

Item 3(c) of the provisional agenda *

COORDINATION OF ON-GOING STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES
(c) Technical assistance in statistics

Report prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division

1. The Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session (New York, 27 February - 3 March 1995) requested the United Nations Statistics Division to submit a consolidated report on the state of technical cooperation in the field of statistics to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination.

2. Based on a pilot study undertaken in August 1995 and experience gained from previous questionnaires, the Statistics Division is aware that it is not feasible to collect and precisely classify technical cooperation information in a uniform manner, due to the varying methods and definitions adopted in the process of accounting for technical cooperation by different donors and recipients. Different accounting periods also pose a similar problem.

3. Accordingly, the Statistics Division has decided not to try to provide a precise definition for the term "technical cooperation in statistics" or to try to disaggregate such a category. It is recognized that each statistics office may interpret this category slightly differently; the common culture of national statistics offices, however, is such that the differences should be reasonably small and the aggregate

* SA/1996/1.

information should still be useful.

4. The information sought for the report includes direction or source of technical cooperation (depending on whether the country is a donor or recipient), the project title and a brief description, as well as the annual cost of the assistance involved.

5. In response to another request made by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session, the Statistics Division has requested the regional commissions to provide an assessment of the impact, if any, of the national execution of technical cooperation projects in statistics on countries in their respective regions. Three of the regional commissions provided a response to the request on the "assessment of the impact of national execution of technical cooperation projects in statistics". ESCWA and ECA indicated that an assessment of the situation was not possible for lack of information in the area. ECA also noted that the new arrangements implied a reduction in funds for technical assistance to the regional commission. ECE elaborated on the arrangements in place in Eastern and Central European countries which include Project Implementation Units (PIUs) and Project Management Units (PMUs). ESCAP requested clarifications on the request, whereas ECLAC did not reply at all.

6. The Statistics Division reported to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its eighteenth session (New York, 16-19 April 1996) that the response rate to the request relating to information on technical cooperation in statistics was too low for the preparation of the report.

7. The Working Group decided that the Statistics Division should continue to try to obtain more responses and try to prepare the report and present it to the twenty-ninth session of

the Statistical Commission. The Working Group also requested Statistics Canada, EUROSTAT and IMF to work with the Statistics Division to prepare a report on crucial issues relating to technical cooperation and present it to the twenty-ninth session of the Commission.

8. The Subcommittee may wish to discuss the above and provide guidance as well as suggestions.

