

ACC SUB-COMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES  
Thirtieth session  
New York, 7-9 May 1996

SA/1996/8  
22 February 1996

*New*

Item 3(b) of the provisional agenda \*

COORDINATION OF ON-GOING STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES  
(b) New and revised standards and implementation of "standards"

Report prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division

1. The following provides an account of activities relating to new and revised standards as well as methodologies and implementation prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division for the areas of international trade, environment statistics, disability statistics, classifications and migration statistics.

I. International trade

2. The United Nations recommendations to countries for international trade statistics are currently being revised. A draft of the revision was developed by UNSD with inputs/comments from the involved international organizations; it is to be reviewed by the Task Force on International Trade Statistics in March 1996, an Expert Group in May 1996 and the Statistical Commission in February 1997 for issuance in 1997. Coordination is complete; no action is required by the Subcommittee.

II. Environment statistics

(i) Operational Manual on implementation of the SEEA

3. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) is collaborating with the expert Working Group established by the

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\* SA/1996/1.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in the preparation of an operational manual for the elaboration and implementation of the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA). Both international organizations (WB, EUROSTAT, UNEP, UNSD and the WWF) and experts in the field are members of the Working Group. The manual is to provide an introduction to environmental accounting for policy makers and other users, as well as a practical step-by-step description for implementation by data producers. The first draft is expected to be circulated for comments in December 1996 and to be published in 1997.

(ii) Manual on Environmental Statistics and Indicators

4. Following the recommendation of the Inter-governmental Working Group on the Advancement of Environment Statistics (IGWG), UNSD will develop a manual on selected high-priority environmental statistics and indicators. Lists of environmental indicators were prepared by the IGWG for both the manual and a first international compilation of indicators. The manual will provide guidelines on concepts, methods, classifications, tabulations and data sources to assist national statistical services in the implementation of environmental statistics and indicator programmes.

III. Disability Statistics

5. In the area of disability statistics, two new technical reports seek to promote international comparability in this field. The first "Manual for the Development of Statistical Information for Disability Programmes and Policies" will be published this year. This manual, aimed at program managers and policy makers, will provide, in non-technical language, information and suggestions for a systematic approach to data collection and for the development of statistical information related to impairments, disabilities and handicaps (IDH).

6. A second technical report, "Handbook on census and survey methods for development of impairment, disability and handicap statistics", is being finalized this year. The handbook is more technical in nature and is directed to statistical offices and research organizations working in the areas of disability statistics. When completed, it will offer concepts, definitions and strategies of measurement and assessment of human activity through an improved study of IDH.

#### IV. Classifications

7. As a follow-up to the Statistical Commission at its twenty eighth session, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) has established a **Classifications Hot Line (CHL)**. The **CHL** is intended to serve as the practical central reference service of international classifications, including the provision of assistance to users of the **International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)** (Series M. No. 4, Rev. 3). **CHL** may be reached through the internet mailing system, as well as through other media such as letter, facsimile and telephone.

8. The Commission requested that work be implemented in the promotion of common approaches for the conversion from national and other classifications to the *International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities* (Series M. No. 4, Rev.3). Work on correspondence of *ISIC*, Rev. 3 and *ISIC*, Rev. 2 has been carried out between UNSD, Eurostat, Statistics Canada and the United States Bureau of the Census resulting in revised correspondence tables. Based on the results of this work, a draft was circulated to the Working Group of the United Nations Statistical Commission, at its meeting on 16-19 April 1996, noting modifications in the correspondence tables of *ISIC* Rev. 3 and Rev. 2, providing new working digits and proposing changes in the Explanatory Notes to classes of *ISIC*, Rev.3. The draft Revised Correspondence Tables are now available through the

## **Classifications Hot Line.**

9. Preparations have been made for further meeting and agreement of the **Expert Group on International Classifications** for the development of an international classifications work programme covering broad-based economic and social classification concerns. The second meeting of the **Expert Group** is expected to take place from 24-26 June 1996. The purpose of this meeting is to follow-up on the strategic plan of action developed during the first Expert Group meeting. Papers prepared for review by the Second Expert Group Meeting include: "Framework and criteria for integrating classifications", a joint UNSD/Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) paper; "Possible creation of a coordinating body for classification systems", prepared by the World Customs Organization taking into account the comments of the World Trade Organization and Eurostat; and "Report of the special United Nations Sub-group on Social Classifications (World Bank, Washington, D.C. 1-3 May, 1995).

10. At the request of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA), the *Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP)* has been revised by OECD. The United Nations Statistics Division is seeking to encourage a world-wide review of *COICOP* prior to the completion of the revision process. The draft Revision of OECD, together with an Introduction to *COICOP* prepared by the Statistics Division in collaboration with OECD, is now being circulated to experts from a wide range of countries and regions of the world so that they may provide their comments on the suitability of the revised *COICOP* as an international classification.

11. Following the recommendations of the Task Force on Industrial and Construction Statistics convened by OECD in Paris, 20-21 July 1995, the UNSD has developed a draft revised list of products and materials for the collection of commodity production statistics beginning 1996 based on *PRODCOM*. *PRODCOM* is the title

of the European Community production statistics classification and quarrying, manufacturing, and electricity, gas and water supply, i.e. Sections C,D and E of the *Statistical Classification of Economic Activities* (NACE Rev.1). In this exercise, approximately 4,000 PRODCOM codes were utilized in order to describe the approximately 1,000 items on the newly-revised list of products and materials. The detailed list of commodities based on PRODCOM was then grouped according to activities described in ISIC Revision 3, for the industrial sector comprising mining, quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water supply, i.e. tabulation categories C,D and E. Tables of correspondence between the draft revised list of products and materials and the *Standard International Trade Classification, (SITC), Rev.3; The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS); and Provisional Central Product Classification (CPC)*, are also available through the **Classifications Hot Line**.

#### V. Migration Statistics

12. EUROSTAT in collaboration with UNSD will hold a meeting from 28 to 30 May 1996 to resolve outstanding issues on migration statistics and finalize the draft recommendations that resulted from the Expert Group meeting. The following organizations, inter alia, will also participate in the efforts: OECD, ILO, UNHCR and ECE.

