

ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES
Thirty-third session
Madrid, 14-16 September 1999
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

SA/1999/2
20 July 1998

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Report of the Bureau meeting

New York, 18 June 1998

1. The Bureau met on 18 June 1998, immediately after the thirty-second session of the Subcommittee, to follow-up decisions made by the Subcommittee during the session. The Bureau took the following actions:

(a) Classification of statistics and statistical activities

The Bureau noted that the Subcommittee had "requested ILO and ESCAP to work together and prepare a concrete proposal for the minor changes needed to bring the classifications into correspondence (the statistics part of the ACC classification and the classification used in the integrated presentation of statistical programmes of ECE, OECD and EUROSTAT), circulate the proposal to members of the Subcommittee for comment, and provide the (amended) proposal to the Chairman of the Subcommittee with a short note explaining the background, what had been done, and the results. The Subcommittee agreed that the Chairman would forward the proposal to the Chairman of the Conference of European

Statisticians for consideration." The Bureau requested ILO and ESCAP to draft a covering letter, by which the Chairman of the Subcommittee would forward the above mentioned proposals and notes to the Chairman of the CES. The ILO and ESCAP offered to complete this work quickly and circulate the results to the members of the Bureau, in the first instance, for comments by September 1998.

(b) Agenda for the thirty-third session of the Subcommittee

The Bureau reviewed the provisional agenda that had been approved by the Subcommittee. The Bureau considered that (a) environment statistics might be treated as a priority subject again at the thirty-third session; (b) no special search would be undertaken for a "special topic", in line with the original concept that the "special topic" would be "occasional", emerging from the work and concerns of the Subcommittee; (c) the item "indicator project" needed a clearer, more descriptive title so that readers would understand its coverage; (d) the links between the SNA, GDDS and SDDS should be explored. The Bureau decided to consider the provisional agenda again at its next meeting.

(c) Harmonization and rationalization of indicators

The Bureau decided that it should review developments in the area of indicators at its next meeting, particularly the issues of rationalization of indicators and how the indicators are to be used. The Bureau agreed to try to identify a known user of the indicators and invite that user to join the Bureau in the discussion of these and other related issues at that meeting.

(d) Conduct of the Subcommittee sessions

The Bureau considered that the thirty-second session had been efficient and effective. The Bureau also considered that in future more provision should be made for bilateral and multilateral contacts outside the formal sessions, for example, by setting aside a half day for that purpose while still completing the session in 2½ days. The Bureau also thought it would be desirable to provide for more socialization at the time of the session, for example, by organizing a shared-cost dinner or cocktail one evening. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to contact WTO to work out a proposal for the thirty-third session taking account of the normal working hours in Madrid.

(e) A more pro-active role for the Subcommittee

The Bureau noted that some suggestions had been made during

the Subcommittee's session that the Subcommittee could be more pro-active. The Bureau considered this particularly in terms of the relationship between the Subcommittee and the Statistical Commission, and concluded that the Subcommittee should be forthright in communicating to the Commission the intentions, plans and priorities of the Subcommittee. The Bureau considered that this will be even more important should the Commission itself become more active, particularly through annual meetings, if the proposal on annual meetings is approved.

(f) The role of the Subcommittee and its members in the
Statistical Commission

The Bureau discussed the process by which conclusions are reached by the Statistical Commission, particularly in respect of requests made to the international organizations to carry out particular studies and/or prepare reports for the Commission. The Bureau noted that a suggestion from just one Commission member or observer, if no dissenting opinions are expressed, can end up as a conclusion or request by the Commission. The Bureau concluded that it was essential for members of the Subcommittee to express their views on suggestions that arise during the Commission sessions so that the Commission can take them into account in reaching its conclusions.

(g) Next meeting of the Bureau

The Bureau decided that its next meeting would be held immediately following the Statistical Commission session scheduled for 1-5 March 1999.
