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GENERAL PRICE STATISTICS AND THE ICP

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1. Work on phase V of the ICP (with 1985 as reference year) is nearly completed. The results for the EEC, for the OECD and the European Comparison Programme have already been published. Computations were also finalized for the African comparison, and results which are almost final are available for the ESCAP comparison. A partial and preliminary world comparison covering 57 countries was compiled jointly by the EUROSTAT and the UNSO, and its summary results had been made available. It is anticipated that the final results of the world comparison will be available by the end of 1989.

2. As for phase VI (1990) of the ICP the preparatory work has already started. The Statistical Commission at its twenty-fifth session endorsed the continuation of the Programme on at least the regional level, and if resources permitted, as a world comparison. The EEC, OECD and Europe Group 2 regions have already started the work of phase VI. The most significant development in those regions was the entry of the USSR into the Programme. Arrangements are being made for organizing a comparison both in the Latin American region and in the ESCAP region (China is considering joining the Programme). In other regions, (e.g. the African, Caribbean and ESCWA) the situation is still not clear.

3. A general revision of the methodology took place at a seminar held in June 1988 in Luxembourg, convened jointly by the Statistical Office of the United Nations, the OECD Secretariat and EUROSTAT. The seminar concentrated mainly on the experiences gained after regionalization (in phase IV and V). While the discussions were conclusive in respect of most of the methodological issues, views remained divided on whether or not the traditional aggregation method (Geary-Khamis formula) should be replaced by another formula. In order to reach an agreement in respect of this last issue, the continuation of the seminar is convened for 14-16 June 1989 in Paris.

4. On the request of the Statistical Commission, the United Nations Statistical Office will convene a meeting (most likely in July 1989) of an intersecretariat working group on ICP to review the organizational and other arrangements for phase VI. The report of the group will be presented to the Statistical Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination.

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