussed further at the forthcoming expert group meetings.

65. As to the proposal to introduce a high-level category for mixed farming, the views of representatives did not coincide. It was recognized that such activities were common in developed as well as in developing countries and some provision needed to be made. The association of particular low-level categories of mixed farming with the homogeneous farming categories corresponding to the predominant activity in the mixed farm was an alternative approach which might be suitable in some countries. The approach depended on the availability of data which permitted the calculation of specialization ratios. The Commission decided to defer a decision on that matter until the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) submitted the question to its regional bodies for consideration.

66. In respect of the most useful form of classification in the distribution trades area of ISIC and CPC, many representatives supported the proposal made in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/10) to classify wholesale trade according to the type of goods sold and to use a combined classification of the goods sold and the kind of organization of the sales for retail trade. However, one member cautioned that categorization according to kind of organization of the sales could be subject to changes in time.

67. Several representatives welcomed the inclusion of annexes to ISIC covering cross-classifications of industries for particular purposes, for example, tourism or information services. It was, however, generally agreed that such work should definitely not be allowed to hinder the completion of the revision work in time for consideration of the final version of the classification at the twenty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission in 1989.

68. Concerning the overall coverage of CPC, the Commission recalled that CPC had originally been conceived as a classification of goods based on industrial origin. It approved its extension to services and decided that the classification should

maintain a strict separation between three basic categories: transportable goods, non-transportable goods and services. Some members felt that CPC should also include a fourth category corresponding to intangible assets.

69. The Commission agreed that the explanatory notes of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) should be used for transportable goods, but that new notes for the remaining parts of CPC needed to be developed. It was stressed that the preparation of notes for those parts of CPC would be a difficult task and would require considerable time because of general lack of experience in the field by Statistical Office personnel. The Commission asked that ways be found to assist the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat with that task.

70. The Commission urged that harmonization efforts between ISIC and the General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (NACE) of the European Communities be continued. Also, work on correlation tables between the United Nations classifications and the classifications in use in countries belonging to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, carried out by the Economic Commission for Europe, should be pursued.

71. The representative of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) informed the Commission that every effort was being made to ensure the implementation of HS by 1 January 1988. To date, nine countries had become contracting parties and eight more were required before October 1987 in order to allow implementation as scheduled. He also stated that the new explanatory notes to HS were already available and that the alphabetical index to HS and the Compendium of Classification Opinions would be published by the end of 1987.

72. The Commission was informed about an ad hoc meeting of a number of interested countries, which took place at Voorburg in January 1987. The purpose of the meeting was to determine the contributions countries could make to the work on development of service statistics, in particular the development of service classifications. The aim of the group was to study that area within the framework and timetable set out by the Statistical Commission for the adoption of ISIC and CPC and to take advantage of national interest, expertise and resources that might not otherwise be available for that purpose. The Commission welcomed that effort and noted that the initial outcome of the ad hoc work would need to be available at the expert group meeting on world level classifications scheduled for December 1987. Several representatives expressed the view that high priority should be given to the development of service statistics. The availability of classifications was considered to be an essential prerequisite for the development of service statistics generally. The Commission stressed that the planned broader work on service statistics should not be allowed to delay the work on ISIC and CPC.

73. The Commission indicated that the work on service statistics should be done in close collaboration with the revision of the System of National Accounts, because many aspects had a strong relationship, such as trade and transport margins, banking transactions, and international trade in services related to balance of payments. It was noted that, in the early stages, that work should be carried out in close co-operation with developing countries to avoid having to make readjustments at a later stage to accommodate their needs.

74. The Commission stressed that the work on services should be a co-operative effort between international organizations and individual countries, given the pressure on resources. The Commission requested the Statistical Office to prepare

a technical report on the collection, availability and use of service statistics. In addition, the Commission decided that service statistics should be included in the agenda of its twenty-fifth session and requested the Statistical Office to prepare a report on plans for further development of service statistics, outlining areas that needed further work.

Action taken by the Commission

75. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the continuation of the work of the Statistical Office on the harmonization of international economic classifications in conjunction with appropriate international organizations, in particular the Statistical Office of the European Communities, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the harmonization of economic classifications to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session;

(c) Requested that the final drafts of the revised ISIC and CPC be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session. ISIC should include explanatory notes and CPC should, if possible, also include notes for the part dealing with services;

(d) Requested the Statistical Office to prepare a technical report on the collection, availability and use of service statistics;

(e) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on plans for the further development of service statistics to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

Chapter VI

PRICE STATISTICS

76. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at its 410th and 411th meetings, on 25 and 26 February 1987.

77. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on phase V of the International Comparison Project (ICP) (E/CN.3/1987/11) and containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1987/23).

78. With regard to the progress of phase V of ICP, the Commission noted that the 1985 and 1986 comparison results for the 12 European Community countries and for seven other OECD countries were now available. Substantial progress had been achieved, also, in the African, ESCAP and Europe Group 2 regional comparisons.

79. The Commission expressed its continued support for the project and agreed that the benchmark years should continue on the basis of the five-year interval as established earlier, and that the preparatory work for phase VI (with 1990 as reference year) should be started as early as 1988.

80. However, financial difficulties had been experienced by the project, as described in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/11), and that had resulted in the total absence of Latin American results and other serious consequences for phase V. Further deterioration in the financial situation was possible and the Commission expressed concern that that could jeopardize the co-ordinating role of the Statistical Office and of the regional commissions and might further reduce the level of participation of developing countries. It was proposed that the Statistical Office should explore the possibility of obtaining extrabudgetary funds, both for the finalization of phase V and for the preparatory work for phase VI. It was further proposed that multinational corporations should be approached as potential donors, in addition to national statistical offices and development agencies of developed countries, and that the Statistical Office should make an effort to organize phase VI in such a way that established sources of funding for technical co-operation could be tapped to the maximum extent possible.

81. To adapt the scale of the project to the unfavourable financial situation, the Commission considered that the possibility of partial participation by countries in ICP should be examined. That would involve, for example, the participation of countries in the household consumption comparison, but not in the comparison of other expenditure components of gross domestic product. The Commission also encouraged investigation of the suitability of various shortcut methods of international comparisons, but stressed that such methods could not fulfil all the requirements of the full ICP and therefore should be carried out as additions to, and not as replacements for, ICP.

82. The Commission considered that the main thrust of efforts to improve the accuracy of the comparisons should be the more judicious application of the methodology already agreed upon and the dissemination of guideline or handbook types of documents to participating countries to ensure its more accurate application. It was proposed, however, that methodological research should continue, as far as possible, concentrating mainly on the comparison of services and capital goods. The Commission requested the Statistical Office to work in

collaboration with EUROSTAT and OECD to find a broadly acceptable solution on the fixity issue. It was also proposed that the co-ordinating organs of the project should consider undertaking a critical appraisal of the results obtained in the comparison work, preferably by independent experts.

83. A number of participants expressed interest in product side comparisons, that is, comparisons for such aggregates as agricultural production and value added in manufacturing. The Commission considered that, in view of the high costs involved in that type of comparisons, the Statistical Office should not embark on large-scale product side comparisons, or at least not at that stage, since it would draw resources away from the expenditure side comparisons. However, pairs of countries were encouraged to engage in that type of exercise on a bilateral basis, in the expectation that their experiences could eventually be used to assess the usefulness of large-scale comparisons.

84. The Commission considered that ICP generated a new type of information which could serve many important policy and research purposes, both at the national and the international levels. In some groups of countries (such as the European Community), use of ICP results was being made for administrative purposes. The Commission reaffirmed its position that ICP results were not currently suitable for assessing contributions to the United Nations or the determination of credit eligibility at the world level. That consideration was partly owing to the fact that world participation in ICP was still only partial. Another factor is the reservation expressed by a number of countries participating in ICP that believed that, under the conditions of the current comparison work, they still did not have sufficient confidence in the quality of the results to justify their use for those particular purposes.

85. The Commission was informed of the international comparison work being carried out by CMEA and by FAO. The Commission expressed the hope that methodological collaboration among interested organizations would continue in the future.

Action taken by the Commission

86. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the progress achieved in phase V of ICP and endorsed the plans for its continuation;

(b) Reaffirmed that the Statistical Office should continue to play a strong co-ordinating role in ICP as one of its major functions;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to obtain extrabudgetary resources to support ICP;

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session a report on the finalization of phase V and on the preparatory work for phase VI, with particular reference to the financial conditions necessary for the continuation of the project.

Chapter VII

INDUSTRY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

87. The Commission considered item 8 of its agenda at its 411th and 412th meetings, on 26 February 1987.

A. Industrial statistics

88. For its consideration of item 8 (a), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Introduction to the draft recommendations for a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries" (E/CN.3/1987/12) and a report containing the text of those draft recommendations (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/80 and Add.1).

89. The topic of the draft document was of major importance for a proper understanding of the economic structure of developing countries and, in some respects, developed countries as well. Household and small-scale industries were the main source of industrial production in many developing countries, and in some countries economic conditions were likely to lead to growth in their relative importance. Those industries were of great importance in expanding employment opportunities. In the statistical analyses of small-scale industries, it should not be assumed that they were simply incomplete forms of their larger industrial counterparts.

90. There was general agreement that the draft recommendations represented a useful attempt to deal with the issues covered. However, a number of omissions were identified by the Commission. The main concern was that the discussion in parts of the draft did not have the depth needed to permit a fully balanced assessment of the recommendations. Several representatives stressed that the information on country practices should be made more comprehensive so as to include an overview of a country's total economic survey programme and a discussion on the place of small-scale surveys within that wider framework. In particular, limitation of the review of country practices to a single survey for each country was inadequate. Furthermore, at the household or small-scale level in many developing countries, it would not be meaningful or practicable to attempt to segregate industrial activity from other kinds of economic activity in a survey scheme. The view was expressed that the broader scope of multi-purpose surveys of household activities, as in the World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS), provided a useful alternative means of capturing industrial activity. The Commission therefore requested that country practices be subjected to greater analysis and the results incorporated in the draft report.

91. One representative expressed doubt about whether it would be appropriate, in a single document, to include guidelines applicable to both developing and developed countries, and suggested that the draft focus on developing countries only. Other representatives indicated that, while the document in its current form would be useful to countries with some experience in conducting industrial surveys, it would require further work if it were to be used by countries with no experience in that area. Specifically, it was suggested that guidance be given on how gaps and overlaps in survey coverage could be avoided, at either the sample selection or tabular processing stages, and on how sound list and/or area sampling frames could

be established, with the cost implications of the various approaches. A core questionnaire containing definitions of the basic indicators, as well as examples of table formats illustrating the use of descriptive items of data useful for development planning were also mentioned as desirable improvements to the draft. Several representatives indicated that the documentation prepared for the seminar/workshop on economic censuses and surveys, organized by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific at Tokyo in August 1986, was relevant to chapter IV of the draft concerning the operational aspects of the surveys in question. In connection with chapter V, descriptions of routines for the manual processing of the survey statistics should be included to avoid any implication that there was no alternative to computer processing. That was regarded as particularly important in view of the emphasis on descriptive information.

92. The Commission considered that the draft document should be revised in the light of the foregoing comments, after also being circulated for comments to experts in the field, national statistical offices, particularly those in the developing world, regional commissions and interested international organizations. The revised draft should then be recirculated to the regional commissions and interested international organizations for a final review prior to its publication. Some representatives considered that the revised document might be issued as an addendum to the existing International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics.^{4/} Others observed that considerably more work would be required if the document were to justify the status of "international recommendations". The Commission decided that the revised document should be issued as a handbook on statistics for household and small-scale industries to supplement the existing recommendations.

93. Because of the importance of the topic for developing countries and the great need among countries for opportunities to exchange information on national experience in that area, the Commission strongly urged that regional meetings be set up to guide the process of formulating and implementing sound statistical programmes for household and small-scale industries. Regional activities should include workshops, training programmes and technical assistance.

Action taken by the Commission

94. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Secretariat to circulate the current draft document to individual national experts, the national statistical offices concerned, regional commissions and interested international organizations for review and comment;

(b) Requested the Secretariat to revise the draft document, taking into account the views of the Commission and comments received, and to recirculate the revised draft to regional commissions and interested international organizations for a final review;

(c) Requested that the final version of the document be issued as a handbook to supplement the existing International Recommendations on Industrial Statistics and given wide circulation;

^{4/} United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.XVII.8.

(d) Urged that appropriate training and other forms of technical co-operation in that important area be provided to interested developing countries.

B. Energy statistics

95. For its consideration of item 8 (b), the Commission had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on energy statistics, including statistics on new and renewable sources of energy (E/CN.3/1987/13) and containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1987/23).

96. The Commission commended the Statistical Office for the progress achieved since the twenty-third session in the main areas of its energy statistics work programme, namely, methodological development, the data collection and compilation programme, and maintaining co-ordination and co-operation with other international and national agencies active in the field of energy statistics.

97. The Commission attached considerable importance to statistics on new and renewable sources of energy and agreed that in developing concepts and methods in that area the Statistical Office had correctly emphasized the aspects most relevant to developing countries. It urged the Statistical Office to continue its efforts in that field, as described in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/13). A suggestion was made to also give further attention to the statistical problems of new and renewable sources of energy statistics in developed countries.

98. Members of the Commission noted the efforts of the Statistical Office to assess the feasibility of preparing statistics on the cost and price of energy. The Commission shared the conclusion of the Statistical Office that progress in that preparation might be slow, given the complexities involved and the costliness of data collection.

99. Several members of the Commission proposed that the Statistical Office establish an information system on data sources for international energy statistics, and attempt to develop a standard international classification for energy linked to the revised ISIC, also taking into consideration the results of the regional work achieved by ECE. The usefulness, particularly for developing countries, of the technical report on definitions, units of measure and conversion factors in energy statistics was acknowledged.

100. Regarding the data collection and compilation programme of the Statistical Office in the field of energy, the Commission commended the close co-operation with other international agencies, most notably in sharing completed questionnaires. The Statistical Office was urged to expand further its compilation of energy balances and electricity profiles.

101. The Commission reviewed the activities of the Statistical Office in technical co-operation in energy statistics in developing countries and endorsed the increased emphasis on such activities. Emphasis should focus on improving survey and administrative data collection facilities at the national level, establishing comprehensive energy data systems, including information systems on data sources, advising on survey development needs, including the incorporation of energy-related questions in household, industrial and agricultural surveys, and training of energy statisticians. All those activities should be directed towards strengthening

national statistical capability for providing consistent energy statistics on a regular basis in all interested countries.

Action taken by the Commission

102. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Statistical Office to continue its work programme in the area of energy statistics as outlined in its report to the Commission, including publication of methodological studies and the establishment of an information system on energy data sources;

(b) Urged the Statistical Office to increase its efforts in the area of technical co-operation in energy statistics, in accordance with national plans and priorities, to assist developing countries in the establishment of comprehensive energy information systems.

C. Environment statistics

103. For its consideration of item 8 (c), the Commission had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on the environment statistics programme, including the methodological work carried out and progress towards collection and dissemination of environment statistics (E/CN.3/1987/14) and containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1987/23).

104. Concern was expressed at the slow progress made in the development programme for environment statistics after the significant results achieved during the previous biennium. It was, however, recognized that that was influenced by the limited available resources. It was proposed that the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination and the Director of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat directly address the President of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Executive Director of UNEP to arrange high-level consultations on need, content and funding of a global-level programme of environment statistics. In addition, the view was expressed that such a programme would be more effective if emphasis were placed on technical co-operation to help countries develop their capability of applying statistical methods to studying and solving environmental problems.

105. The Commission reconfirmed the high priority it attached to development of concepts and methods for the compilation of environment statistics and their application at the national and international levels. General support for the proposed future programme of work on environment statistics was also expressed. If available resources remained limited, the Statistical Office should focus its immediate short-term efforts on completing the already planned methodological work and on assisting interested developing countries in carrying out statistical studies to support their environment programmes. At the same time, the Commission reiterated the long-term desirability of a global programme of environment statistics, including co-ordination of international activities in that field by the Statistical Office, development of methodology, the collection and dissemination of international statistical series and the provision of technical

co-operation. A suggestion was made that the Statistical Office publish selected environment statistics in its Statistical Yearbook.

106. A proposal was made that the International Statistical Institute (ISI) be invited to play a major role in assisting and supplementing the technical efforts of the United Nations in the field of environment statistics. The Commission considered that a worthwhile proposal to pursue and the representative of ISI welcomed the proposal and assured the Commission that it would be given serious consideration.

107. The Commission noted the joint efforts of UNEP and the World Bank in the field of environmental and natural resources accounting and recognized that such accounts could be linked to the System of National Accounts by means of a framework of satellite accounts. The Commission considered that further discussion on the question should take place in the appropriate expert group meetings organized in the context of the ongoing revision of SNA. The Commission also noted with satisfaction the progress made by ECE in preparing a draft experimental compendium of environment statistics, which would include a case study of the ecosystem of the Baltic Sea. The need to extend such activities to other regions for a more balanced global environment statistics programme was stressed.

Action taken by the Commission

108. The Commission:

(a) Reconfirmed the importance and high priority of the environment statistics programme and noted with regret the lack of progress achieved in the implementation of the programme over the recent biennium, largely influenced by lack of resources;

(b) Requested that in the immediate future the environment statistics work programme of the Statistical Office should focus on:

- (i) Completing the Manual of Environment Statistics, which should be widely circulated before publication;
- (ii) Supporting developing countries in applying the methodologies developed by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in national environment statistics programmes;
- (iii) Co-ordinating international statistical activities in the field of environment;

(c) Requested that the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination and the Director of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat approach the President of the Governing Council and the Executive Director of UNEP to open high-level discussions on the development and implementation of a global programme on environment statistics;

(d) Endorsed the proposal that the United Nations invite the International Statistical Institute to assist the Statistical Office in further work in the field of environment statistics, with any such joint programme being subject to review by the Commission.

D. Sea-borne trade statistics

109. For its consideration of item 8 (d), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1987/23).

110. The Commission was informed of the progress of work on shipping statistics. In particular, the usefulness of the data base developed by the shipping statistics project was recognized. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the Government of Norway for the financial contributions made to the development of the statistics. It noted that the limited availability of extrabudgetary funding would affect the future work programme.

111. As a result of an evaluation of progress on the uniform system of collecting economic statistics on shipping, the Statistical Office proposed to the Commission that the focus of work in the immediate future be redirected, with emphasis on one of the three elements of the uniform system, namely, sea-borne trade statistics. The proposal reflected the current financial constraints on the project and the immediate statistical needs of maritime countries.

112. The Commission agreed that work on the development of shipping statistics in the Statistical Office would continue, but at a level permitted by available funding. Some members expressed concern that the new focus might mean that the uniform system was being abandoned and replaced by a sea-borne trade statistics project. They stated that such a change was most undesirable, given the investment and effort already made by some developing countries and the United Nations in developing and implementing the uniform system. There was general agreement that, while the proposed new work programme would achieve the immediate objective of improving sea-borne trade statistics, in general, it would also contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of having the uniform system implemented by developing countries.

Action taken by the Commission

113. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation to the Government of Norway for its contribution to the Statistical Office over the eight-year period 1978-1985 for the shipping statistics project;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General:

(i) To retain in the immediate work programme of the Statistical Office the development of sea-borne trade statistics, but with the implementation of the uniform system as part of its longer-term goal;

(ii) To make efforts to raise adequate extrabudgetary funds for those activities.

Chapter VIII

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

114. The Commission considered item 9 of its agenda at its 412th to 414th meetings, on 26 and 27 February 1987.

A. Population and housing censuses

115. For its consideration of item 9 (a), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the World Population and Housing Census Programme, 1985-1994 (E/CN.3/1987/15) and the "Draft supplementary principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses" (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Add.1).

116. The Commission expressed agreement with the range of preparations undertaken by the Secretariat in connection with the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme. Several members informed the Commission of the increasing and pivotal role of the population and housing census and the resultant statistics in their countries. Developments such as the introduction of a range of intercensal data collection activities, including micro-population censuses, demographic surveys and the joint use of census and administrative records to provide up-to-date demographic statistics in many countries, were proving possible.

117. The draft supplementary recommendations should be reviewed in the light of the comments received from members and the regional commissions so as to ensure global and regional uniformity to the extent possible. However, the Commission stressed that the regional recommendations need not mirror the world recommendations in all respects. A separate publication of the supplementary recommendations would make them more difficult to use, since the existing Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses 5/ would have to be consulted at the same time. Despite the cross-references contained in the draft supplementary recommendations, mistakes could result. It was therefore requested that, if possible, the supplementary recommendations be integrated with the existing publication and issued as a single volume.

118. The Commission endorsed the use of the new international standards concerning statistics of the economically active population, adopted by ILO in 1983, as the basis for those aspects of the principles and recommendations dealing with the economic activity of the population. It was pointed out that the new ILO standards were primarily aimed at enhancing their applicability to the developing countries and meeting new concerns, such as the accurate measurement of women's participation in economic activities. The Commission recognized the importance of formulating questions in the population census which would elicit complete and accurate information equally for both sexes. The importance of the availability of the revised International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) for use in the population and housing censuses round commencing in 1990 was also emphasized.

5/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.XVII.8.

119. With respect to migration topics, the Commission endorsed the supplementary recommendations for collecting data on the immigrant section of the population. Internal migration was extremely important in many countries for monitoring population trends, particularly in urban areas and for studies on social mobility. The need for methodological studies on internal migration, including rural/urban definitions in national population censuses, was emphasized.

120. In a general discussion of issues related to population and housing censuses, members of the Commission stressed the importance of housing censuses and drew attention to the substantive need for methodological work and technical co-operation activities in that field. Harmonization of population census concepts and housing census concepts, including related tabulations, was emphasized. The importance of co-ordinating work on population and housing censuses with that on agricultural censuses was also mentioned. For that purpose, the Commission considered that some guidance on the development of computerized data bases, including the incorporation of registers, would be useful to several countries. Guidance from regional commissions on socio-economic group classifications would be valuable in preparing for the 1990 censuses. Several members emphasized the importance of greater use of census data, particularly information concerning literacy and special population groups, including women, children and youth, and the elderly. It was also urged that particular attention be paid to the least developed countries to ensure that a 1990 population and housing census was conducted and a comprehensive data base was prepared for use in development planning and administration in those countries.

121. The Commission emphasized that technical co-operation activities supported by UNFPA and other organizations contributed greatly to the successful completion of the 1980 round of population and housing censuses in many developing countries and that similar activities were equally essential to carry out improved censuses in the 1990 round. Recognizing that, several countries offered help and indicated readiness to assist countries bilaterally and/or through training fellowships in regional and other institutions. In that regard, it was also urged that technical co-operation among the developing countries themselves should be further encouraged and promoted. In view of the limited resources available, the Commission stressed the need for effective co-ordination of technical co-operation activities.

122. With respect to future technical co-operation activities, the Commission agreed with the needs outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/15). It was stressed that the high turnover of census staff in many developing countries meant that there was a continuing need for general training courses covering census planning and organization. In that respect, the Commission considered that it would be useful if the Statistical Office could prepare a planning package covering various aspects of census organization and planning, including cartography, recruitment of personnel, training, enumeration, data processing and analysis for distribution to the developing countries. In addition, it would be useful if regional seminars could be convened to discuss problems encountered in census taking.

123. The Commission noted with satisfaction that UNFPA would continue to provide support for census activities in developing countries. The Commission was also pleased to learn of the establishment of a committee consisting of UNFPA and other multilateral and bilateral donor bodies to promote the co-ordination of assistance to countries in sub-Saharan Africa in carrying out their censuses.

Action taken by the Commission

124. The Commission:

(a) Approved the draft supplementary principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/SER/M.67/Add.1), modified by the Commission's comments and reflecting the views of the regional commissions aimed at ensuring global and regional uniformity to the extent possible, and requested its publication as a single integrated volume with the existing Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses or, if that was not possible, as a separate publication;

(b) Requested the preparation of additional technical documentation identified in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/15, para. 24) and, in particular, emphasized the study of sampling methods employed in censuses, electronic data processing and dissemination, census planning packages, evaluation and analysis, and integration of census data with other sources of information, including administrative records and registers;

(c) Strongly supported census training and other technical co-operation activities proposed in the report of the Secretary-General and urged their implementation in co-operation with the regional commissions and interested national statistical offices in developed and developing countries, giving special attention to the following activities:

- (i) Technical support to countries in the areas of electronic data processing, cartography, sampling and measurement of the economically active population in the light of the new ILO standards;
- (ii) Organization of census training workshops and seminars on census planning and organization, pitfalls in census-taking, evaluation, analysis and utilization of census data at the national level.

B. Social statistics and indicators

125. For its consideration of item 9 (b), the Commission had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on progress in the work on indicators of living standards and patterns of consumption and co-ordination of the work on social statistics and social indicators (E/CN.3/1987/16) and containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1987/23).

126. Many members of the Commission strongly endorsed the results of the work contained in those reports. It was agreed that that work, such as the co-ordination of international work on social indicators and the Handbook on Social Indicators, would be extremely valuable to countries and international bodies working in that field and that that progress was a good example of what could be achieved from effective international co-operation.

127. At the same time, the Commission agreed that more work was needed on selected aspects of social indicators, including new concepts and innovative methods and their applicability in developing countries. It emphasized the need for reliable and extensive basic data and adaptability of the basic data sources to analysis of new issues in the work on indicators. There was a continuing need for the

development of harmonized statistical classifications suitable for use by countries at various stages of development and with different social and political systems. Many representatives from both developed and developing countries also stressed the increased importance being given in national work to developing data suitable for international comparisons. Many countries faced internal socio-economic problems that were strongly influenced by external factors and needed good international data for their analysis. The Commission also emphasized the importance of indicators in measuring the negative as well as the positive impact on levels of living and quality of life of national economic development trends and policies, and several members suggested that greater attention could be given in United Nations work on social indicators to the analysis of the availability of specific series at the national level.

128. On the other hand, one member questioned the value of much of the work of the Statistical Office in the field of social statistics and indicators as set out in the documents under consideration, and of the planned work in the upcoming biennium and medium-term plan period. It was specifically proposed that the planned list of fields and illustrative series should not be widely disseminated prior to its inclusion in the Handbook of Social Indicators, that a report to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session on international co-ordination in that field was unnecessary and that addition of a review of indicators on the natural environment to the Handbook of Social Indicators was outside the desirable scope of that publication. In connection with the last point, several members supported the proposed inclusion of those indicators, noting that a proposal to include indicators on the environment had been endorsed by the Conference of European Statisticians. The suggestion was also made that the coverage of environmental indicators should be limited to those directly relevant to levels of living.

129. The Commission noted the high priority given to statistics for monitoring and research in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women ^{6/} and by the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and expressed its strong support for the collaborative work of INSTRAW, the Statistical Office and the regional commissions in that field to meet the needs expressed by those bodies. The Commission welcomed the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on Measurement of Women's Income and Their Participation and Production in the Informal Sector, contained in document E/CN.3/1987/23, as concrete proposals to improve statistics for assessing and monitoring women's remunerated and unremunerated contribution to development. The Commission also noted with approval the view of the Expert Group that the SNA definition of economic activity should not be revised to include value added by home-makers but that such activities should be covered in separate, supplementary estimates. Concerning the calculation of gross domestic product by sex (E/CN.3/1987/23, para. 26 (d)), the Commission agreed that investigational work along those lines by interested countries and organizations would be of great interest, but the major problems inherent in such an exercise precluded the development of international guidelines. The Commission emphasized the importance

^{6/} See Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

of working closely with countries, particularly developing countries, in the development and implementation of improved statistical methodology to take full account of women's work, and noted the great relevance in that respect of the current revision of the International Standard Classification of Occupations.

130. The Commission welcomed the strong support of Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) and Rehabilitation International for the development of statistics on disability. It noted that the necessity of good statistics on disability was widely recognized by the 70 national assemblies of disabled persons with which DPI was associated and that DPI was thus calling for the further expansion of data collection programmes on disability to encompass all countries of the world, following up the International Year of Disabled Persons organized by the United Nations in 1981.

131. Many members also described new international and regional work on indicators, including small-scale social surveys concerned with measuring specific levels of living issues and new forms of social statistics dissemination. Ways of strengthening co-ordination of social statistics work through focusing on special issues or groups and of improving analytical capability in national statistical offices were also mentioned.

Action taken by the Commission

132. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the reported results achieved in the United Nations work in the development of social statistics and indicators, including progress in the co-ordination of international activities since the twenty-third session of the Commission;

(b) Stressed the importance of the work on the development of statistics and indicators on the situation of women, giving special emphasis to the measurement of women's remunerated and unremunerated contributions to all aspects and sectors of development, as called for in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and supported the close collaboration with INSTRAW and the regional commissions in that field;

(c) Strongly endorsed the work that had been undertaken on the development of statistics and indicators on disabled persons and urged countries to further develop their data collection on disability through their basic census and survey programmes, as appropriate, and to make those data available to the United Nations for international monitoring, dissemination and research;

(d) Recommended the wide distribution and use of the United Nations Handbook of Social Indicators among national and international statistical services and other interested institutions, while recognizing the illustrative nature of the selected series for indicators shown there and the need for the continuing review and evolution of the list of fields and topics covered;

(e) Requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session on international co-ordination of social statistics and indicators and development of statistics and indicators on special population groups.

C. Development indicators

133. For its consideration of item 9 (c), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on progress in the work on indicators of living standards and patterns of consumption and co-ordination of the work on social statistics and social indicators (E/CN.3/1987/16). General Assembly resolution 40/179, entitled "Patterns of consumption: qualitative aspects of development", was distributed to the Commission for information.

134. The Commission noted that it should consider two main paragraphs of General Assembly resolution 40/179. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Assembly emphasized the need for "a reliable measuring instrument consisting of a set of indicators related to living conditions, employment and the circumstances underlying them, and the improvement of basic national statistical programmes and capabilities related to food, clothing, housing, education, health care and necessary social services", in order to assess accurately advances in living standards.

135. In paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 40/179, the Assembly noted "the importance of identifying, for national use, indicative patterns of consumption that adequately meet fundamental socio-economic needs and are tailored to local and national requirements, particularly in developing countries, taking into account national experience, plans and strategies".

136. The Commission agreed that the subject of patterns of consumption and related socio-economic indicators was a matter of considerable importance and priority for developing countries, and it commended the work of the Statistical Office, the World Bank, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the regional commissions for the considerable progress made in trying to resolve difficult problems of statistical methodology and data availability for such indicators. The Commission also agreed that the specific issues raised by the General Assembly in resolution 40/179 should be considered in a larger context, taking into account social, economic and environmental factors in development. Indicators should be seen as part of an information system to support development through assisting in the formulation and monitoring of specific policies and programmes. The choice of indicators was a critical matter if structural shifts and trends in the development process were to be accurately assessed. In assessing information needs, a long-term view should be taken in order to address issues that would be relevant well into the twenty-first century. The need for close links between the development process and indicators was emphasized by a number of members of the Commission, and it was agreed that appropriate indicators should not be limited to social indicators, or indicators of poverty or basic needs.

137. In the particular fields identified in paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 40/179, the Commission agreed that progress was being made in the development of basic data collection capabilities and methodology for indicators. However, different views were expressed concerning the situation of economic indicators on income, consumption, patterns of consumption and poverty, as described in paragraphs 18 to 21 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/16). Some representatives considered that the types of indicators discussed in those paragraphs and shown in section H of table 1 were overly conservative in approach and little suited to the identification of indicative patterns of consumption, as called for by the General Assembly in resolution

40/179. A number of representatives also observed that the assessment of those indicators in paragraphs 18 to 21 was too pessimistic. In their view, satisfactory progress was being made in the development of new methods and approaches in those fields and much more data were available at the national level than generally recognized. In many cases, the problem was not lack of data, but lack of resources for tabulation and analysis. It was suggested that the introduction of microcomputers in developing countries could substantially alleviate that bottle-neck in the next 10 years.

138. Other representatives noted that many countries, including developed countries, had encountered serious difficulties in their own work on indicators in those fields and doubted that those problems could be resolved at the international level in the foreseeable future. They also noted that current international work in the development of methods in those fields was quite limited and would be extremely difficult to augment at the present time on the scale necessary to achieve widely applicable results.

139. In discussing how it should respond to the request of the General Assembly for consideration of a report on patterns of consumption and related socio-economic indicators, the Commission supported the suggestions made in paragraph 43 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/16), but considered that more work was needed to address adequately the issues raised in General Assembly resolution 40/179.

Action taken by the Commission

140. The Commission:

(a) Strongly supported the work of the Statistical Office, FAO, WHO, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNRISD and the regional commissions as providing a sound basis for further work on indicators appropriate to the needs expressed by the General Assembly;

(b) Drew the attention of the Economic and Social Council to the list of fields, topics and selected illustrative series for indicators to be issued in the Handbook on Social Indicators as an indicative basis for selecting and compiling indicators in many of the specific fields identified in General Assembly resolution 40/179, with suitable adaptation to specific national and international requirements;

(c) Drew the attention of the Economic and Social Council to the serious continuing need in the developing and the least developed countries, in particular in Africa, for the development of continuing basic data collection programmes if the demand for indicators on patterns of consumption related to fundamental socio-economic needs were to be met;

(d) Recommended that the Statistical Office explore the possibility of an in-depth study of the development process itself being prepared so that the indicators would reflect the stages or level of the development. In that regard, the Statistical Office would make use of experienced international bodies, such as the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis;

(e) Recommended that a report setting forth the views of Governments and containing a small number of case studies or national monographs on the preparation of a basket of indicators in the fields identified in paragraph 2 and the indicative patterns of consumption referred to in paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 40/179, be drawn up by the Secretary-General and UNRISD, with the support of the Statistical Office and in consultation with other appropriate bodies in the United Nations system, including the World Bank, the regional commissions and other appropriate research organizations, to be considered by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-fifth session, before being submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its next meeting, which would report to the General Assembly on the question.

Chapter IX

TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

141. The Commission considered item 10 of its agenda at its 414th to 416th meetings, on 27 February and 2 March 1987. It had before it the following reports:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on technical co-operation in statistics rendered by the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries (E/CN.3/1987/17);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Towards an assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics" (E/CN.3/1987/18);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the National Household Survey Capability Programme (E/CN.3/1987/19);

(d) Report of the World Bank on prototype surveys of the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) (E/CN.3/1987/20).

142. The Commission considered technical co-operation to be a subject of paramount concern. It noted that in addition to the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, which, in co-operation with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, played a key role in the technical co-operation programme in statistics, a wide variety of technical co-operation activities were being carried out by a large number of multilateral and bilateral organizations. Therefore, effective co-ordination was essential.

A. Technical co-operation in statistics

143. The Commission agreed that the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/17) was of value. However, because of the importance of obtaining as complete a picture as possible of the technical co-operation in statistics being provided to developing countries, the Commission urged that the coverage and content of the report be improved. Some representatives pointed out that information on several bilateral technical co-operation programmes in statistics had been omitted from the report. However, the Commission was pleased to note that the Directory of Technical Co-operation in Statistics, which would be issued shortly in an updated edition, provided more comprehensive information. It was noted, nevertheless, that the Directory itself contained one or two omissions and the Secretariat was requested to see whether those omissions could be corrected and the Directory published on a regular basis.

144. Many representatives offered suggestions on how to make future reports on technical co-operation more useful. It was proposed that the report be expanded to cover such topics as (a) additional analysis at the regional level, (b) methods by which technical co-operation projects were executed and the cost of the project to the recipient Government and (c) the analysis of trends in specific subject areas. It was also suggested that future reports should indicate the preliminary nature of the data for recent years and provide United States dollar values in constant terms. One representative noted that, although the report included a number of

improvements over the previous report on the subjects, no connection was shown between the type and extent of technical co-operation on the one hand and the demand for technical co-operation on the other. The Commission also stressed the importance of the integration of technical co-operation with other programmes of the Statistical Office and noted that the issue had already been addressed under other agenda items. The Commission considered that future reports should clarify the relevance of the manuals and handbooks prepared as part of the regular methodological work of the Statistical Office to the technical co-operation activities of the Office by, for example, using appropriate cross-references in the report on technical co-operation.

145. Several representatives provided additional or updated information on their countries' bilateral programmes of technical co-operation in statistics. Representatives of some regional commissions and several international organizations also provided additional information. Because of the continuing problem of the incomplete coverage of bilateral programmes in the report, one representative noted that if it was not possible to obtain more complete and comprehensive data, that element should be deleted from the report in the future. Even a document limited to the coverage of multilateral assistance in the report would be useful and worth while.

146. Turning to the substantive aspects of technical co-operation, several representatives stressed the value of technical co-operation efforts that formed part of general programmes, such as the African Census Programme, the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) or the World Fertility Survey, as opposed to purely ad hoc technical co-operation projects. The Commission emphasized again the importance of the training component in technical co-operation programmes in statistics and noted that technical advisers and country experts were involved in training. Many of them not only carried out on-the-job training but also organized country training courses as part of their functions. Some members urged that the Statistical Office should make every effort as a first step to increase the resources allocated to training from 13.5 per cent in 1985 to a level of at least 20 per cent. The complementary roles of regional advisers and technical advisers working at Headquarters were discussed, as well as the relative advantages and disadvantages of employing long-term country experts and short-term consultants. It was suggested that there was a need to evaluate the balance between services delivered and to make those more cost-effective.

147. The Commission considered that statistical data processing remained a major problem area in statistical operations. Microcomputers were being used in increasing numbers in the statistical offices of developing countries, in particular to capture data obtained from censuses and surveys. The Statistical Office should promote the wider use of computers in technical co-operation programmes. The issue of referring to the products of specific computer hardware or software vendors in documentation for the Commission was mentioned and it was agreed that such references should be avoided when possible.

Action taken by the Commission

148. The Commission:

(a) Stressed the great importance of technical co-operation programmes for developing countries and endorsed the current efforts of the Statistical Office of

the United Nations Secretariat, supporting the technical co-operation activities of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development in conjunction with the technical co-operation activities carried out by a large number of multilateral and bilateral organizations in the field of statistics;

(b) Stressed the importance of strengthened co-ordination in multilateral and bilateral technical co-operation statistical activities and urged the Statistical Office to play a leading role in promoting such co-ordination;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session a report on technical co-operation in statistics, taking into account the suggestions made during the twenty-fourth session.

B. Assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation

149. The Commission noted that the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/18) had been prepared at the request of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination. The Commission found the report a very helpful one, on a complex and difficult subject. The Commission agreed that evaluation was important and served a number of purposes.

150. Section IV of the report outlined a tentative plan for a comprehensive assessment of technical co-operation in statistics based on a country approach. Some representatives considered that the country approach would be costly and of questionable usefulness. Other representatives saw the country approach as a valuable means of identifying one or two examples of statistical development that would demonstrate the success of United Nations development activities to donors and others. Some representatives proposed that the Statistical Office undertake one or more case-studies in countries that had received technical co-operation and that had developed a good statistical system, and explain how the improvements had been achieved. Other representatives stressed that it was important to know whether the recipient countries were satisfied and whether the technical co-operation projects were well integrated into the national statistical programme.

151. The Commission found useful the examples of project evaluations contained in the report. It requested that a summary of recent evaluations conducted by UNDP and UNFPA be made available to the Commission at its next session.

152. Representatives expressed a range of views on the proposed plan for identifying indicators of national statistical capability and the efficacy of those indicators for measuring changes in such capability. Some considered that the proposed indicators could not be used for global or regional comparisons because of the different circumstances, needs and priorities of individual countries. Individual countries must develop a statistical programme suited to their own needs. Another view expressed was that the purpose of the indicators would be to assess the extent to which statistical capability needed to be developed throughout the world. The indicators could be used to identify, in very general terms, where gaps existed so that resources could be more effectively targeted. The study on the availability of data for national accounts statistics made by the Statistical Office was a good example of such an approach, and similar studies should be made on other subjects.

153. Representatives of some international organizations indicated that they had undertaken evaluations of statistical systems and offered to co-operate with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat by providing data.

Action taken by the Commission

154. The Commission:

(a) Emphasized the continuing need for evaluation of technical co-operation in statistics and stressed the importance of co-operation among international organizations in the exchange of information and experience;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to encourage the preparation, perhaps by an interested non-governmental organization, of one or two country case-studies analysing the experience of developing countries that have made notable progress in statistical development and that had received technical co-operation;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to continue work on indicators of national statistical capability and to submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session on the results of the review of the current state of statistics and statistical development in developing countries proposed in paragraph 48 of his report (E/CN.3/1987/18);

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to include in the report requested in subparagraph (c) above a summary of recent evaluations of statistical projects conducted by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

C. National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP)

155. The Commission considered the report of the Secretary-General on the National Household Survey Capability Programme (E/CN.3/1987/19). It noted with satisfaction the strong support for the National Household Survey Capability Programme expressed by the representatives of the countries participating in the Programme. Those representatives reported on the progress of the programme activities in their countries, the results achieved and their importance and usefulness for planning and policy formulation. The Commission emphasized the need of the participating countries for further assistance, especially in the fields of training, data processing, analysis and dissemination. In that connection, the Commission welcomed the assurance of the representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP and UNFPA of the continued support of their organizations and strongly urged all interested funding agencies to provide greater assistance to the Programme in order to strengthen national survey capabilities and statistical data bases.

156. The Commission expressed satisfaction at the arrangements for management and co-ordination of the Programme at the national and international levels. It endorsed the work programme for 1986-1987 (E/CN.3/1987/19, sect. VI) and agreed to the gradual extension of the Programme to 45 countries by 1990, subject to the availability of the necessary external resources. Some representatives cautioned against over-extending the coverage of the Programme. In the choice of new countries, due consideration should be given to their general ability to take

advantage of the Programme. The Commission noted that an interim evaluation had been made of the Programme and that several measures had been taken to implement the resulting recommendations. It suggested that a summary of the evaluation report be released for wider circulation.

157. Several representatives mentioned the valuable role of regional advisers in providing much-needed technical support at short notice. They urged that the regional component of NHSCP be further strengthened. Representatives of the specialized agencies informed the Commission of their continued interest and active participation in the Programme.

158. The Commission welcomed the progress made in the production of technical documentation and the increasing emphasis on the preparation of practical manuals providing guidance on appropriate survey methodology. However, it was suggested that the Programme should also attempt experimentation with alternative methodologies. The Commission noted that a study on household income and expenditure surveys was at an advanced stage and that an international workshop would be held to consider the study before it was finalized.

159. The Commission stressed the value of technical co-operation among developing countries in the promotion of NHSCP and commended the special training courses jointly organized by the Government of India and ESCAP for the member countries of the Asia and Pacific region. It noted that several countries in other regions had organized regional seminars and workshops for the exchange of technical information and country experiences.

160. The Commission welcomed the co-operation between NHSCP and the Living Standards Measurement Study in the country survey programmes and took note of the recent decision by one country to carry out an LSMS-type survey within the framework of NHSCP. The Commission considered that such possibilities should be explored further, subject to specific data needs and the priorities of the participating countries.

161. The representative of UNDP raised the issue of long-term funding for the interregional and regional components of NHSCP and expressed the view that the United Nations should gradually take over those components as part of its regular programme of technical co-operation. The Commission requested that the matter be addressed by the Secretary-General in a report on NHSCP to be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

Action taken by the Commission

162. The Commission:

(a) Emphasized the need for continued support for implementing NHSCP country projects;

(b) Urged all interested donor agencies to accord high priority to NHSCP in their technical co-operation activities in statistics;

(c) Stressed the importance of technical co-operation among developing countries in the promotion of NHSCP;

(d) Recommended further work in the preparation of technical studies and documentation and promotion of experimentation, where feasible;

(e) Requested the Secretary-General to submit proposals on the long-range future of the Programme to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

D. Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)

163. In considering the report of the World Bank (E/CN.3/1987/20), the Commission noted that prototype LSMS surveys had been completed in two countries, that detailed analyses of the results were well advanced and that surveys were being planned in two additional countries. It agreed that the prototype LSMS surveys had somewhat different objectives to those organized within the framework of the National Household Survey Capability Programme. Those objectives included testing methodology for measuring living standards and for obtaining results quickly and undertaking policy-oriented research and analysis. The Commission expressed some technical reservations on the organization and design of the LSMS prototype surveys. In particular it was considered that the sample size selected for LSMS surveys was too small to measure short-term socio-economic changes accurately or to allow for subnational disaggregation and that the size and complexity of the questionnaire might make it difficult to implement the survey in some countries. The Commission agreed that geographical disaggregation was particularly important and increasingly required by development planners.

164. The Commission was of the firm opinion that, in spite of the above differences, the development of LSMS had reached the stage where closer co-operation between LSMS and NHSCP was both desirable and possible. From their inception, the two programmes had been intended to be complementary and now that the first concrete results from the LSMS data collection activities had been achieved, ways of bringing together the most fruitful methods and objectives of both in country work should be explored in more depth. The Commission agreed that for that purpose more information on the methods and results of the completed LSMS surveys was needed. It was suggested that NHSCP and LSMS methods should be examined in a workshop to identify differences, similarities and lessons learned in each programme. The urgency of obtaining sensitive indicators of short-term socio-economic changes in Africa was also noted.

Action taken by the Commission

165. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the work of the World Bank on prototype surveys of the Living Standards Measurement Study and expressed its support of the study as a way of refining and testing statistical methodology in that field and of promoting policy-oriented research using household survey statistics;

(b) Invited the World Bank, in consultation with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and other interested national and international specialists, to prepare a report on the methodology used in the prototype surveys, together with an evaluation of the results achieved, as well as on the best way of integrating the LSMS methodology into continuing survey programmes, such as those carried out under the National Household Survey Capability Programme, for consideration at its twenty-fifth session.

Chapter X

CO-ORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

166. The Commission considered item 11 of its agenda at its 416th and 417th meetings, on 2 and 3 March 1987. It had before it the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination on its eleventh session, which had been held at Geneva from 2 to 4 September 1985 (E/CN.3/1987/21). The Working Group had made the following recommendations:

(a) That members of the Commission express their views on the documentation for the present session (E/CN.3/1987/21, para. 7);

(b) That it would be desirable for the Commission to have available to it a report or part of a report showing details of work planned, by all the organizations normally covered by reports under that item, in a given field of statistics such as social statistics or environment statistics (E/CN.3/1987/21, para. 27);

(c) That a re-examination be made of whether the Commission's efforts were being properly directed in terms of a balance between new areas of statistics, new programmes to be commenced and older programmes to be dropped from consideration (E/CN.3/1987/21, para. 29);

(d) That the Statistical Office provide a report to the twenty-fourth session of the Commission on the criteria for and selection of special topics for inclusion in its agenda (E/CN.3/1987/21, paras. 37 and 41).

The Commission decided to consider those recommendations under item 14 (see chap. XIII).

167. It was also noted that the Working Group had set out its views on the co-ordination of the statistical data collection activities of international organizations (E/CN.3/1987/21, paras. 43-46).

168. The Commission considered the composition of the Working Group and the dates for its twelfth session.

Action taken by the Commission

169. The Commission:

(a) Agreed that the composition of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination at its twelfth session should be as follows:

(i) Officers of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-fourth session:

Chairman: Emmanuel Oti Boateng (Ghana)

Vice-Chairmen: Luis Alberto Beccaria (Argentina)
Vladimír Mička (Czechoslovakia)
Mukhtar Hallouda (Egypt)

Rapporteur: Stephen Kuzmicich (New Zealand);

(ii) Representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission:

Nicolai Gregorievich Belov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Dorothy M. Tella (United States of America)
M. G. Sardana (India);

(b) Agreed that the following representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission would act as alternates:

Dzigbodi Bouaka (Togo), alternate to Emmanuel Oti Boateng (Ghana)
Rogelio Montemayor Seguy (Mexico), alternate to Luis Alberto Beccaria
(Argentina)
Yu Guangpei (China), alternate to M. G. Sardana (India);

(c) Recommended that the twelfth session of the Working Group be held at Geneva from 6 to 9 October 1987.

Chapter XI

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

170. The Commission considered item 12 of its agenda at its 416th meeting, on 2 March 1987. The Commission had before it the reports of the Secretary-General containing an overall review of the statistical work of the international organizations for the period 1984 to mid-1986 (E/CN.3/1987/22) and containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1987/23).

171. Pursuant to a recommendation made by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its twenty-sixth session, 7/ the Commission had before it excerpts from the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1984-1985 (A/41/318 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) and an excerpt from the report of the Committee on its twenty-sixth session.

Action taken by the Commission

172. The Commission:

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

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the statistical work of the international organizations to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

7/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/41/38), para. 62.

Chapter XII

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING

173. The Commission considered item 13 of its agenda at its 416th to 418th meetings, on 2 and 3 March 1987.

174. The Commission had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics (E/CN.3/1987/24);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1988-1989 and preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995 (E/CN.3/1987/25);

(c) Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1988-1989 and related information (E/CN.3/1987/CRP.1);

(d) Note by the Secretary-General on the preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan of the Statistical Office of the United Nations for 1990-1995 (E/CN.3/1987/CRP.2);

(e) Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed work programme of the regional commissions for 1988-1989 in the field of statistics (E/CN.3/1987/CRP.3).

A. Review of the functioning of the Commission

175. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 1987/112, the Commission conducted a careful review of its terms of reference; the mode of conducting its deliberations and decision-making; its relationship with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (both the Headquarters office and the regional divisions) and with the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination; and its effectiveness and use of resources in meeting the needs of both the United Nations and Member States in the field of statistical services.

176. The representatives of the 24 States that were currently members of the Commission were unanimous in the view that the Commission was performing an invaluable service to the United Nations and its Member States in an overall cost-effective way and that no radical changes in its functions, the frequency of its sessions or its composition were warranted, even in the current difficult period of financial stringency in the United Nations. That assessment reflected a consensus among the developed and developing countries represented, both large and small, from various regions of the world and with varying political, economic and social systems. It was considered that the diverse United Nations activities in the field of statistics required a decision-making and advisory body that reported to the Economic and Social Council and brought to bear a special mix of statistical, managerial and professional skills and perspectives which a generalist body would not be able to provide.

177. It was recommended that, except in matters of detail, no essential change in the Commission's mode of work be made.

1. Basis for the assessment

178. It was the view of the Commission that the experience of countries world-wide demonstrated an indispensable need for comprehensive statistical information systems on economic, social and demographic matters, as well as on natural resources and environment, in order to facilitate the efficient processes of government and communities. Public policy formulation and monitoring, economic and social development planning, and political processes all required reliable statistical information.

179. That need was just as great in developing countries as in developed countries. The same consideration applied to organizations within the United Nations system, as was evident from the range of specialist statistical offices, divisions and units that currently existed. The need to have available integrated national and international information to facilitate consistent and coherent treatment of issues and policies on a world-wide and regional basis was widely recognized.

180. The Commission agreed that development and implementation of statistical systems was a professionally complex task, demanding of resources. The need for international collaboration had been widely felt in the conduct of statistical development work, to make certain that satisfactory concepts, frameworks and methodologies were available. As a result, a world-wide co-operative endeavour, involving both national and international statistical agencies, had developed progressively to avoid wasting statistical development resources and to ensure that professional standards were met as widely as possible.

181. The need for machinery to supervise the international process had always been evident, particularly at the world level. For that reason, and to ensure that the United Nations programme of statistics preparation would meet its own requirements and those of Member States, it was judged that a body must be established with the general functions of the Statistical Commission. That realization was present very soon after the foundation of the United Nations, even before the establishment of the Statistical Commission, because the League of Nations had also had a body with similar functions.

182. It was agreed that without the appropriate network of co-operative consultation and development work referred to, brought together and co-ordinated by the United Nations, it was almost certain that there would be in place no acceptable broadly compatible system of macro-economic statistics to afford a measure of the overall performance of individual national economies, or of regional economies or the world economy. In the same way, reliable knowledge of the demographic characteristics of the world's population would not be available unless similar work were supervised by the Commission. Many other significant examples could be mentioned.

183. The value of that work to Member States was evident from the high level of attendance by States and international agencies at statistical meetings throughout the United Nations system, ranging from the Commission itself to the conferences and committees of the regional commissions and world or regional meetings on specialized topics. It was considered that among the specialist functional activities of the United Nations, that of its intergovernmental and Secretariat statistical bodies must be among the most successful in terms of utility, both internationally and nationally.

2. Review of the Commission machinery

184. While considering that no radical changes in the basic functioning of the Commission and its Working Group were warranted, the Commission concluded that a detailed examination by the Commission of its effectiveness in respect of the five specific functions set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1566 (L) showed the need for some practical strengthening with regard to two matters.

185. There was no doubt that function (a), concerned with promoting the development of national statistics and the improvement of their comparability, had been achieved to a great extent, although it was recognized that the process was ongoing and much work remained to be done, especially for developing countries. Assistance to many countries with the organization of effective national statistical offices and the implementation of basic economic and social surveys required by development planning was a prime example of such work.

186. It was agreed that a great deal of excellent and important statistical work was done by the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, in support of their specialized functions and under the direction of their respective governing bodies. With regard to function (b), however, the Commission agreed that there was still considerable scope for strengthening its co-ordinating role in respect of the statistical work of the specialized agencies. The Commission's mandate to co-ordinate was to ensure that (a) the work of the specialized agencies, to the extent that it was relevant to the statistical programmes of the United Nations Secretariat, was taken into account in the development and implementation of those programmes, and (b) the Commission was able to provide the specialized agencies with its views and to urge them to take into account the concerns of the Commission in formulating new programmes. Although not a formal part of the Commission's terms of reference, there was also a need for co-ordination with respect to other United Nations bodies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the United Nations Environment Programme; agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; other international organizations outside the United Nations system; and non-governmental organizations involved in statistical work on a global level. The Commission emphasized the importance of achieving a sufficiently broad and detailed overview of statistical activities conducted outside the United Nations Secretariat so as to ensure that the activities of the Statistical Office and the regional commissions were optimally co-ordinated and integrated with the activities of other organizations. The Commission recognized that the solution to the problem was within its own hands. The solution required asking for more detailed reporting to the Commission on statistical activities conducted outside the United Nations Secretariat. The Commission considered that the benefits afforded by improved co-ordination, namely, improved quality of output and reduced programme costs, would far outweigh any increase in the reporting burden. It was noted that the exercise by the Commission of its co-ordinating functions was complemented in administrative aspects by the co-ordinating work of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistics.

187. Function (c), regarding the development of the central statistical services of the Secretariat, had been well handled, as attested by the general efficiency of the Statistical Office.

188. Function (d), enjoining the Commission to advise the organs of the United Nations on general questions relating to the collection, analysis and dissemination

of statistical information, was the second area that, in the view of the Commission, provided room for improvement. It was recognized that many non-statistical bodies and units undertook statistical work and there were many instances where the Statistical Office was involved in providing professional statistical assistance to those organs. The process was not systematic, however, because all such statistical activity was not brought to the attention of the Statistical Office. The Commission therefore intended to request the Statistical Office to undertake the stipulated advisory function in a more concerted way in the future.

189. Function (e), which concerned promoting the improvement of statistics and statistical methods generally, had been successful in respect of national statistics throughout the world. The quality of government in many countries would be lower than it currently was in the absence of the Commission's contribution and that of the units within the United Nations to which it provided guidance.

190. The relation of the Commission to the statistical committees or conferences of the regional commissions was given attention during the review. The decreed pattern of regional distribution of the 24 members of the Commission provided that each region had representation as follows: five African States, four Asian States, four Latin American States, seven Western European and other States, and four Eastern European States. The chief of the statistical division of each regional commission attended each session of the Statistical Commission. Unlike the Statistical Commission, the statistical committee or conference which advised each regional commission on its statistical work programme comprised the full commission membership. The Statistical Commission received detailed regional commission reports.

191. It was also observed that consideration should be given to the possibility of further decentralizing selected aspects of the Commission's work, especially in connection with the development of methodologies and international statistical standards by according a larger role to working groups convened by the regional commissions, as opposed to expert groups convened and consultants hired by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. It was noted that regional meetings were generally open to attendance by the full range of experts from all countries in a region, rather than on a selective basis. The global expert group meetings and consultants, however, were still important, especially at the final stage of developing global recommendations or standards.

192. During the session, the Commission had not been able to examine decentralization to the detailed extent needed. That should be done, but it was emphasized that, whatever the outcome, it would not be likely to lead to any major shift in the respective roles of the Statistical Commission and the decision-making bodies of the statistical divisions of the regional commissions. There did not seem to be any need for a radical change in the general scheme of Statistical Commission/regional commission consultative and technical meetings. The scheme had generally proved effective over a considerable period.

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

193. A detailed examination was made of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination, which comprised the officers of the Commission and the representatives on the Commission of the two largest

contributors to the United Nations budget, with further provisions to ensure both equitable regional distribution and representation of developed and developing countries. The Working Group had, in the Commission's view, proved its value as a result of the more detailed examination it had been able to give to the setting of priorities in the work programme of the Statistical Office and other units within the United Nations, as well as by pinpointing co-ordination issues to be drawn to the Commission's attention. The provisional agenda for the forthcoming session of the Commission was always updated and reviewed to ensure that the session would be conducted efficiently. It was the Commission's intention to examine the role the Working Group could usefully play in assisting with function (d) in the Commission's terms of reference, possibly in relation to setting standards for United Nations statistical data collection.

4. Periodicity and length of sessions

194. It had been the experience of the Commission that eight working days were necessary to cover its agenda satisfactorily, in particular to provide sufficient time for the exchange of information and discussion of technical issues.

195. The pace of change in the needs of statistical users that arose from rapidly changing circumstances in Member States and the nature of the work of international bodies meant that the two-year interval between sessions of the Commission was appropriate in view of the number of matters that arose during the period and required the Commission's attention. The Commission agreed that the two-year interval should be retained.

5. Documentation

196. The Commission was aware that it generated a large volume of documentation. The wide-ranging nature of economic and social statistics and the complexity of modern statistical concepts and methodology explained why that was so. At the same time, the Commission considered it very important that the documents provided to it for deliberation should focus only on priority elements as much as possible. The Commission, supported by its Working Group, would make a conscious effort to rationalize and reduce the amount of documentation at subsequent sessions. It had to be realized, however, that much of the Commission's documentation was of permanent value to all regional statistical bodies and Member States as reference and practical guides.

B. Plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics

197. The Commission endorsed the general direction of the planned work of the international organizations in the area of statistics as set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (E/CN.3/1987/24).

Action taken by the Commission

198. The Commission:

(a) Agreed that future reporting to the Commission on the medium-term plans of the international organizations in the field of statistics should be scheduled to coincide with the preparation of medium-term plans by the organizations;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on plans of the international organizations in the field of statistics to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

C. Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1988-1989

199. The Commission agreed that the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1988-1989 was generally well-balanced and appropriate. Additions and modifications to the work programme were proposed by several representatives mainly reflecting conclusions reached by the Commission in its discussion of other items on the agenda. Specific points include:

(a) The continuation of work on input-output tables, in co-operation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and other organizations;

(b) The need to reformulate programme element 1.9 (Development of concepts, methods and classifications for environment statistics) to reflect the views of the Commission expressed during the discussion of item 8 (c), "Environment statistics";

(c) The need to reformulate the description of programme element 7.1 (Co-ordination of the statistics programme of the United Nations).

200. The Commission considered that additional information on proposed resources at the programme element level was needed to enable the Commission to properly review the work programme and priorities, together with comparative information on resources used for the biennium 1986-1987. The Commission noted that the ESCAP secretariat had been able to provide more extensive resource data in its work programme statements than had the Statistical Office. That information had been of great value to the ESCAP Committee on Statistics for reviewing the ESCAP statistics programme. The Commission expressed the wish that similar data be provided for its review of the programme of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. The Commission therefore requested the Secretariat to provide full resource information at the programme element level for the bienniums 1988-1989 and 1990-1991, similar to that provided by the ESCAP secretariat, for use by the Commission when considering the 1990-1991 work programme at its twenty-fifth session. The information needed to be presented in a manner which would readily facilitate the comparative situation in successive bienniums.

201. The Commission discussed priorities proposed by the Secretary-General for selected programme elements of the work programme. The Commission recalled its discussion of items 5 to 11 of the agenda and reached a basic agreement that the programme elements of the highest priority for the biennium 1988-1989 included the following:

- 1.1 Further development of the United Nations System of National Accounts and linkage with the System of Balances of the National Economy;
- 1.2 Development, updating and harmonization of standard international classifications.

202. Other programme elements were regarded by some representatives as having highest priority:

- 1.9 Development of concepts, methods and classifications for environment statistics;
- 5.1 Collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics for international comparisons of real gross domestic product and purchasing power of currencies;
- 7.2 Provision of statistical services to the General Assembly organs and other bodies on request;
- 8.2 Improvement of statistical-data processing capabilities of developing countries.

203. Another group of programme elements was considered by some representatives to have highest priority, but other representatives expressed divergent views. That category included the following programme elements:

- 1.5 Development of concepts and methods for statistics of prices and purchasing power comparisons;
- 1.7 Development of concepts and methods for statistics and indicators on special population groups and co-ordination of social statistics and indicators;
- 6.3 Collection, compilation and dissemination of environment statistics;
- 7.1 Co-ordination of the statistics programme of the United Nations.

204. There was basic agreement that programme elements of the lowest priority for the biennium 1988-1989 included the following:

- 1.4 Development of concepts, classifications and methods for international trade, transport and related statistics;
- 3.2 Collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics on the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation;
- 5.2 Price statistics for internationally traded commodities;
- 5.3 Collection, compilation and dissemination of price and related statistics.

205. Several representatives indicated that it would be more practicable to assign priorities at the output or activity level rather than the programme element level. The Commission recalled the discussion at its twenty-first session when it

had recognized that some programme elements of highest priority could contain some outputs or activities of lower priority and programme elements of lowest priority could contain some outputs of higher priority. It was further pointed out at that session that all programme elements contained some outputs and activities that had high priority. 8/

206. One representative expressed the view that some activities or outputs in programme elements 1.5 (Development of concepts and methods for statistics of prices and purchasing power comparisons) and 1.6 (Development of concepts, classifications and methods for demographic, housing and human settlements statistics) could be considered of lowest priority. Another representative considered that some activities under programme element 1.3 (Development of concepts, classifications and methods of industrial, construction, distributive trade and energy and related statistics) could be considered as highest priority, but that the full programme element did not call for that rating. The Commission noted that the assigning of priorities at the programme element level was a formal requirement of the programme budgeting process in the United Nations, and requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to adhere, to the extent possible, to the substantive views as expressed. The Commission also noted the formal requirement to identify the programme elements of highest and lowest priority which represented, in each category, approximately 10 per cent of the resources requested for the programme under the regular budget. It was informed that in practice the 10 per cent level was calculated on the basis of professional work-months.

207. Other aspects of work that were emphasized during the discussion included the need to achieve harmonization in methodological work, unify geographic groupings of countries used in United Nations publications and review the content of the statistical publications to incorporate statistics on current concerns, including technical progress, related structural changes and utilization of secondary materials. Several representatives considered that follow-up work on development indicators was important and proposed that an initial study on such indicators be carried out, consistent with the concerns expressed during the Commission's consideration of item 9 (c), "Development indicators". Another representative suggested that a workshop on development indicators would be useful. The Commission noted that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Statistical Office were collaborating on statistics on human settlements and that Habitat had plans to organize an expert group on the subject.

208. Several representatives commented on the use of consultants, expert groups and mission travel. They emphasized the need to provide adequate direction to the work of consultants to ensure that outputs met the purposes for which they were designed. The necessity and appropriateness of using consultants as proposed for some specific outputs was questioned. The Commission noted that several of the proposed consultancies were to be funded from extrabudgetary sources. It was also considered essential to have broad, integrated inputs. The desirability of participation by regional commissions, specialized agencies and other concerned organizations was emphasized. The Commission noted that a system existed for co-ordination and collaboration with the regional commissions and other statistical

8/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1981, Supplement No. 2 (E/1981/12), para. 235.

agencies, which included, inter alia, review of draft manuscripts and provision of inputs into Statistical Office publications. Funds for travel to permit headquarters staff to participate in regional technical meetings and regional staff to participate in global technical meetings were recognized as essential if regional inputs were to be fully incorporated in global work and for regional work to be compatible with global work. It was noted that expert group meetings on particular subjects ensured that a diverse range of views and experience were incorporated into methodological outputs, making them more useful to a wide range of national statistical offices. The Commission further noted that several of the proposed expert groups were to be funded in whole or in part from extrabudgetary sources.

Action taken by the Commission

209. The Commission:

(a) Approved the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1988-1989 as contained in the note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1987/CRP.1), subject to the comments made and the priorities set by the Commission;

(b) Specified a number of programme elements as having highest priority within the work programme (see para. 201 above) and a number of programme elements as having lowest priority (see para. 204 above).

D. Preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995

210. The Commission generally supported the preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995 for the programme in world statistics (E/CN.3/1987/CRP.2). The Commission noted that the plan was subject to formal review every two years, so that it could be revised in the light of changing circumstances. The reviews of the biennial work programmes that were formulated within the framework of the medium-term plan also provided opportunities for adjustments in the light of the progress of the work. That flexibility was very important so that the Commission and the Statistical Office could take account of new developments at the national level.

211. Several representatives commented on the importance of some of the planned activities, including work on service statistics, the International Comparison Project, in particular the planned handbook for the Project, income distribution statistics, and the application of new technology to publications and machine-readable data bases to increase responsiveness to users' needs. The Commission generally supported the proposals for curtailment of work in some areas. However, it considered it important that work on income distribution statistics be reoriented and carried out within the work programme on the System of National Accounts and that it include the monitoring of country activity in that field, particularly in terms of data collection. The Commission also noted that work on the review of consistency of data in publications of the Statistical Office and those of the regional commissions would be curtailed as a separate activity but that the work would continue within each subject area. The Commission further

noted that the preliminary proposals would be reviewed within the Secretariat and by intergovernmental organs and that they were subject to change.

212. The Commission recognized that the plan was indicative and that the proposed strategies of the subprogrammes were simply illustrations of the kinds of activities that would follow from the proposed objectives; it restricted its primary consideration to the plan's general orientation.

Action taken by the Commission

213. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its general support for the preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995;

(b) Commented on the curtailments proposed for a number of activities;

(c) Recommended that the subprogramme on support of technical co-operation be adjusted to take into account the comments made during the Commission's consideration of item 10.

E. Proposed work programme for 1988-1989 of the regional commissions in the field of statistics

214. The Commission took note of the proposed work programme for 1988-1989 of the regional commissions in the field of statistics (E/CN.3/1987/CRP.3).

Chapter XIII

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

215. At its 417th meeting, on 3 March 1987, the Commission considered the draft provisional agenda for its twenty-fifth session and other matters concerning the future programme of work of the Commission (E/CN.3/1987/L.2/Rev.1). The Commission also had before it the report of its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination on its eleventh session (E/CN.3/1987/21).

216. The draft provisional agenda and related documentation were orally revised to reflect decisions made by the Commission during the session. The Commission expressed concern at the amount of documentation that was proposed and requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat:

(a) To circulate to all Commission members the proposed list of documentation for their views on the relative priority and usefulness of the various documents;

(b) To provide a summary of those views to the Working Group.

217. The Commission agreed that it would be useful to have the report to be considered under item 13, "Programme objectives and planning", show details of the work planned by the international organizations presented by subject-matter rather than by organization, which would help to identify gaps and overlaps. The Commission requested the Statistical Office to report to the Working Group at its next session on the feasibility of preparing that type of report.

218. The Commission agreed that special topics should be issue-oriented. They should deal with problems and relate to the efficacy, quality and content of the statistical work of the United Nations rather than to items of interest only at the national level. It noted that the list of possible topics was a lengthy one and the Commission would have to exercise considerable judgement in selecting a few topics for consideration at its twenty-fifth session. The Commission decided that two special topics should be included in its agenda and the final choice of topics left to the Working Group. During the course of the discussion, three subjects were suggested for consideration: (a) service statistics, (b) co-ordination of international statistical activities and (c) selection and recruitment of professional staff for work in national and international statistical offices. The Statistical Office was requested to provide the Working Group with outlines of possible documents on those subjects to assist the Working Group in its consideration of the matter. Delegations were also invited to make suggestions to the Working Group on other possible subjects.

219. The extensive discussion under item 13 (a), "Review of the functioning of the Commission", was considered to be most relevant to the considerations that the Working Group had taken into account when it had recommended to the Commission that it might wish to re-examine the direction of the Commission's efforts (E/CN.3/1987/L.2/Rev.1, paras. 12-28). In response to the Working Group's request (E/CN.3/1987/21, para. 7), the Commission expressed the view that, overall, the documentation for the twenty-fourth session had been of high standard. The Commission asked the Working Group to review at its twelfth session progress and plans for the SNA review and developments in relation to environment statistics.

220. Subject to final review by the Working Group, as outlined above, the Commission approved the provisional agenda and documentation for its twenty-fifth session. The Commission recommended that its twenty-fifth session be held at United Nations Headquarters from 6 to 15 February 1989.

221. At its 420th meeting, on 4 March 1987, the Commission decided to recommend the Economic and Social Council to approve the provisional agenda and documentation for its twenty-fifth session (see chap. I, sect. A, draft decision).

Chapter XIV

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

222. At its 419th and 420th meetings, on 4 March 1987, the Commission adopted the report on its twenty-fourth session (E/CN.3/1987/L.4 and Add.1-25), as orally revised during the discussion.

Chapter XV

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

223. The Statistical Commission held its twenty-fourth session at United Nations Headquarters from 23 February to 4 March 1987. The Commission held 16 meetings (405th to 420th meetings).

224. The session was opened by V. Mička (Czechoslovakia), Vice-Chairman of the Commission at its twenty-third session.

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

B. Attendance

226. All States members of the Commission were represented at the session. Observers for Member States, and representatives of the Secretariat, 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. Election of officers

227. At its 405th meeting, on 23 February, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Emmanuel Oti Boateng (Ghana)

Vice-Chairmen: Luis Alberto Beccaria (Argentina)
Mukhtar Hallouda (Egypt)
Vladimír Mička (Czechoslovakia)

Rapporteur: Stephen Kuzmicich (New Zealand)

D. Agenda

228. At its 405th meeting, on 23 February, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in documents E/CN.3/1987/1 and Add.1, as amended and orally revised (see annex II to the present report).

229. The Commission also approved the organization of work contained in the note by the Secretariat (E/CN.3/1987/L.1), as orally revised.

Annex I

ATTENDANCE

Members

Argentina: Luis Alberto Beccaria, Lelia Boeri de Cervetto*

Brazil: Edson de Oliveira Nunes, Eduardo Augusto de Almeida Guimaraes*

Bulgaria: Stanoy Tassev, Lubomir Tsankov,* Raiko Raichev*

China: Yu Guangpei, Wu Hui*

Cuba: Jorge Martínez Fernández, Even Fontaine Ortiz,* Joann Salas Merino,*
Luis Daniel Carreras Martorell*

Czechoslovakia: Vladimír Mička, Jaroslav Ceska*

Egypt: Mukhtar Hallouda

Finland: Olavi E. Niitamo, Tapio Leppo,* Aarno Laihonon,* Antero Pohjola*

France: Edmond Malinvaud, Mr. Tranap*

Germany, Federal Republic of: Egon Hölder,** Günter Hamer, Alexander Count York,*
Mr. Borkmann,* Karl-Ernst Brauner*

Ghana: Emmanuel Oti Boateng, Kofi Kissi Dompere,* Edward Obeng Kufuor*

India: M. G. Sardana

Japan: Saburo Kawai,** Hiroyasu Kudo, Hiroyuki Ieda,* Michio Ogino,* Jun Saito,*
Yoshimasa Tezuka,* Masayaki Takashima*

Kenya: P. Kallaa

Mexico: Rogelio Montemayor Seguy, Edmundo Berumen Torres,* Clarisa Torres Mendez,*
V́ctor Lichtinger Waisman*

New Zealand: Stephen Kuzmicich, Rodney Lewington*

Pakistan: Akhtar Mahmood

Spain: Javier Ruiz-Castillo, Carmen Arribas*

Togo: Dzigbodi Bouaka

* Alternate.

** Did not attend.

Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic: Aleksandr Afanasyevich Zhuk,
Boris Nikolayevich Goudima*

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Nicolai Gregorievich Belov,
A. A. Konevskiy,* I. M. Volkov,*
V. V. Rumiantsev,* S. G. Jakovlev,*
S. A. Sukcharev,* A. L. Panshin*

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: J. Hibbert,*
T. Griffin,* R. Allen*

United States of America: Dorothy M. Tella, Kyle R. Scott,* Wendy L. Gramm,*
Suzann Evinger,* C. Louis Kincannon*

Zambia: Celestina Lumba Chenjelani Ssewankambo, Elias M. C. Kazembe*

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Canada, Morocco, Netherlands, Panama

United Nations Secretariat

Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), Economic Commission for Europe, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations bodies

United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Specialized agencies and GATT

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

Other intergovernmental organizations represented by observers

African Development Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat, Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, Customs Co-operation Council, European Economic Community, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Organization of American States, World Tourism Organization

Non-governmental organizations

Category I: International Chamber of Commerce

Category II: Disabled Peoples' International, Institute of Social Studies Trust,
Inter-American Statistical Institute, International Statistical
Institute, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population

Roster: Data for Development, International Association for Research in Income and
Wealth

Annex II

AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Special issues:
 - (a) Communications between national and international statistical agencies and the development of data bases;
 - (b) Special problems in the statistically least developed among the developing countries.
4. Dissemination of international statistics.
5. 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 and the System of Balances of the National Economy.
6. International economic classifications.
7. Price statistics.
8. Industry, energy and environment statistics:
 - (a) Industrial statistics;
 - (b) Energy statistics;
 - (c) Environment statistics;
 - (d) Sea-borne trade statistics.
9. Demographic and social statistics:
 - (a) Population and housing censuses;
 - (b) Social statistics and indicators;
 - (c) Development indicators.
10. Technical co-operation:
 - (a) Technical co-operation in statistics;

- (b) Assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation;
 - (c) National Household Survey Capability Programme;
 - (d) Living Standards Measurement Study.
11. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes.
 12. Programme implementation.
 13. Programme objectives and planning:
 - (a) Review of the functioning of the Commission;
 - (b) Plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics;
 - (c) Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1988-1989;
 - (d) Preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995;
 - (e) Proposed work programme for 1988-1989 of the regional commissions in the field of statistics.
 14. Provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Commission.
 15. Report of the Commission on its twenty-fourth session.

Annex III

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

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1987/1 and Add.1	2	Annotated provisional agenda
E/CN.3/1987/2	3 (a)	Issues of communication between national and international statistical agencies and data base development: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/3	3 (b)	Special problems in the statistically least developed among the developing countries: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/4	4	Dissemination of international statistical data: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/5	5 (a)	Progress in the revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA): report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/6	5 (a)	State of the basic economic information used in the System of National Accounts in developing countries: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/7	5 (a)	Links between the System of National Accounts (SNA) and related fields of statistics, with particular reference to balance-of-payments statistics (BOP), government finance statistics (GFS) and money and banking statistics (MBS): report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/8 and Corr.1	5 (b)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the secretariat of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance on the improvement of a methodology for compilation of the statistical balances of the national economy
E/CN.3/1987/9	5 (c)	Elaboration of the conceptual framework for the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) comparisons and related experimental calculations: report of the Secretary-General

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1987/10	6	Harmonization of international economic classifications: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/11	7	Phase V of the International Comparison Project (ICP): report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/12	8 (a)	Introduction to the draft recommendations for a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/13	8 (b)	Energy statistics, including statistics on new and renewable sources of energy: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/14	8 (c)	Environment statistics programme, including the methodological work carried out and progress towards collection and dissemination of environment statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/15	9 (a)	Preparations for the World Population and Housing Census Programme, 1985-1994: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/16	9 (b)	Progress in work on indicators of living standards and patterns of consumption and co-ordination of work on social statistics and social indicators: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/17	10	Technical co-operation in statistics rendered by the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/18	10	Towards an assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/19	10	National Household Survey Capability Programme: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/20	10	Prototype surveys of the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS): report of the World Bank
E/CN.3/1987/21	11	Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination: report on the eleventh session

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1987/22	12	Overall review of the statistical work of the international organizations: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/23	5 (a), 6, 7, 8, 9 (b), 12	Updated information on the work of the Statistical Office: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/24	13	Plans in statistics of the international organizations: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/25	13	Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1988-1989 and information on the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/CRP.1	13	Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1988-1989 and related information: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/CRP.2	13	Preliminary proposals for the medium-term plan of the Statistical Office for the period 1990-1995: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/CRP.3	13	Proposed work programme of the regional commissions for 1988-1989 in the field of statistics: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1987/L.1	2	Organization of the work of the session: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1987/L.2	14	Draft provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Commission and other matters concerning the future programme of work of the Commission: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1987/L.2/Rev.1	14	Ditto
E/CN.3/1987/L.3	2	State of preparedness of documentation for the session: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1987/L.4 and Add.1-25	15	Draft report of the Commission

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/ SER.M/4/Rev.3	6	First complete draft of the revised International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/ SER.F/17/Rev.1 (vols. I and II)	5 (b)	Draft basic methodological principles governing the compilation of the System of Statistical Balances of the National Economy
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/ SER.M/67/Add.1	9 (a)	Draft supplementary principles and recommendations for the population and housing censuses
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/ SER.M/77 (Rev.ed.)	6	Draft of the Central Product Classification
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/ SER.M/80 and Add.1	8 (a)	Draft recommendations for a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries