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on Co-ordination

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REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES
ON ITS TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

(Vienna, 18-22 June 1990)

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I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE
COMMITTEE ON CO-ORDINATION: POLICY ISSUES OF CONCERN
TO THE SYSTEM AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

1. The attention of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination is called to three issues: first, the Sub-Committee's consideration of the statistical implications of changes in Eastern Europe as part of its overall consideration of emerging issues and priorities for statistical development. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of co-ordination in those activities (related to statistical development in the countries in transition) which were new, had emerged suddenly, involved many national and international organizations and which would potentially involve very large amounts of technical and financial resources over a long period of time (see paras. 2-10); secondly, further development of the initiative being taken jointly by several organizations relating to monitoring the achievement of social goals in the 1990s, which had been brought to the attention of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in the report of the Sub-Committee on its twenty-third session (see paras. 55-57); thirdly, positive results achieved in enhancing co-ordination in the past year of a number of internationally sponsored household survey programmes (see paras. 60-72).

II. DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE
ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES

A. Emerging issues and priorities for statistical development,
including statistical implications of changes in
Eastern Europe

2. The item was discussed on the basis of oral reports and reports prepared by the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) (SA/1990/24) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (SA/1990/27). The Sub-Committee also heard a statement from Mr. Wolfgang Haeder, of the Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic, on adjustments to the statistical system of the German Democratic Republic in response to the changing situation in that country.

3. The Sub-Committee considered that the discussion of that item was important and timely. It was recognized that the nature and duration of the transition process might vary from country to country and that due account of that diversity would have to be taken. Moreover, although the primary focus of attention was the eastern and central European countries in transition, the Sub-Committee recognized that there were also countries in transition in other parts of the world, including in the regions of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and that those countries also would be engaged in adjusting their statistical systems to their changing economic and social situations. The emerging changes in the transition countries had implications for the specific work programmes of many of the international organizations, and several organizations described activities that they had already undertaken or were planning in the transition countries.

4. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of co-ordination in those activities which were new, had emerged suddenly, involved many national and international organizations and which could potentially involve very large amounts of technical and financial resources over a long period of time. The situation was seen to pose a special challenge to co-ordination which would best be met by (a) the use of traditional established mechanisms, such as the Sub-Committee itself, (b) existing intersecretariat working groups and the "Inventory of statistical data collection activities" (E/CN.3/AC.1/1990/R.4) and (c) the development of new co-ordination mechanisms designed for that specific situation.

5. In that connection, the Sub-Committee welcomed the establishment of an Inter-Secretariat Group of international organizations on statistical co-operation with eastern and central European countries that had been reported on by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT). The Group had met for the first time in June 1990 at the time of the Conference of European Statisticians. The Inter-Secretariat Group was open to those international organizations involved in operational co-operation with eastern and central European countries in statistics. At present the Inter-Secretariat Group consisted of EUROSTAT, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, FAO, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. Meetings of the Inter-Secretariat Group would be held at the time of other major meetings to facilitate attendance by the largest number of members. OECD, in co-operation with EUROSTAT and ECE, would prepare a questionnaire to be sent to all members of the Sub-Committee and to national Governments to inquire about ongoing and planned activities of statistical co-operation in the transition countries of eastern and central Europe. The results of that inquiry would be circulated widely to interested countries and agencies. EUROSTAT planned to set up a data bank of relevant information, including the results of the inquiry. The data bank was intended to complement the Newsletter on Transition Projects issued by ECE which gave information on projects in the transition countries and was aimed, *inter alia*, at avoiding the duplication of projects. The Sub-Committee welcomed both the data bank and the Newsletter, which would help to disseminate relevant information. The Newsletter would be made available to all members of the Sub-Committee, and organizations were informed that ECE would welcome receiving relevant information from them for incorporation into the Newsletter. The Sub-Committee stressed that a high degree of communication among involved organizations was essential, especially at the starting stage. The Sub-Committee requested that the Inter-Secretariat Group provide a report to the Sub-Committee at its next session so that organizations not so involved in the operational aspects of the work could be kept up to date on developments. The Sub-Committee was pleased to note that the Inter-Secretariat Group would endeavour to promote co-ordination of work on statistical co-operation in all eastern and central European countries. Nevertheless, its responsibilities were limited to that group of countries, and the Sub-Committee emphasized the need, in the longer term, to mobilize resources for and transfer experience gained in Europe to, the countries in transition outside of Europe and to co-ordinate co-operation with those countries. The Sub-Committee considered that it was important to investigate appropriate ways to achieve those objectives.

6. The Sub-Committee noted that the Conference of European Statisticians, at its plenary session in June 1990, had developed a clear strategy for progressive co-operation with transition countries. The programme of work of ECE had been adjusted to reflect the changing needs, and it was considered that progress would be achieved with the Inter-Secretariat Group mentioned above, given a division of labour and the appropriate co-ordination.

7. Aspects of the work for transition countries included consideration of concepts and definitions, priorities, technology and how to transfer it, institution building and the development and training of human resources. An underlying requirement was the rapid development of the statistical information needed for policy decisions both at the macro and micro levels. The point was made that the resources available in the transition countries, including official statisticians and scientific bodies, should be utilized in the work to permit rapid progress. The time frame for change was also deemed important, although it would be different for different countries.

8. Some of the priority areas for statistical work, which had already been identified by the transition countries themselves, included basic national accounts series, including recomputation of those series for previous periods, prices, enterprise data, including value of capital, public finance and monetary data and social statistics and indicators to permit the social impact of changes to be monitored. The Sub-Committee was informed of related projects in tourism and agriculture.

9. Some concern was expressed about the possibility that resources which might have been assigned to statistical development in developing non-European regions might be re-directed towards the eastern and central European countries. Recent intergovernmental meetings in Africa and Asia had addressed statistical requirements directly. In Africa, the Sixth Session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers had adopted a Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. In the Asia and Pacific region, ESCAP, at its forty-sixth session, had recognized that the recent emphasis on restructuring of economies and the economic reform processes initiated in several countries of the region, required further strengthening and a reorientation of national statistical services.

10. The Sub-Committee noted that the changes in eastern and central European countries and other countries in transition had implications for the presentation of regional and economic aggregates in the publications of international organizations and decided to consider that matter in more detail under the agenda item entitled "Publication and dissemination policy, including co-ordination of statistical data bases" (see para. 37 below).

B. Processing and dissemination of trade statistics

11. The item was discussed on the basis of two reports prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/6 and SA/1990/7).

12. The Sub-Committee noted the satisfactory progress reported by the Statistical Office on the transfer of commodity trade statistics processing from Geneva to New York and stressed the importance of concluding the transfer in a timely way, maintaining duplicate copies of the Commodity Trade Statistics Data Base (COMTRADE) in both Geneva and New York and maintaining a senior professional staff member in Geneva to provide services to European-based users.

13. There was an extensive discussion of the importance of timeliness and coverage of data in COMTRADE, and the Sub-Committee considered it important that those questions be addressed. The Sub-Committee welcomed the expanded initiatives that the Statistical Office was taking with countries to improve timeliness and coverage and considered that the most effective way to improve timeliness and coverage was a co-operative one, involving all organizations with appropriate contacts at the national level, and should take advantage of special relationships that organizations or individuals had with individual countries. The Sub-Committee welcomed the assistance that had already been provided by many organizations and noted suggestions for additional actions that could be taken. The Sub-Committee welcomed the lists of missing country data recently prepared by the Statistical Office as a valuable tool for focusing attention on particular countries and welcomed the possibility that organizations, in particular, the regional commissions, might be able to provide information on the specific reasons for the non-supply or late supply of data by those countries.

14. The role that the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) and other similar software, such as P.C. TRADE, could play in improving the availability of trade statistics was recognized and the new steps planned by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Statistical Office with countries which had installed the ASYCUDA system were noted. The Sub-Committee observed that developments in Eastern Europe could lead to the improved availability of detailed commodity trade statistics from those countries even in the short term.

15. The Sub-Committee also considered that the quality of data in COMTRADE should be addressed as a matter of priority. A number of user organizations made specific suggestions for the analysis of quality, such as reviewing matching trade flows, and considered that a description of the processes undertaken in processing the commodity trade statistics by the Statistical Office would improve users' understanding of the quality of the data. Offers of assistance in the analysis of quality were made by several user organizations and welcomed by the Statistical Office.

16. The Sub-Committee noted that trade statistics and estimates were maintained by several organizations for analytical purposes and that there were differences in those sets of figures. The Sub-Committee requested the Statistical Office to organize a working group on improving the quality and comparability of data and estimates. It would pool information on available data and estimates and report back to the Sub-Committee at its next session with proposals for minimizing the differences, while recognizing that some estimates, prepared for specific purposes by different organizations, may be different.

17. The Sub-Committee welcomed the continuing efforts to help countries improve their trade statistics and stressed the need for training in the compilation of trade statistics, particularly computer processing, at the national level. Particular problems and actions being taken in the various regions were outlined. The early reporting system of IMF for obtaining aggregate statistics, including trade aggregates, from countries with a minimum of delay was also noted.

18. The Sub-Committee welcomed the collaboration of UNCTAD and the Statistical Office in the collection, compilation and publication of statistics of goods loaded and unloaded and requested the Statistical Office to continue efforts to obtain funding to permit continued work on maritime transport statistics and goods loaded and unloaded in international trade, which were fields of considerable importance to several organizations in the Sub-Committee.

19. The Sub-Committee noted the continuing work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat on analytical trade tables showing trade by large commodity groups and regions, other major compilations of trade statistics and methodological work and stressed the need for methodological work on trade indices to be undertaken.

C. Statistical implications of the single market
of the European Economic Community

20. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by EUROSTAT (SA/1990/9).

21. The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation of the report on the recent developments concerning the INTRASTAT project. That project aimed to develop alternative methods for measurement of trade in goods between members of the European Economic Community after 1992 when customs formalities between the member countries would be eliminated, consequently eliminating the source documents upon which trade in goods was currently based. The Sub-Committee welcomed the offer made by EUROSTAT to circulate the relevant draft Council decision and technical comments made on it by EUROSTAT which would provide more complete information for interested organizations. The Sub-Committee welcomed the "Group of Reflection" established at the time of the Conference of European Statisticians in June 1990 to consider various substantive and methodological issues, some of which had been mentioned in the discussions, namely, the quality of data, the coverage to be obtained through census and survey techniques, the establishment and maintenance of registers of trading entities, the comparison with data collected through traditional customs documents, and the effects of linking statistical data collection to a fiscal measure, namely the VAT system.

22. The Sub-Committee requested EUROSTAT to keep agencies informed of the major developments in the INTRASTAT project on a timely basis so that they could make decisions concerning the processing and analysis of trade data for countries of the Community in the future. The Sub-Committee noted that the establishment of the single market had implications for many other fields of statistics, including balance of payments, monetary statistics and other fields, and requested EUROSTAT

to report to the Sub-Committee at its next session, addressing the implications for the broader range of statistical fields, including trade statistics.

D. Working arrangements among the organizations with respect to collection and compilation of statistics from Member States

23. The Sub-Committee considered two aspects of the question. The first related to co-ordination. Examples of co-ordination problems in specific fields of statistics were discussed, in particular, a recent instance of apparent duplication in the collection of data on economically active population by ILO and the Statistical Office and the related absence of cross-referencing in relevant publications. Co-ordination for the routine collection of data was considered effective, but, in that case, had apparently been deficient in relation to the collection of data for a set of special tables. The Sub-Committee agreed that ILO and the Statistical Office should give attention to the specific issue raised. More generally, the Sub-Committee [agreed that organizations planning special publications or special topics in a recurrent publication should circulate information on their collection and publication plans as far in advance as possible to interested organizations so that data collection and publication plans could be co-ordinated to the extent necessary.] The problem of inconsistent population estimates was also discussed and the role of the ACC Ad Hoc Committee on Population Estimates and Projections was noted. In addition it was recognized that in some cases inconsistency arose in the data collected, and in that context the role of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities was noted.

24. Concerning the second aspect of the question, the Sub-Committee noted that the item arose from the discussion at the twenty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission on arrangements among the international organizations for the collection and compilation of statistics from Member States. 1/. In that connection the Sub-Committee considered that the prevailing practice had been reflected in para. 224 of the report of the Commission on that session as follows: "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." The Sub-Committee further expressed its agreement with the conclusion of the Commission also set out in para. 224 that: "Since that practice had been and was still highly successful, great care should be taken not to disrupt the existing modalities."

25. A view was expressed that a review of the subject and the rationale for the existing arrangements was timely, bearing in mind the need to have mechanisms to serve users as effectively as possible with the available resources. Accordingly, the Sub-Committee requested the Statistical Office to prepare a report for the next session covering the fields in which the Statistical Office collected data from countries and describing the basis of the division of responsibilities. Reports from other members of the Sub-Committee on this topic were also welcomed by the Sub-Committee.

E. Publication and dissemination policy, including
co-ordination of statistical data bases

26. The item was discussed on the basis of reports prepared by the Sub-Committee's Technical Working Group on Statistical Data Bases (Technical Working Group) (SA/1990/2), the Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Information Systems (ACCIS) (SA/1990/3), the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/4), IMF (SA/1990/4/Add.3), the World Bank (SA/1990/4/Add.4), ILO (SA/1990/4/Add.5), EUROSTAT (SA/1990/5), FAO (SA/1990/27), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (no symbol) and oral reports from a number of agencies.

27. The Sub-Committee welcomed the various written and oral reports. During a wide-ranging discussion the Sub-Committee touched upon the following matters: (a) the Report of the Sub-Committee's Technical Working Group; (b) development of new data bases or enhanced data bases in several organizations; (c) new arrangements provided by some organizations for dissemination of data on-line and on Compact Disk-Read-Only-Memory (CD-ROM); (d) new systems for maintaining statistical data and meta-data; (e) developments in the use of the United Nations Rules for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT) for transmission of statistical data; (f) use of national statistical services for dissemination of international statistical data; (g) movement towards provision of more analytical data in publications; (h) provision free of charge of statistical publications to developing countries or countries in transition; (i) country or area classifications and aggregates used in statistical publications; (j) arrangements for dissemination of sales copies of statistical outputs from the regional commissions.

28. The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation for the report of the Technical Working Group on Statistical Data Bases at its seventh session. The Sub-Committee welcomed the work being done by the Statistical Office to update and revise the Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use 2/ and looked forward to the circulation of the revised text in the near future. The standard codes, which were considered an important tool for promoting the exchange of data, would be more useful if changes could be incorporated and notified to users in a more timely manner. In that connection the Sub-Committee was pleased to learn of several alternatives for providing such updates which were being considered by the Statistical Office. Several members of the Sub-Committee reported experiences with CD-ROM that were far more positive than those described in the report of the Technical Working Group.

29. The Sub-Committee considered the view expressed by the Technical Working Group concerning policy on secondary dissemination. Several members considered that, on the basis of existing information, the existing guidelines were adequate and should be maintained, while some concern over the existing policy was expressed by one organization. The matter was recognized to be quite complex, involving pricing policies, possible reimbursement for onward dissemination, policy setting arrangements and administrative structures and rules in different organizations. The Sub-Committee requested the Statistical Office to write to organizations concerning their policies and practices in that area with a view to circulating the

responses to Sub-Committee members for possible informal discussion at the time of the twenty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission (1991) and review by the Sub-Committee at its twenty-fifth session (1991).

30. The Sub-Committee endorsed the proposed agenda for the 8th meeting of the Technical Working Group with the addition of the following items: (a) rules and procedures for editing and processing statistical data; (b) experience with desk-top publishing; and (c) the feasibility of developing standard codes for statistical series. With respect to the first addition, the Sub-Committee considered that it would be highly desirable to share among the various organizations descriptions of the editing and processing rules used by each organization in compiling major data sets. The Sub-Committee agreed that it would be desirable to expand the duration of the meeting of the Technical Working Group from two to three days. The Sub-Committee also requested that all interested members of the Sub-Committee receive copies of the detailed papers prepared for the Technical Working Group. Finally, the Sub-Committee requested the Technical Working Group to make full use of all written submissions that had been prepared by organizations for its deliberations.

31. The Sub-Committee welcomed the establishment by the Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Information Systems (ACCIS) of the Technical Panel on Computer Security and considered that its work would be particularly relevant to the statistical offices of international organizations. The Sub-Committee requested FAO to prepare a more detailed progress report on the technical and policy questions addressed and its experience in developing and introducing its new data base system, and to make the report available to the Sub-Committee through the Technical Working Group. The Sub-Committee also invited ECE to report on its recently introduced data base through the Technical Working Group. The Sub-Committee welcomed the arrangements that had been established by EUROSTAT, ECE and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to ensure that all members of the Sub-Committee would be kept informed concerning developments related to UN/EDIFACT.

32. In view of the problems encountered by several of the United Nations regional commissions with regard to the printing, distribution and sales of their statistical publications, the Sub-Committee recalled the view it had expressed at its last session; "... as statistics often represented a large part of the total sales revenues in many organizations, the Sub-Committee urged that, where statistical dissemination was significant in an organization, the statistics division should be represented directly in the organization's publication policy and publication management mechanisms. Indeed, this was the practice in at least one agency." (ACC/1989/PG/6, para. 21). The Sub-Committee considered that the view expressed at its last session remained valid. In particular, the regional commissions were concerned about the distribution of sales copies from Geneva and New York and the lack of feedback on sales figures.

33. The Sub-Committee welcomed the progress that the Statistical Office was making on the core United Nations system data base of basic series of general interest. The point was made that proper maintenance and updating of a data base once it was established was essential.

34. Concerning data bases in general, the Sub-Committee stressed the importance of the establishment of relevant data bases at the regional level, dissemination of data and data bases in developing countries, especially data bases of United Nations data, and the provision of assistance to developing countries for establishing data bases, particularly with the use of current technology and for promoting the use of data bases for country purposes. It was also considered important to make data bases more user-oriented, in particular, through the harmonization of coding systems, the provision of user interfaces and the coding of series. Developments in those directions, combined with technical co-operation, would promote the flow and use of data in developing countries.

35. The point was made that data bases were of much greater value if they included current and historical data; in that connection, the inclusion of estimates and forecasts was considered of great value to users and several organizations described their work on presenting estimates to meet user needs. The Sub-Committee decided to consider the dissemination of data and data bases to countries, particularly developing countries, at its next session on the basis of reports from organizations.

36. The Sub-Committee considered dissemination policies for statistical data and, in particular, responses to ad hoc requests by users to statistical agencies for data and the question of pricing policies for such requests. Several organizations described their practices for servicing ad hoc requests and for several organizations those requests were considerable. It was recognized that responding to such requests made substantial demands on resources and the possibility of charging fees for such services was discussed. The Sub-Committee decided, as part of its consideration of dissemination of statistics at the next session, to include an extensive discussion devoted to servicing ad hoc requests for data, including the provision of data that had not been included in statistical publications of the organization, experience with collaboration with private vendors for general dissemination and free distribution of statistical publications. The Sub-Committee requested the Statistical Office to prepare a report on those issues based on descriptions of experience to be obtained from members of the Sub-Committee.

37. The Sub-Committee considered the geographical groupings of countries used for presenting statistical data, in the context of changes in eastern Europe and in a broader context. The Sub-Committee noted that different country classifications were in use in the various organizations which reflected operational and analytical requirements, and it was unlikely that any one set of classifications could serve all purposes. It further noted that several members were ceasing to use the dichotomy between market economy and centrally planned economy countries in their publications and were introducing a grouping entitled Eastern Europe and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or other similar title in its place, moving those developing countries that had formerly been included in the centrally planned economies aggregate to the developing country aggregate.

38. The Sub-Committee considered that, since the Country and Area Code for Statistical Use was being revised and since it included some widely used country groupings, it would be opportune and helpful if the Statistical Office could include classifications used by a number of organizations in the publication,

although it was recognized that it would not be possible to include all such classifications due to space. The Sub-Committee requested organizations to supply information to the Statistical Office on their major or frequently used country classifications for possible use in the revised publication. In addition, those classifications not included in the publication would be circulated to organizations for information. In view of the current importance of country classification and the classifications in use, the Sub-Committee requested the Statistical Office to prepare a report on that question for the next session.

F. Revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA)

39. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by the Statistical Office (SA/1990/8) and an oral report presented by the Director of the Statistical Office at the meeting of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) held in Vienna on 17 June 1990. The following organizations attended the ISWGNA meeting: IMF, World Bank, OECD, EUROSTAT, ECA, ESCWA and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. The other regional commissions had been invited but were unable to attend.

40. The Inter-Secretariat Working Group reviewed in considerable detail the work that remained to be done to ensure that the revised draft of the SNA would be available for consideration and adoption by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session in 1993. That review included: (a) a consideration of the steps needed to ensure the timely resolution of the remaining outstanding substantive issues; (b) various aspects of the drafting of the revised SNA, including annexes and related supporting materials; (c) the role of the SNA Handbooks and an initial consideration of priorities among them. (For example, a Handbook on the use of the SNA in transition countries had been given higher priority and brought forward in the time schedule.) The Inter-Secretariat Working Group also considered the technical and financial support needed for the revision process.

41. All the organizations participating in the Inter-Secretariat Working Group stressed the importance of the SNA revision process and their commitment to doing everything within their means to see it through to a successful conclusion. It was recognized that much work still needed to be done in the limited time available. Accordingly, the Inter-Secretariat Working Group was pleased to accept the offer of the services of Ms. Carol Carson of the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis to assist it. The terms of reference for Ms. Carson included: (a) substantive support to and servicing of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group; (b) co-ordination of work on outstanding issues; and (c) assistance in integration of texts from various sources for the revised SNA. Ms. Carson was not expected to do primary drafting work but rather co-ordination work, including identification of specialists to make contributions. Ms. Carson would immediately prepare a revised draft timetable and develop a draft of an overall financial plan for the Inter-Secretariat Working Group.

42. The Inter-Secretariat Working Group had expressed its appreciation of contributions from Austria and Switzerland to the process and to additional

contributions being made by the United States and EUROSTAT over and above the continuing efforts of all the organizations in the Group.

43. The Sub-Committee welcomed the report on the meeting of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group and stressed the importance that it placed on the SNA review in view of the importance of the SNA to economic policy-making, description and analysis at the national and international levels and the role the SNA played in statistical co-ordination and integration. The Sub-Committee noted that during the review period, important new issues and concerns had arisen and others had become more important and those were being reflected in the ongoing work on the review. However, unresolved issues still existed that would require considerable attention in the remainder of the review. Those and other factors made it essential to work out a new, realistic timetable and resource plan. The point was made that that information would have to be included in a comprehensive report on the SNA revision to be presented to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-sixth session (1991).

44. The Sub-Committee recognized that the success of the process was important for many organizations. They had made significant commitments of resources and had suffered impacts on other work. The Sub-Committee observed that the current schedule of the review process would permit the most recent developments in ILO work on employment in the informal sector to be taken into account. The Sub-Committee noted the importance of the Handbooks to the implementation of the revised SNA in countries and the desirability of having them available in conjunction with the revised SNA.

45. The Sub-Committee was pleased to note the significant role the regional commissions were playing and, in particular, their role in regional meetings and in consulting with countries to get their inputs, including interaction with users. Some uncertainty was expressed, however, about funding for the second round of regional meetings in 1991, and in that context the possibility of an interregional meeting was being considered. It was considered that regional meetings could be held in 1992 or 1993 to review the final draft of the SNA.

46. The Sub-Committee considered that inter-agency collaboration in the work on the SNA review was an excellent example of effective co-ordination and provided an example for use in other fields of statistics. The Sub-Committee noted that, in addition to the Inter-Secretariat Working Group itself, the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities and the Statistical Commission had been important in the effective co-ordination, and the co-ordination process had been helped by the significant distribution of documents and information and the ready contact among the involved organizations when needed.

47. Because of the importance of the review of the SNA, the Sub-Committee decided to include it on the agenda of its next session and requested a progress report from the Statistical Office.

G. Co-ordination of technical co-operation in statistics

48. The item was discussed on the basis of reports prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/10), ESCAP (SA/1990/10/Add.1), ECA (SA/1990/10/Add.2), ILO (SA/1990/10/Add.6), FAO (SA/1990/10/Add.7), the World Health Organization (WHO) (SA/1990/10/Add.10), IMF (SA/1990/10/Add.11), the World Bank (SA/1990/10/Add.12), and EUROSTAT (SA/1990/10/Add.13). Several of the reports focused on the selected sub-theme of technical co-operation involving bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations.

49. The Sub-Committee welcomed the above reports and the supplementary oral presentations by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, ESCAP, ECA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), WHO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), IMF, the World Bank and EUROSTAT, which described in detail various technical co-operation initiatives undertaken recently and various sources for funding, including some new sources which were being tapped. The Sub-Committee considered that current co-ordination arrangements were working well but could be strengthened. Some mechanisms for this were discussed, including a newsletter (see para. 52 below).

50. The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation for the financial and manpower assistance extended to the major technical co-operation programmes in Africa, such as regional advisory services in population matters funded by UNFPA, the Statistical Development Programme for Africa supported by UNDP, the closely related assistance of the European Economic Community (EEC) to the Statistical Training Programme for Africa and the support for regional advisory services for the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) provided by ILO. The Sub-Committee further noted the initiatives undertaken and ideas proposed by various organizations for the future strengthening of statistical systems in Africa; notable among these were the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, recently adopted by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers and the ECA Conference of Ministers; the proposals of the World Bank on general strengthening of statistical systems in sub-Saharan Africa; the planned programme of statistical activities of EUROSTAT; the plan of UNESCO for strengthening national statistical infrastructure in the field of education; and the programme of WHO on the strengthening of epidemiological capability and future trend assessment. The Addis Ababa Plan of Action set out the co-ordination and institutional arrangements involved in the further provision of technical co-operation to African countries, in which all relevant multilateral and bilateral agencies were expected to play a role. In that connection, the Sub-Committee noted that ECA was planning to organize as soon as possible a working group to formulate concrete proposals for the implementation of the Plan of Action. The Sub-Committee was informed that the World Bank was conducting three country case studies to identify how the recommendations in its already published proposals could best be transformed into action programmes at the country level. The findings of the case studies would be shared with interested multilateral and bilateral agencies. The Sub-Committee was also informed that in view of the various technical co-operation initiatives in Africa, UNDP was currently in the process of examining its role in evolving a strategy for

strengthening statistical system in Africa at the regional, subregional and country levels. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of co-ordination in the development of such strategies. Accordingly, it agreed that at its next session, it should examine in greater detail the co-ordination issues involved on the basis of reports to be prepared by ECA and other agencies.

51. Several organizations noted that training would continue to be an important component of their technical co-operation activities in the field of statistics and stressed that full account was being taken of existing institutional and co-ordination arrangements.

52. The Sub-Committee acknowledged the important contribution made by technical co-operation activities of bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations in developing national statistical capabilities, and several members spoke of their working relationships with those organizations. The Sub-Committee recognized that co-ordination between multilateral and bilateral agencies was of vital importance if statistical development was to proceed in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The Sub-Committee stressed, however, that co-ordination depended on access to information on bilateral technical co-operation activities and such information was often not easily available, at least at the formal institutional level. It recalled that the Directory of Technical Co-operation Activities in Statistics (ST/ESA/STAT/105/Rev.2) was expected to play a useful role in that regard, and regretted that it had not been printed as yet although it had been completed at the time of the twenty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission in 1989. The Sub-Committee urged the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to take the necessary steps to minimize the delay already experienced in printing that publication. It also requested the Statistical Office to investigate the feasibility of producing a newsletter or other mechanism for circulating up-to-date details of both multilateral and bilateral technical co-operation activities.

53. The Sub-Committee was aware that policies of UNDP and UNFPA relating to project execution and agency support costs were undergoing modification and recognized that such changes would have implications for technical co-operation in statistics. It decided to place the topic on the agenda for its twenty-fifth session, as the special sub-theme under its consideration of technical co-operation. It invited all interested members of the Sub-Committee to prepare reports for that item. In view of the difficulty that some members of the Sub-Committee had reported in responding to the questionnaire used by UNDP for the collection of data for its national development co-operation reports, the Sub-Committee requested UNDP to explore the feasibility of modifying that questionnaire in order to facilitate the reporting of assistance provided through intercountry projects.

H. Monitoring achievement of social goals in the 1990s

54. The item was discussed on the basis of reports prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/11), FAO (SA/1990/11/Add.1), WHO (SA/1990/11/Add.2) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (SA/1990/11/Add.3) and an oral report by a representative of the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

55. The Sub-Committee was informed of the progress in the implementation of the joint proposal of UNICEF, UNFPA and the Statistical Office to establish a statistical programme to monitor the achievement of social goals in the 1990s which are recommended by international bodies for adoption by national Governments. Since the twenty-third session of the Sub-Committee, both UNICEF and UNFPA had further clarified their goals with respect to the achievement of social progress. In addition, terms of reference for a pilot study to be conducted in six countries had been tested in one country, and the results of the test were being studied; the role of the regional commissions in the pilot studies was to be further articulated. The Sub-Committee was also informed that the technical consultation among FAO, the World Bank and the Statistical Office on the socio-economic indicators programme of FAO had recommended exchange of information and co-ordination of work among the three agencies, especially on methodological research and the study of analytical techniques for identifying vulnerable groups.

56. The reports presented by FAO, WHO and UNICEF informed the Sub-Committee of aspects of activity in that field being undertaken by the three respective agencies, and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs provided an oral report on work relating to goals for the advancement of women. UNICEF was working on a report detailing indicators for monitoring its goals, the frequency of related data collection and the preferred methods of collection and processing. WHO had reformulated indicators and added three new sub-indicators to be used in the next evaluation cycle of the Global Health for All Strategy. To facilitate that evaluation, a more elaborated common framework would be used. FAO had issued guidelines on socio-economic indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of agrarian reform and rural development in 1989 which would serve as instruments for developing long-term programmes of socio-economic indicators in countries to monitor progress towards goals. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had carried out initial studies on relevant indicators for several goals that had been established for the advancement of women.

57. The Sub-Committee welcomed the reports of the various initiatives. It emphasized the role of the regional commissions in proceeding with the joint proposal of UNICEF, UNFPA and the Statistical Office. It also noted that although household surveys were expected to play a major role in the programme, other national statistical operations were to be utilized as much as practicable. In that connection, the Sub-Committee observed the relevance of the new initiative on vital statistics and civil registration considered under the agenda item "Civil registration and vital statistics". The Sub-Committee also observed that even with respect to household surveys the primary emphasis of the programme was to make use of existing survey programmes, such as the NHSCP, the Social Dimensions of Adjustment project (SDA) and the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). In that connection the Sub-Committee indicated the desirability of associating with the programme other international programmes, such as the Pan Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD). It also recommended that the feasibility of adding various indicators on the situation of women and poverty to the various programmes should be studied.

58. The Sub-Committee also considered the Human Development Report 1990 3/ that had recently been issued by UNDP. The Sub-Committee noted that it was

comprehensive and attempted a basic measurement of human development. It endeavoured to analyse the record of human development for the last three decades and the experience of 14 countries in managing economic growth and human development. Several policy conclusions from that experience underpinned a detailed analysis of human development strategies during the 1990s and included a special focus on the problems of human development in an increasingly urban setting. The report also contained human development indicators, including a human development index. 4/

59. The Report attempted the basic measurement of human development. The Sub-Committee recognized the significant effort that had been applied to the project. Nevertheless, the report raised two kinds of questions for the Sub-Committee, namely, substantive questions on the approach to measurement and index construction, on the one hand, and inter-agency co-ordination on the other hand. Several members of the Sub-Committee had serious reservations about some aspects of the publication, including the attribution and use of data. Closer collaboration between the producers of such types of reports and the organizations from which the data were obtained was necessary to ensure that the producers of the Reports had an adequate understanding of the nature and sources of the data and their appropriateness for the particular uses. The question of co-ordination was also raised and the view was expressed that such a comprehensive analysis of social indicators should be the responsibility of the United Nations Secretariat. One member of the Sub-Committee expressed strong concern about the use of composite indexes, since such statistical artefacts were conceptually misleading, as had been established years ago and expressed by the Statistical Commission. The Sub-Committee was informed by UNDP that it would be pleased to receive comments and suggestions on any aspect of the Report, including substantive issues and those related to co-ordination. To facilitate the preparation of comments, the Sub-Committee requested UNDP to send copies of the Report directly to each member of the Sub-Committee, although each collaborating agency had already been sent a copy and those regional commissions which had not yet received copies would receive them.

60. The Sub-Committee noted that according to the Report, it was the intention of UNDP that the Report would be a genuine United Nations system-wide initiative. 5/ The Sub-Committee welcomed the fact that at the initial stages of planning, the statistical services of a number of organizations had been contacted. Nevertheless, the Sub-Committee expressed concern that at least some members of the Sub-Committee, particularly the regional commissions, had not been consulted at all in preparing the Report and that few, if any, members had been consulted in the subsequent stages of preparation. Consequently, the original intention had not been achieved. The Sub-Committee was pleased to learn that UNDP intended to consult more fully with the concerned agencies, including the regional commissions, in the preparation of future issues of the Report so that more comprehensive co-ordination could be achieved than was possible in the limited time and resources available to prepare the first Report. The Sub-Committee requested UNDP to present a report on plans for future issues of the Human Development Report to the next meeting. In the interim, the Sub-Committee welcomed the fact that UNDP planned to be in contact with agencies as plans for the next issue were developed.

I. National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP)

61. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/12). The Sub-Committee welcomed the report and the progress achieved in the NHSCP in terms of country participation, including the significant increase in the number of participating countries, the movement of a number of countries into the maintenance phase, and the availability of technical studies, workshops, training and co-ordination. The availability of technical studies in a wide range of languages was particularly welcomed.

62. Many members of the Sub-Committee presented their positive assessment of results of the Programme, and the Sub-Committee expressed its gratitude for the continuing support of multilateral and bilateral donors to the Programme, in particular ILO and FAO for their provision of regional advisory support, and UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF for their financial support. An appeal was made to other agencies to consider the provision of technical specialist services to support the NHSCP, particularly in the regional commissions. The Sub-Committee emphasized the significant involvement in the Programme of the specialized agencies, namely, WHO, FAO, ILO, UNESCO and UNICEF, in their own areas of substantive concern and the special role that the regional commissions played in the Programme.

63. The Sub-Committee was pleased to note the positive results achieved in enhancing co-ordination in the past year with a number of other internationally sponsored household survey programmes, including PAPCHILD, DHS, the Inter-Agency Food and Nutrition Surveillance Programme (IFNS), the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and the Social Dimensions of Adjustment Project (SDA). The Sub-Committee emphasized the importance of continuing those efforts at co-ordination.

64. The Sub-Committee noted the new elements of the Regional Household Survey Training Project currently financed by UNDP with technical support by India, namely the training of trainers and its expansion to include training of trainees from Africa and West Asia, and was informed of the need to find funding to continue that activity beyond 1990.

65. The Sub-Committee was pleased to be informed of the decision of UNFPA and the intention of UNICEF to provide continuing support for the Programme beyond 1991 in the light of the continuing need for support to countries in that field. It also welcomed the plan of UNFPA to hold a meeting late in 1990 to consider a special round of surveys in sub-Saharan Africa under the umbrella of the Programme and in collaboration with ECA. The Sub-Committee requested UNFPA to report on progress on that matter to the Sub-Committee at its next session.

66. In view of the importance of that subject, the Sub-Committee requested the Statistical Office to prepare a progress report on the Programme at its next session.

J. Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and Social Dimensions of Adjustment Project (SDA)

67. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by the World Bank (SA/1990/13) covering the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS), which was a study by the World Bank, and the Social Dimensions of Adjustment Project (SDA) which was co-sponsored by the World Bank, UNDP and the African Development Bank.

68. The Sub-Committee was pleased to note the significant progress made in the SDA on developing the conceptual framework, defining survey modalities and instruments, developing prototype instruments, planning and developing the survey programmes, training and co-ordination. The Sub-Committee welcomed the fact that the technical aspects had evolved through consultations with countries, international organizations and other experts. Members of the Sub-Committee expressed their interest in receiving technical documentation at all stages of the work, and in particular, in receiving documentation on the prototype instruments which were scheduled to be finished shortly.

69. Many members of the Sub-Committee expressed their satisfaction with the progress of the SDA in its technical and co-ordination aspects during the past year. UNFPA had been included in the SDA Steering Committee; the World Bank had organized meetings on SDA in Africa and participated in other relevant meetings, which had provided forums for country priorities to be expressed; the World Bank and EUROSTAT had exchanged experts, and joint missions had been carried out involving staff from NHSCP, ECA and other agencies. The Sub-Committee welcomed the establishment of the Statistical Sub-Committee of the Working Group of the SDA Steering Committee for the consideration of detailed technical questions. The Statistical Sub-Committee was addressing such questions as priority-setting, co-ordination, especially at the country level, the relationship of the programme to other survey programmes and other issues. The Sub-Committee noted that the SDA was presently under evaluation in accordance with the stipulations of the project document.

70. The World Bank welcomed the offers of further assistance and co-operation that were made by several members of the Sub-Committee in relation to the development of documentation, training activities and technical support for country programmes.

71. The point was made that survey programmes could be of value in Eastern Europe under the new conditions that prevailed in those countries, and ECE requested that it be provided with copies of technical documentation relating to the NHSCP and the LSMS. It was noted that several Eastern European countries had expressed their intention of participating in LSMS. The Sub-Committee was also pleased to note the improved co-ordination that had evolved with respect to LSMS. For example, detailed consultations had taken place between the LSMS staff and the staff of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on methodological aspects of the study. The fact that the joint effort was oriented towards strengthening the national statistical offices was welcomed.

72. The Sub-Committee expressed its appreciation for the range of co-operative

efforts that had been introduced among the SDA, LSMS, NHSCP and other programmes and activities. In view of the importance of survey programmes and activities, the Sub-Committee requested a progress report for its next session.

K. Science and technology statistics

73. The Sub-Committee considered the item on the basis of a report prepared by UNESCO (SA/1990/14).

74. The report covered the current situation of statistics concerning the stock of manpower in scientific and technical fields and resources allocated to research and development. The Sub-Committee welcomed the report and considered it important to be kept informed of developments in those areas. The point was made that a common effort by the international organizations was necessary to overcome weaknesses that existed in data collection in that area of statistics, especially in Africa, despite the existence of methodological guidelines. The relevance of the new world programme for industrial censuses (which would be considered at the twenty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission) as a source of data on research and development activities was also stressed. In addition, the Sub-Committee considered that several issues related to statistics on science and technology had relevance for other fields of statistics, such as labour statistics and work on the revision of the SNA, the latter with respect to the treatment of research and development expenditures.

L. External debt statistics

75. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by IMF (SA/1990/15) and an oral report by the World Bank. The Sub-Committee welcomed the reports, which described developments since its previous session when it had discussed the subject extensively. The subject had taken on added importance in the context of debt reduction and debt write-offs, especially in developing regions. The Sub-Committee considered that the methodological studies which would be an outgrowth of that work would be extremely useful in helping countries measure their national debt, and it welcomed the increased efforts to train national compilers and build debt reporting systems.

M. General price statistics and the International Comparison Programme (ICP)

76. The item was discussed on the basis of reports prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/16), EUROSTAT (SA/1990/17), ECE (SA/1990/19) and CMEA (SA/1990/24).

77. The Sub-Committee welcomed the reports, which dealt largely with the activities and plans of a number of organizations related to phases V and VI of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) and its regional components. It noted that the global results of phase V would be available by the end of 1990. The

Much of the above work was being done on a co-operative basis with other international organizations. For example, EUROSTAT was collaborating with OECD on a joint questionnaire on physical data and on a questionnaire on economic statistics of the environment, and also agreed to work with ECE on the latter. ECE and EUROSTAT were working together on environment statistics methods and classifications. ILO and WHO expected to collaborate on the ILO programme.

85. Important substantive areas were identified as requiring further attention. The integration of economic and environment statistics had implications for the SNA review process as had been recognized in the discussion under the revision of the SNA, and there was a demand from users for environmentally adjusted national accounts aggregates and for links between environment and social statistics. Special methodological difficulties arose in specific areas, such as environment as it related to occupational injuries.

86. The Sub-Committee stressed that because environment statistics covered many spheres of interest and fields of statistics, a substantial effort at co-operation and collaboration in both methodology and data collection was required. That could involve joint questionnaires and exchange of data. In that connection the Sub-Committee requested organizations that were developing questionnaires to send drafts of them to other organizations for comment so that they might have information on what data might become available in the future. The Sub-Committee endorsed the establishment of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Environmental Data and noted the interest on the part of many members of the Sub-Committee to participate in it. In that regard the Sub-Committee considered that efforts should be made to schedule meetings of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group in conjunction with other meetings to promote fullest participation and stressed that it was important for the necessary funding to be made available to permit participation in those essential co-ordination forums.

O. Services statistics

87. The Sub-Committee discussed the item on the basis of reports prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/16/Add.2), EUROSTAT (SA/1990/26) and oral reports by the representatives of UNCTAD, the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) and ECE.

88. Several organizations provided information on the current and planned work in methodological development, data collection and data base development. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of the development of services statistics, and in particular, in the context of the GATT negotiations on trade in services. That was a newer area of statistical development in which the concepts, methods and practices were evolving. The Sub-Committee considered it essential to have the widest possible participation of organizations and developed and developing countries in the development of methodology for services statistics and noted the contribution of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics to achieving this. Effective co-ordination in methodological development and data collection was considered essential. Although it provided a particular challenge under the circumstances of new and evolving work, the Sub-Committee considered that a good

spirit of co-operation existed in that field. For example, the Sub-Committee was pleased to learn that the new initiatives of ECE and the Conference of European Statisticians in the field of services would concentrate on the collection of statistics and the dissemination of the methodological outputs of the Voorburg Group and others, rather than work on the development of new methodologies. The Sub-Committee also welcomed the plan of EUROSTAT and OECD to circulate to other interested organizations copies of the draft questionnaire they were developing for collection of statistics from countries, and noted that UNCTAD was making an effort to gather statistics on international trade in services from developing countries to complement similar efforts of other organizations that concentrated on developed countries.

P. Informal sector

89. The Sub-Committee discussed the item on the basis of a report prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/16/Add.2). The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of further development of definitions of the informal sector and compiling statistics on the subject. The Sub-Committee recalled its discussion of the work done by ILO on employment in the informal sector under the agenda item on the revision of the SNA (see para. 44 above).

Q. Population and housing censuses

90. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/16).

91. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of population and housing censuses as a basic source of social and demographic data and data on the economically active population. It also recognized that a high level of co-ordination had been achieved on work in that field. It was pleased to learn of the various projects under way in a number of regions. The Sub-Committee expressed its gratitude to UNFPA for its support for a wide range of activities for development and use of population and housing censuses, and expressed the hope that the revised policy guidelines of UNFPA would continue to be supportive of that work. The Sub-Committee stressed the usefulness of the regional and subregional workshops which had been organized by the regional commissions in collaboration with the Statistical Office and ILO. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of including in the censuses, questions on children ever born and children surviving by gender, which were recommended topics in Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses. 6/ They were important for monitoring a wide range of demographic and social issues and could be included on a complete count or sample basis.

92. The Sub-Committee welcomed the publication by ILO and UNESCO of comprehensive reports summarizing census results since 1945 in the areas of particular concern to those agencies. The Sub-Committee was also interested to hear of the developments in the United Nations Demographic Yearbook Data Base, supported by UNFPA, which would improve the availability of a wide range of demographic data from censuses and other sources in a variety of user-friendly ways.

93. In view of the many activities currently under way relating to population and housing censuses in a number of organizations, the Sub-Committee decided to include the subject on the agenda of its next session and requested the Statistical Office to provide a progress report.

R. Civil registration and vital statistics

94. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/16).

95. The Sub-Committee welcomed the progress that had been made in the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems, which was an important instrument for monitoring the achievement of social goals, especially given that the civil registration system was uniquely well-suited to provide timely and reliable data. It expressed its appreciation to the Statistical Office for the lead role it had played and to UNFPA and UNICEF for their indications of financial support, and invited other international organizations to consider providing support. The Sub-Committee recalled that UNFPA was revising its policy guidelines on data collection and expressed the hope that UNFPA would take the Programme into account in the revised guidelines. The point was made that although there were accelerating reforms to civil registration and vital statistics systems in some developing countries, in some regions Governments had not paid much attention to civil registration systems and that some encouragement needs to be provided to them to adopt or improve these most useful systems.

96. The Sub-Committee reiterated its view that the regional commissions should be closely involved in the development and implementation of the Programme and noted that the Programme was an example of effective collaboration with non-governmental organizations, in particular with the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics. The Sub-Committee considered it important to develop adequate consultative and co-ordination arrangements for that Programme as had been developed for population and housing censuses and for household survey programmes.

S. Social statistics and indicators

97. The item was discussed on the basis of reports prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (SA/1990/16/Add.1) and (SA/1990/16/Add.2) and oral reports by representatives of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, UNESCO, ESCAP, and ECLAC. Those reports covered various aspects of general social statistics, statistics on the situation of women and statistics on special population groups covering methodology, data collection, data base development and dissemination and use of the data. The Sub-Committee recalled that its discussions under the item "Monitoring achievement of social goals in the 1990s" (see paras. 54-57 above) were relevant to the present subject.

98. The Sub-Committee welcomed the reports and oral statements, which stressed the growing importance of social statistics and indicators, as the international

community was placing increased emphasis on matters of social concern, and social goals would be included in the International Development Strategy for the 1990s. That emphasis, along with other requirements, was increasing the need for current social statistics, a need that was difficult to satisfy, since much of the data in that field were derived from population and housing censuses which in most countries were held at intervals of approximately 10 years. Country coverage also needed to be improved since the minimum essential key data, for example, data on literacy, were missing for many developing countries. While countries had indicated that improving social statistics was a high priority, and in some regions work was progressing towards that end, in other regions, projects had remained unfunded.

99. The Sub-Committee noted that the situation could be improved in part by a better compilation of existing statistics. New series that were considered appropriate for measuring the achievement of goals could be developed, for example, statistics of women in decision-making positions, and the Sub-Committee noted that the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs would collect that series in the immediate future. The situation was also expected to be helped by the current work of the Statistical Office on methods of measuring women's participation and production in the informal sector in the context of national accounting and other studies of that kind.

100. The Sub-Committee requested that data bases, such as the International Disability Statistics Data Base (DISTAT) and the Women's Indicators and Statistics Data Base (WISTAT) and others in the social field, be maintained and updated periodically with special effort given to making the data more current. The Sub-Committee also urged the completion of the Compendium of Social Statistics (United Nations publication, forthcoming) and stressed that it should be published on a timely basis.

101. The Sub-Committee recognized that while much had been achieved in the area of social statistics and indicators, much remained to be done. There were gaps in data and there were methodological problems. However, the major survey programmes, such as NHSCP, LSMS, SDA and the joint social monitoring programme of UNICEF, UNFPA and the Statistical Office, combined with traditional population and housing censuses and administrative records and more special compilations, such as the planned effort by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to collect data on women in decision-making positions, offered considerable promise. In addition it was recognized that important methodological work in many of the essential areas was being carried out. In view of those factors, the Sub-Committee decided to consider the matter further at its next session and requested the Statistical Office to prepare a progress report on the subject.

T. Indicative patterns of consumption

102. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (SA/1990/20) and an oral report by the Director of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. The UNRISD report covered the meeting of a group of experts convened as a preparatory

meeting for a meeting of high-level experts on development indicators to review the results of work in progress, which was scheduled for April 1991.

103. The Sub-Committee welcomed the reports and recalled the discussions of that issue at previous sessions of the Sub-Committee and at the twenty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission. The Sub-Committee recognized that work on indicative patterns of consumption was of great interest to a number of intergovernmental bodies. Given the wide-ranging nature of the issue and the potential implications for statistical co-ordination and development at the national and international levels, the Sub-Committee stressed that the organizations involved should work closely together. It requested a progress report from UNRISD for the next session and also requested UNRISD to continue to consult with all concerned organizations on plans for the upcoming meeting of high-level experts.

U. Status in employment classification

104. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by ILO (SA/1990/23). The Sub-Committee welcomed the information provided concerning the revision of the status in employment classification which was being done in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. The revision was seen to have implications for other fields of statistics, particularly the revision of the SNA, and the Sub-Committee requested ILO to circulate intermediate documents to interested agencies as they were developed.

V. Tourism and migration statistics

105. The item was discussed on the basis of a report prepared by WTO (SA/1990/21).

106. The Sub-Committee was pleased to learn of the progress made in tourism statistics in the areas of data collection, processing and dissemination, methodological development, technical co-operation and analysis and in the use of tourism statistics. It took note of the plan to convene an International Conference on Tourism Statistics jointly with the Government of Canada from 25 to 28 June 1991.

107. Many members of the Sub-Committee described their positive experiences in co-operation and collaboration with WTO in areas of mutual concern. They considered that there was a high degree of co-ordination in the work on tourism and related areas of statistics. The Sub-Committee was pleased to learn of the intention of WTO to consult with the regional economic commissions on its statistical development programmes. The Sub-Committee requested WTO to prepare a report for its next session, giving due regard to the methodological developments that would be under way leading up to the International Conference.

W. Base year for statistics

108. The Sub-Committee discussed the item on the basis of oral reports. The Sub-Committee noted the different practices and the difficulties faced by organizations concerning the adoption and implementation of a base year for statistics and recognized that that was a challenge for co-ordination. The Sub-Committee recognized that a number of factors were involved in any decision on the choice of base year. Those included: (a) using a relatively recent year as the base year for many kinds of analysis; (b) using a year that reflected relatively stable conditions with respect to the phenomenon being measured; (c) using a year that could be as uniform among as many organizations and fields of statistics as possible; (d) national practices and the availability of statistics at the international level; and (e) the special circumstances in individual fields of statistics and the special requirements of different groups of users. The Sub-Committee considered that individual organizations, in response to requirements within their organizations and of their main external users would necessarily take their own approaches to that question, although that would create some difficulties in the use of data by analysts using statistics from a number of international sources. Indeed, even within certain organizations, different approaches might be taken with respect to different sets of data. The Sub-Committee decided to consider the matter again at a future session based on written reports to be prepared by the organizations concerned.

X. Co-ordination of ad hoc statistical inquiries to countries from non-statistical units of organizations

109. The Sub-Committee discussed the item on the basis of oral reports. The Sub-Committee recalled previous discussions of that subject during its last several sessions and the review arrangements that had been set in place in most organizations. For most organizations there had been no new problems or need for initiatives in that field in the past year. However, the Sub-Committee welcomed an organizational development at IMF which was aimed in part at co-ordinating the data needs of, and data reporting to, the organization, a development which would contribute to meeting the objective of co-ordination of data collection.

Y. Plan of action to strengthen epidemiological capability and future trend assessment in production and use of health statistics

110. The Sub-Committee took note of the plan of action being proposed by WHO to accelerate technical co-operation aimed at strengthening national epidemiological capability and future trend assessment in countries. The programme would aim in part at assisting in improving production of the appropriate data at the country level and the enhancement of its use. The programme would require co-ordination with statistical programmes of other organizations and financial support. The Sub-Committee welcomed the intention of WHO to circulate a draft of the proposed plan to members of the Sub-Committee for comment.

Z. Organization of work

111. The Sub-Committee noted the benefits to all participants of the timely distribution of documents, although it was recognized that their distribution at, or immediately before, the session, while of limited value for the session itself, was still of considerable use in terms of keeping organizations informed of developments. The suggestion was made that the Sub-Committee, when considering the agenda for future sessions, should consider the possibility of identifying subjects which required substantive discussion and those which would be considered of an informational nature to be discussed only if a member of the Sub-Committee considered it necessary. In that regard the Sub-Committee noted that its sessions provided the only regular opportunity for the discussion of a wide range of concerns in the statistical field and had been found to be invaluable. Appropriate discussion of all items on the agenda properly reflected the divergent interests of the various organizations represented in the Sub-Committee and provided a full opportunity for all members to be informed of developments in many areas, including those not of primary concern to them, and to learn from them and contribute related experiences. Each item was discussed only to the extent required, and the Sub-Committee always was able to work successfully within the five-day limit of the meetings and discuss all issues. Consequently, the Sub-Committee decided that all subjects included on the agenda should be considered for discussion.

112. The Sub-Committee reviewed the decisions taken and conclusions reached during its discussions at the present and prior sessions. The work of the Sub-Committee was seen as successfully promoting co-ordination in statistical work, and many specific examples of that success were apparent despite some constraints on co-ordination among agencies resulting from the special needs and situations that may, from time to time, face individual agencies in certain contexts. The Sub-Committee also noted the successes achieved by the various related working groups and intersecretariat groups that existed for promoting co-ordination in particular fields of statistics, and considered that an even greater potential existed if the Sub-Committee were, in future, to provide even fuller policy guidance to them.

113. The Sub-Committee agreed that, in view of the role that some regional banks were playing in international statistical work and as users of international statistics, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank would be invited to participate in future sessions of the Sub-Committee on subjects of particular concern to them.

114. The Sub-Committee noted with appreciation that the Organizational Committee of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination at its session in October 1989 had decided, following the recommendation of the Sub-Committee at its twenty-third session, that the report of the Sub-Committee should be brought to the attention of the CCSQ(OPS) in view of the high degree of interorganizational collaboration that was being undertaken in operational matters relating to statistics and statistical development. Consequently, the report of the Sub-Committee was expected to be considered by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities (CCSQ(OPS))) at its session at New York later in 1990.

AA. Preparations for the twenty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission (1991)

115. The Sub-Committee noted that discussion under many of the agenda items had implications for the preparations for the twenty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission. The Sub-Committee was informed of a number of requests distributed by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to provide input to the preparations for the Commission. The Sub-Committee, while noting the work-load that such contributions represented, considered it an important part of the overall process of international statistical work and recognized that it was an important element in the co-ordination mechanism.

BB. The structural adjustment process and its implications for national data systems

116. The Sub-Committee took note of the request that had been circulated by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat for input to the paper to the Statistical Commission on the question of structural adjustment and the intention of the Statistical Office to consult further with IMF and the World Bank which had offered assistance once a draft of the paper had been completed.

CC. Time and place and draft provisional agenda of the twenty-fifth session

117. The present session of the Sub-Committee had been relocated to Vienna, since meeting facilities had not been available for the relevant dates at Geneva (see ACC/1990/OC/CRP.5, para. 3). The Sub-Committee recalled that there had been uncertainties about the ability to service previous sessions of the Sub-Committee at Geneva in June due to the large number of large-scale meetings traditionally scheduled at that time. The Sub-Committee reconfirmed the importance of scheduling its sessions immediately before or after the plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians, which met each year in mid- to late June, as that enabled more organizations to participate in the Sub-Committee's session on a cost-effective basis. Virtually full participation had been achieved at the current session in Vienna, and many members had benefited from the opportunity it provided for technical consultations with staff at the international organizations based in Vienna. The Sub-Committee had foreseen those potential benefits at its twenty-third session when many Sub-Committee members had expressed the view that it would be extremely useful if the Sub-Committee meetings could be held at duty stations other than Geneva from time to time as it would provide, *inter alia*, an opportunity to undertake detailed consultations with the technical staff at those duty stations (see ACC/1989/PG/6, para. 71). In the light of those considerations, the Sub-Committee recommended that its twenty-fifth session be held at Vienna from 24-28 June 1991. The Sub-Committee considered that the following items should be included in the draft provisional agenda for its twenty-fifth session:

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
(Documentation: provisional agenda, list of documentation and tentative schedule of discussions)
2. Statistical implications of developments in transition countries.
(Documentation: report by the Inter-Secretariat Group of international organizations on statistical co-operation with eastern and central European countries)
3. Publication and dissemination policy, including co-ordination of statistical data bases:
 - (a) Servicing ad hoc requests for data;
(Documentation: report compiled by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat based on descriptions of experience to be obtained from members of the Sub-Committee)
 - (b) Dissemination of statistics and statistical data bases to developing countries;
(Documentation: reports from organizations)
 - (c) Secondary dissemination;
(Documentation: report by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat incorporating inputs from agencies)
 - (d) Country classification and classifications in use;
(Documentation: report by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat)
 - (e) Other matters.
(Documentation: report of the meeting of the Technical Working Group on Statistical Data Bases; report on the work of ACCIS of relevance to the work of the Sub-Committee)
4. Processing and dissemination of trade statistics.
(Documentation: progress report by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat on trade and transport statistics; report of the Working Group on improving comparability of trade statistics and estimates)

5. Revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA).

(Documentation: progress report from the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat)

6. Statistical implications of the single market of the European Economic Community.

(Documentation: report by the Statistical Office of the European Communities addressing the implications for the broader range of statistical fields, including trade statistics)

7. Co-ordination of technical co-operation in statistics:

- (a) Co-ordination issues involved in strategies for statistical development in Africa;

(Documentation: reports by ECA and other interested agencies)

- (b) Implications for technical co-operation in statistics of changes in UNDP and UNFPA policies relating to project execution and agency support costs.

(Documentation: reports from organizations)

8. Monitoring achievement of social goals in the 1990s.

(Documentation: progress reports and reports of interested organizations covering monitoring and evaluation aspects; report by UNDP on plans for future issues of the Human Development Report)

9. Household surveys:

- (a) National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP);

(Documentation: progress report on the NHSCP by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat; progress report by UNFPA on the special round of surveys in Africa)

- (b) Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and Social Dimensions of Adjustment Project (SDA).

(Documentation: progress reports by the World Bank)

10. Co-ordination of ongoing statistical programmes:

- (a) International Comparison Programme;

- (b) Services statistics;

- (c) Population and housing censuses;
- (d) Social statistics and indicators;
- (e) Indicative patterns of consumption;
- (f) Tourism and migration statistics;
- (g) Environment statistics;
- (h) World programme of industrial statistics.

(Documentation: progress reports by involved organizations)

11. Working arrangements among the organizations with respect to collection and compilation of statistics from Member States.

(Documentation: report by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and other interested organizations)

12. Follow-up to the twenty-sixth session (1991) of the Statistical Commission.

(Documentation: oral reports)

13. Other business.

14. Adoption of the report of the twenty-fifth session.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 3 (E/1989/21), para. 224.

2/ Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 49/Rev.2 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.XVII.8).

3/ Human Development Report 1990, published for the United Nations Development Programme by Oxford University Press, 1990.

4/ Ibid., p. 1.

5/ Ibid., p. v.

6/ United Nations publication, Sales No.E.80.XVII.8.

Annex I

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
SA/1990/1	Draft provisional agenda
SA/1990/1/Rev.1	Provisional agenda
SA/1990/1/Add.1	Tentative schedule of discussions
SA/1990/2	Report of the Technical Working Group on Statistical Data Bases at its 7th meeting, Geneva, 21-22 May 1990
SA/1990/3	Report on the work of ACCIS of relevance to the work of the Sub-Committee
SA/1990/4 and Add.3, 4 and 5	Reports on publication and dissemination policy, including co-ordination of statistical data bases
SA/1990/4/Add.1 and 2	Not issued
SA/1990/5	Report on the use of UN/EDIFACT for transmission of statistical data
SA/1990/6	Progress report on the arrangements for processing and dissemination of international trade statistics
SA/1990/7	Progress report on trade and transport statistics
SA/1990/8	Progress report on the revision of the SNA
SA/1990/9	Report on statistical implications of the single market of the European Economic Community
SA/1990/10 and Add.1, 2, 6, 7 and 10-13	Reports on current issues in technical co-operation focusing on bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations
SA/1990/10/Add.3-5, 8 and 9	Not issued

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
SA/1990/11	Report on monitoring achievement of social goals in the 1990s
SA/1990/11/Add.1	Monitoring in relation to the Programme of Action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
SA/1990/11/Add.2	Report on monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing health for all strategies
SA/1990/11/Add.3	Monitoring achievement of social goals in 1990s (of concern to UNICEF)
SA/1990/12	Report on the National Household Survey Capability Programme
SA/1990/13	Report on the World Bank initiatives on integrated household surveys: Living Standards Measurement Studies and the Social Dimensions of Adjustment
SA/1990/14	Report on UNESCO statistics on science and technology
SA/1990/15	Report on external debt statistics
SA/1990/16	Report on co-ordination of ongoing statistical programmes
	(a) General price statistics and the ICP
	(b) Population and Housing Censuses
	(c) Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
SA/1990/16/Add.1 and annex	(a) Development and co-ordination of general social statistics and indicators
	(b) Development of statistics and indicators on the situation of women
	(c) Environment statistics

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
SA/1990/16/Add.2	(a) Service statistics (b) The informal/formal distinction (c) Statistical programmes for social indicators
SA/1990/17	Report on general price statistics and the ICP
SA/1990/18	Not issued
SA/1990/19	Report on the European Comparison Programme (ECP)
SA/1990/20	Report on patterns of consumption: qualitative aspects of development: report of the preparatory meeting for a meeting of a group of experts, held in Geneva on 16 May 1990
SA/1990/21	Report on tourism statistics
SA/1990/22	Report on environment statistics
SA/1990/23	Report on the revision of the International Classification of Status in Employment
SA/1990/24	Report by CMEA on the major areas of international co-operation in the field of statistics in 1989/90
SA/1990/25	Report on environment statistics
SA/1990/26	Report on services statistics
SA/1990/27	Report on emerging issues and priorities for statistical development
Not numbered	Report on telecommunication statistics

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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* * *

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