

FOLLOW UP OF MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION (FEBRUARY 1989)

Decisions and comments of the
Statistical Commission relating to co-ordination

Report prepared by the United Nations Statistical Office

1. At its twenty-fifth session the Statistical Commission discussed many matters with a co-ordination orientation. The Sub-Committee may wish to consider what co-ordination action, if any, is called for as a follow up to the Commission's discussion of the following subjects:

<u>Subject</u>	Chapters and relevant paras. of the Report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-fifth session <u>(E/1989/21) *</u>
<u>Co-ordination of international statistical activities;</u>	IIA
considered existing institutional structures appropriate	8
and effective; recognized the international statistical	8
programme well co-ordinated; considered that co-ordination	8
an essential response to financial limitations; noted	8
successful initiatives to share limited staff and financial	8
resources; <u>identified areas requiring additional development</u>	9
<u>and co-ordination: namely environment, indicators for</u>	

*Recently issued: copies will be available in meeting room.

development, productivity statistics and statistics on illiteracy; the point was made that there might be practical limits to harmonization and co-ordination in particular areas; considered that co-ordination between bilateral and multidonors in technical co-operation at the country level could be improved; considered that it would be useful to (a) establish a list of key issues concerning international statistical development in which co-ordination was an important consideration, (b) propose priorities among those issues and (c) identify the most appropriate ways of proceeding with those subjects, taking co-ordination fully into account and decided to ask the Working Group to consider the matter at its thirteenth session; suggestion was made that a few areas could be selected on an experimental basis to see whether alternative approaches to co-ordination would be successful in meeting needs; the point was made that multilateral communication was essential to increased co-ordination; stressed importance of a strong and vigorous regional component in statistical work; reaffirmed the critical importance of co-ordination in international (statistical) work; recognized that considerable success had been achieved in co-ordination in a number of areas; considered there was scope for improvement in the coverage and effectiveness of co-ordination; requested the Statistical Office to continue to provide all available support to the regional commissions, in particular ESCAP; the Working Group to continue to review statistical data collection activities of the international organizations, including statistical data collection by non-statistical units of those organizations.

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Data collection

Discussion Annex 3

Suggested United Nations Statistical Office publications to be given publicity through the regional commissions; the complementarity among statistical publications of the United Nations Statistical Office, regional commissions and specialized agencies was stressed.

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Expressed overall satisfaction with progress in the SNA IIIA 41
review programme and noted that the progress was largely SNA
due to efforts of the United Nations Statistical Office, 9
and the other participating organizations (World Bank, IMF,
EEC, and OECD) and the co-ordinating role of the
Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts;
pleased to note participation of regional commissions in the 41
Inter-Secretariat Working Group; pleased with harmonization 42
between SNA and related IMF systems on balance of payments,
government finance and money and banking statistics.

Endorsed the continuation of the work linking SNA and MPS IIIC 68(b)
by the United Nations Statistical Office in conjunction SNA
with regional commissions and appropriate international 9
organizations particularly the CMEA aimed at integrating
the two systems; requested a report on progress in the 68(c)
harmonization of the SNA and MPS.

Pleased to note progress achieved by the Voorburg Group on IV 71
Service Statistics and welcomed the intention of volunteer
countries in association with the participating Services
international organizations to continue efforts in 10
promoting methodology and international comparability
in the field of service statistics; recognized the need 76
for co-ordination of work among the various international
organizations especially work on statistics of trade in
services; requested the Secretary-General, in co-operation 77(d)
with international organizations, to seek extrabudgetary
funding to support a comprehensive programme including
methodological development, data compilation and technical
co-operation to advance work in the important new field
of service statistics.

Noted that the numerous improvements made to ISIC VA 80
Rev. 3 and CPC, particularly in services, had been the
result of a combined effort of many experts and organizations;

reaffirmed the importance of the two classifications and their
co-ordinating role in economic statistics; agreed that the
part of the introduction to ISIC Rev.3 dealing with statistical
units needed to be redrafted taking into account comments of the
Statistical Commission, the SNA Expert Group, the Voorburg
Group on Service Statistics and the Round Table Conference
on Business Survey Frames; was informed that the United Nations
Statistical Office was preparing indexes for SITC Rev. 3 in
co-operation with CCC and the latter offered to co-operate in
preparing indexes to CPC; was informed that statisticians from
member States and the Statistical Office of the United Nations
Secretariat invited by CCC to participate in the
Review Sub-Committee for updating HS.

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Noted the existing close co-operation between the ILO (on the
International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE))
and the United Nations Statistical Office and stressed
necessity of continuing collaboration in a number of fields,
particularly population and housing censuses and surveys.

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Noted likelihood that Phase VI (1990) ICP would consist of
regional comparisons only with some possible links among them
due to problem of core comparisons and the funding of central
co-ordination; task of establishing links would no longer be
the task of a central agency but would be that of the
regional organizations involved; commission of the opinion
that the Statistical Office of the United Nations should
retain its co-ordinating role in ICP; requested the
United Nations Statistical Office to convene a meeting of
an intersecretariat working group on ICP to review
arrangements for phase VI, the report of the group to be
submitted to the Statistical Commission's Working Group.

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Co-ordination of technical co-operation at national and
international levels for the 1990 World Population and
Housing Census Programme was emphasized; countries urged,

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in co-operation with United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral technical co-operation agencies, to organize training courses and workshops for census users to make effective and maximum use of census data.

Expressed strong support for continuing work of the United Nations Statistical Office in co-ordinating international work on social statistics and indicators including special population groups; stressed that it was essential to maintain a strong co-ordinating framework within which series and indicators for a wide range of uses and users could be developed on a cost-effective basis; recommended that further work in the Statistical Office focus on the development of a co-ordinated United Nations system data base for selected social statistics and indicators of common interest at the national and international level; agreed that concerted effort should be made in the United Nations system to develop and disseminate appropriate methodologies for the compilation of indicators to assess human factors and social impacts of development in connection with the preparations for the fourth United Nations development decade; endorsed the programme of the Statistical Office carried out in co-operation with INSTRAW, UNOV and other interested agencies on the developing of statistics and indicators on women, including statistics on the informal sector and women's contributions to development, and the preparation of a technical report on methods of compiling economic accounts and tables on women's contributions to production.

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Welcomed the joint efforts of UNEP, the World Bank and the Statistical Office of the United Nations regarding development of a framework for environmental satellite accounting; suggestion made that high priority should be given to harmonization and expansion of global environmental monitoring in order to assist in the assessment of international environment

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problems; close co-operation between ECE and United Nations Statistical Office should be maintained on lead data bases and methodological development; reiterated its view that some outputs of the work on methods of environment statistics of the Conference of European Statisticians might contribute to work at the global level; emphasized the need to strengthen leadership and co-ordinating role of the Statistical Office in this field of statistics; identification of lead data bases for statistical data collection considered to be an efficient tool for avoiding duplication of efforts and should be closely monitored and co-ordinated by the United Nations Statistical Office with the assistance of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities; for further development of methodological work the Commission noted the necessity of establishing a set of high-priority programmes and of appropriate organizations to carry them out; these programmatic suggestions should also be reviewed by the ACC Sub-Committee; establishment of a working group for environment statistics like the Voorburg Group for Service Statistics was suggested as a means of accelerating the environmental statistics programme of the Statistical Office; pleased to note that planned co-operation with International Statistical Institute (ISI) appeared to be leading to the preparation of video material on environment statistics for training purposes; possible collaboration with the regional commissions in energy and environment statistics was envisaged by the ISI.

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Expressed appreciation of work done by UNRISD and Statistical Office on development of indicators on patterns of consumption: qualitative aspects of development; noted that future basic research on the development process might draw on the related research efforts of World Bank and other organizations; asked that all interested agencies of the United Nations should be consulted to further develop the list of series

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16d

and classifications for indicators contained in Annex I to document E/CN.3/1989/14; considered that previous work on development indicators and basic needs by FAO, ILO, and the World Bank as well as the Handbook on Social Indicators should be taken into account in the review (of a wide range of indicators); expressed concern that further work in the field (of development indicators) be fully co-ordinated and complementary with existing national and international programmes on social statistics and indicators; agreed that the programmes of FAO and the World Bank would be of special relevance and should be taken into account in the preparation of the report submitted to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-sixth session. 158

Pleased to note extensive efforts of DTCDC with substantive support from the United Nations Statistical Office as well as efforts of other multilateral and bilateral technical co-operation agencies to further strengthen the capabilities of developing countries in statistical data processing and informatics; appreciated ISI's effort to develop a series of educational video-cassettes on various aspects of statistical work for use in statistical training; commended the Statistical Office's collaboration in that project; stressed the importance of proper co-ordination in achieving a sound and cost-effective technical co-operation effort; noted that a variety of co-ordination mechanisms existed and stressed once again the critical role of the recipient country in the co-operation process; recognized the importance of co-ordination among organizations providing technical co-operation in statistics; emphasized that the Statistical Office should continue to serve as focal point in promoting the co-ordination of technical co-operation projects in statistics; was pleased to learn of the co-ordinating activities of UNFPA in broad field of population including basic data collection; re-emphasized its opinion that co-ordination of technical co-operation IXA 168 171 171 173 173 173 173 IXB 180

activities in statistics was very important and stressed that there was a need for effective co-ordination of those activities.

Stressed the need for co-operation and co-ordination in household survey activities at the national and international level; observed that NHSCP had been a good model for inter-agency co-operation in statistical development; noted (in context of ECOSOC resolution 1979/5) arrangements worked out for collaboration with PAPCHILD and growing co-operation with specialized agencies such as ILO, FAO, WHO, and UNESCO and funding agencies such as UNFPA and UNICEF in promoting household survey activities of mutual interest; stressed the need for effective co-ordination between NHSCP and the LSMS and SDA programmes sponsored by the World Bank and noted in that connection the continuing dialogue and exchange of ideas on the modalities of co-ordination between the Statistical Office and the World Bank; recognized with appreciation the supportive role played by the regional commissions in the promotion and implementation of NHSCP and reiterated the paramount need to strengthen the regional commissions through additional extrabudgetary support.

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NHSCP

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Welcomed the co-operation that existed between NHSCP and LSMS and the proposal to undertake in some countries an LSMS type of survey within the framework of NHSCP; noted with satisfaction that the SDA project would function within a framework of international collaboration; reiterated the need and welcomed the desire for effective co-ordination between SDA and NHSCP in Africa and observed that the survey programmes envisaged in the two projects were mutually compatible and indeed, could reinforce each other; representative of the World Bank identified the elements of co-ordination it sought; inter alia, exchange

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NHSCP
LSMS
SDA

of documentation and programme plans, joint NHSCP and SDA appraisal missions, consultations with specialized agencies and ECA, co-ordination of survey programmes at the country level, and sharing experiences; some of the developed countries and international organizations engaged in funding both the NHSCP and the SDA projects indicated they were prepared to provide assistance for country level projects and emphasized the importance of co-ordination; welcomed the desire for mutual co-operation expressed by both the World Bank and the Statistical Office and the steps already taken for such co-operation; noted with satisfaction that the Statistical Office was represented on the SDA project Steering Committee and the World Bank had all along been a member of the NHSCP Programme Review Committee and that further proposals for co-ordination and collaboration had been exchanged; also welcome the involvement of ECA and other international agencies in the implementation of the SDA project, which was essential for its success; emphasized its understanding that in implementation of the SDA programme, account would be taken of ongoing national and regional statistical activities and that it would be carried out in collaboration with NHSCP and other programmes; appreciated the ongoing efforts at achieving co-ordination between the SDA project and NHSCP and urged the need to avoid duplication and disruption of ongoing work in the countries.

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Expressed its General satisfaction with progress made by international organizations in implementing their work

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programmes and requested a further report; recommended that in light of scarce regular budget resources

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the Statistical Office should endeavour to mobilize additional extrabudgetary resources or advance its work, particularly in the area of methodological development, by developing other approaches; several different options

were suggested all of which embodied the principles

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(a) that the leadership and co-ordinating role of the Statistical Office should be preserved and (b) the mechanism used should be inclusive so as to ensure that all countries interested in a particular area would be able to participate; noted that, in addition to statistical co-ordination, organizational co-ordination was one of its responsibilities; expressed its interest in the reported statement that other international organizations could take over some of the work on compilation currently undertaken by the Statistical Office and that the resources thus freed could be redeployed to undertake methodological work; since no detailed information on the statistical capacity of other international organizations to take over compilation work had been supplied, could not consider the matter further; it was pointed out that the prevailing practice was that the Statistical Office compiled and published data predominantly collected by national statistical offices, while data predominantly collected by ministries were compiled and published by the specialized agency concerned; since that practice had been and was still highly successful, great care should be taken not to disrupt the existing modalities.

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