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CO-ORDINATION OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN STATISTICS

Current issues in technical co-operation focusing
on bilateral agencies and non-governmental organisations

Report prepared by the ILO Bureau of Statistics

1. Consideration had been given in the past to issues of co-ordination of technical co-operation in statistics between agencies of the UN System or between statistical and non-statistical departments within an organisation.

2. Other areas of coordination that need to be looked into are a) between the organisations of the UN System and bilateral agencies and non-governmental organisations b) between the regional statistical advisory services of an organisation and c) assistance to governments as opposed to assistance to employers' or workers' organisations (something specific to ILO).

3. Given its low volume of technical co-operation in statistics, the ILO has had less opportunity to operate in competition with bilateral agencies or NGO's. In the few cases where bilateral agencies and NGO's were present alongside the ILO in related fields of statistics, there has been mutual co-operation in and support of each other's activities. Up to now, this good relationship has been due to the ILO expert's personal ability to contact and communicate with the representatives of the other organisations, to the personal contacts of headquarters' staff with the staff of other organisations and to the practice of some bilateral agencies and NGO's to first discuss with the ILO, projects which are directly or indirectly related to labour statistics and which they intend to implement nationally.

4. With regard to the statistical advisers of an organisation located in various regions, there is a need to avoid conflicting views or action in the services they provide. With this in view, the ILO Bureau of Statistics has started to strengthen the communication between regional advisers via headquarters through routine exchanges of reports, studies, work plans, etc.

5. The ILO is in the unique position of having to assist not only governments but also workers' and employers' organisations on statistical matters. It has been found necessary to differentiate between these types of assistance to avoid within a country, duplication and overlapping of statistical production activities and the confusion that different statistical results may lead to. For this purpose, the Bureau of Statistics has prepared a set of guidelines, which have been approved by top management, which would be useful in assessing or supporting requests for statistical assistance from organisations other than governmental ones.