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POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICAL DATA
Report prepared by the International Labour office

The policies and practices of the ILO Bureau of Labour Statistics concerning the dissemination of statistical data have not essentially changed since last year (see Report submitted to the 23rd session: SA/1989/4/Add.5, 5 May 1989). However, a few additional points can be mentioned.

In pursuance of our policy to provide methodological descriptions for all statistical series published by the ILO Bureau of Statistics, the Statistical Sources and Methods series has been expanded to include Volume 5 on Total and economically active population, employment and unemployment (population censuses). This has been issued as a companion volume to the Year Book of Labour Statistics, Retrospective edition on Population Censuses, 1945-89, published earlier this year. It is available in English, French and Spanish both in printed and machine-readable form. Future volumes in this series will contain methodological descriptions on labour cost, occupational injuries, strikes and lock-outs and household income and expenditure. We are presently considering the possibility of issuing a new edition of one volume every year at the same time as the Year Book of Labour Statistics and disseminating them jointly.

We have also established a policy of disseminating technical manuals of all statistical standards adopted on labour statistics by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Manuals are already available on Wages, Consumer price indices and on Economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment; another on the International Standard Classification of Occupations will be published shortly. These manuals complement those published by other international agencies, in particular the NHSCP (National Household Survey Capability Programme) Household income and expenditure survey manual. They will also provide an important part of the teaching material for the ILO training programme on labour statistics which is currently being developed.

In pursuance of its policy to modernise the dissemination of labour statistics, the ILO Bureau of Statistics has implemented a programme for the restructuring of its data base (LABORSTA) and the dissemination of statistics from it in machine-readable form, mainly on tapes and floppy disks. It is hoped to extend this to DC-ROM in 1992-93. The development of a publication containing descriptive labour indicators is also under consideration. Subject to resources being available, we plan to issue it annually as a supplement to the ILO Year Book of Labour Statistics.

As requests for ad hoc statistical information, not readily available in LABORSTA or requiring analytical calculations, are increasing substantially and resources for this purpose are not increasing correspondingly, the ILO has decided to gradually adopt a cost recovery policy for this type of data dissemination. For in-house requests, a Centre for statistical services is being developed which will operate on a fee basis. For outside requests, the appropriate channels are being established for disseminating the statistics and collecting the fees. The fee basis does not apply to data readily available in LABORSTA.