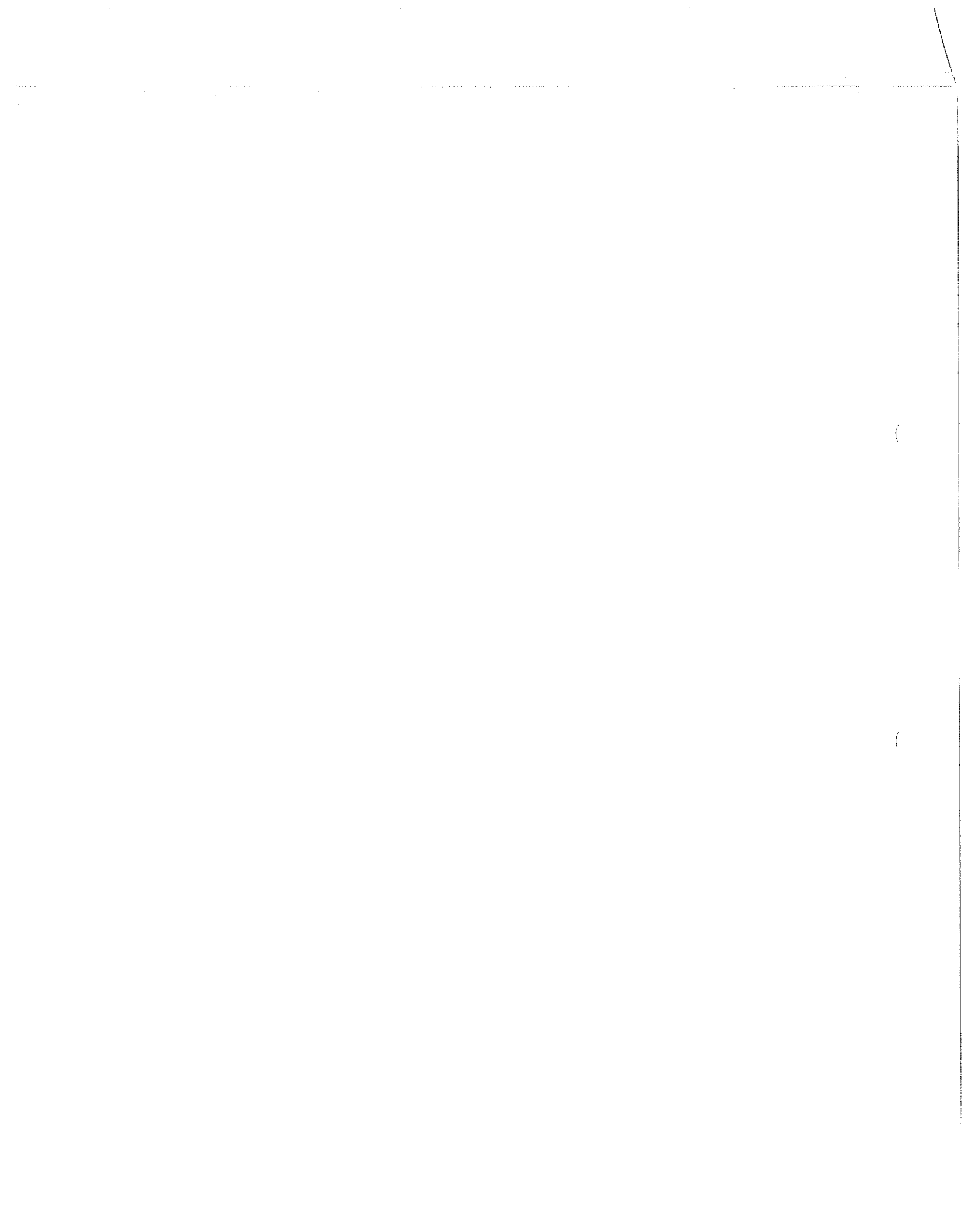


ACC SUB-COMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES
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PROGRESS ON SERVICE STATISTICS

Report prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations



I. INTRODUCTION

1. As it has in the last 3 years, the work on service statistics will continue in a somewhat decentralized way. No progress was achieved in resolving the major resource problems: no contribution was offered to the project proposal prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. The main vehicles for promoting service statistics continue to be (a) the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics (VGSS) and (b) the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (UNSO) and the secretariats of other international organizations (EEC, GATT, IMF, OECD, UNCTAD, UNCTD, WORLD BANK). A new form of contributions consists of documents to be prepared by unpaid consultants (so far Norway and Canada have offered this kind of collaboration). Some progress is also expected from the discussions to be held at the conference of the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth (IARIW).

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II. MAIN AREAS OF WORK

2. In the area of trade in services statistics the UN and the IMF secretariats will finalize the findings of their joint enquiry on national practices and selected methodological problems. Substantial contribution is expected from the fourth session of the VGSS (at least five papers will discuss this subject) and from the twenty-first conference of the IARIW, where a special session is to be devoted to this subject.

3. In the area of statistics of quantity and price indices of services the UNSO will finalize the findings of its enquiry on national practices and selected methodological problems and will prepare draft guidelines on general methodological problems of service indices. Draft guidelines on special methodological problems of particular service industries will be prepared by unpaid consultants from Norway, Canada and perhaps also from some other countries. The discussions at the fourth session of the VGSS (at least 3 papers on this subject) and at the twenty-first conference of the IARIW (where one session will be devoted to the measurement of productivity in government) will also provide contributions in this field.

4. Work will continue (or start) in a number of other areas of service statistics, mostly within the frame of the VGSS. A number of studies will be prepared with respect to particular services industries (manufacturing services, financial services, etc). Whether or not this work can result in guidelines for statistics in selected service industries depends on the resource conditions of the future work. Other studies relate selected general methodological problems (e.g. concept of services, statistical units in service industries, own account services).