

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

10th meeting, 16 May 1998

CONCLUSIONS AND DECISIONS

1. Harmonization and rationalization of development indicators

The Committee had before it a paper entitled “Harmonization and rationalization of development indicators: problem statement and steps towards a solution” that was prepared by the Statistics Division of DESA and introduced by its Director. The paper identified the problem of uncoordinated proliferation of indicators, inconsistencies among them, as well as the burden placed on national statistical systems. To begin addressing this problem, the Statistics Division proposed to start a process that would of necessity be incremental and long-term. As a first step, an inventory of indicators being produced and published by both UN and non-UN entities would be compiled, with DESA acting as a facilitator. It was underscored that the proposal was not intended to result in developing a definitive single set of indicators for mandatory universal use. Entities will continue to compile, analyse and disseminate their own sets of indicators as they see fit. At the same time, a very limited number of indicators that are commonly used for universal purposes should be identified, analysed and agreed upon so that the consistency of their meaning and interpretation is ensured.

The Committee reached the following decisions:

1. The Statistics Division of DESA, in continued cooperation with statistical units of both UN and non-UN entities, should start preparing an inventory of development indicators.
2. Representatives of the EC-ESA entities at the ACC Subcommittee on Statistics should hold a meeting alongside the next regular meeting of the Subcommittee to discuss the progress achieved in compiling the inventory and further steps to be taken in developing a clear architecture of development indicators.
3. A dedicated EC-ESA Internet web-site will be constructed containing the inventory as well as information about the project and its progress.