CO-ORDINATION OF NEW WORK PLANNED BY EACH ORGANIZATION

Plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics

Report assembled by the United Nations Statistical Office

1. World Bank
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1. The World Bank does not have a formal work program for the period 1986-89. The following statements deal essentially with the work currently under way and to be undertaken in the course of the next two or three years.

(a) **Income distribution and living standards measurement.** The Bank’s efforts in this area are now focused on developing new methods for measuring and analyzing changes in living standards within a given country. Prototype questionnaires, survey designs, data processing techniques, and analytical plans are being tested in several country settings. These pilot studies will provide a basis for judging the feasibility and relative merits of alternative strategies. The Bank is working in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office in one test site and will share its findings and recommendations as they emerge with the Commission, member States, and other international organizations.

(b) **International Comparison Project (ICP).** The Bank will continue in its efforts to provide assistance in the improvement of methodology, using methods involving shortcuts and limited information. In these endeavors, it will work closely with other international organizations, especially the U.N. Statistical Office.

(c) **International Trade Statistics.** The Bank has recently completed work on estimating import/export unit value and quantum indices for some 60 developing countries. These indices, based on reported and estimated trade
statistics, will largely be used within the Bank but will also be made available to other agencies and ultimately will be published in the Bank’s statistical publications. Further work to refine these indices will continue.

(d) **Computing activities.** The Bank has completed work on establishing a comprehensive data-base management system. This has led to the integration of various data bases and provides service to a large variety of users within the Bank in a "user-friendly" environment. A standardization of concepts and the establishment of procedures for statistical computations built around the information resource management concept is an integral part of the system. The system which centers around a mainframe and with a large number of personal computers also enables updating of the data base through spreadsheets. Further work is underway to link the system to the data bases of the other international agencies to facilitate access and exchange data.

(e) **Data needed for monitoring and evaluation.** A considerable amount of work will be undertaken in the next several years to define the collection procedures for assembling data needed for project implementation and evaluation in agriculture and rural development. Issues covering data content, survey design and the technology needed for the manipulation of the data will be dealt with. A manual has been produced for use in member States. In addition, the Bank, in coorporation with other agencies, hopes to test alternative survey approaches for obtaining timeliness and reliable estimates of food production, especially in countries of sub-Saharan Africa.
(f) Improvement of international comparability of national accounts data. The Bank computes GNP per capita estimates in US dollars and uses these in the operational context. These estimates are also published in the World Bank Atlas and are used extensively by other agencies. Underlying methodological and coverage differences do reduce the comparability of these numbers. The Bank has in recent years embarked on a work program which will evaluate the quality of the GNP numbers and the appropriateness of conversion factors used in calculating per capita numbers in terms of US dollars. It is proposed to collect and evaluate available information on the methodologies employed by national statistical agencies in compiling the national accounts. The Bank will seek the assistance of the other international agencies engaged in the collection, compilation and publication of national accounts data. A longer-term work program geared to the systematic compilation of national accounts including the provision of technical assistance to national Governments, is being formulated. Since the Bank’s own resources are limited, it will work closely with other agencies including the Regional Commissions. The Bank as a participant in the inter-secretariat group on national accounts, and the Expert Groups on the revision of the SNA, will identify issues of concern to developing countries, and provide such inputs as appropriate towards the revision of the SNA.

Debtor Reporting System (DRS)

The scope of the statistics to be reported under the DRS remains unchanged from previous years. The Bank is, however, actively seeking to enlarge the number of countries that report private nonguaranteed debt data (in aggregated form) under the DRS.
World Debt Tables

The Bank has expanded the range of standard debt information published on a country-by-country basis in its annual publication, the World Debt Tables. The standard format for each country now includes (i) public and publicly guaranteed debt (derived from reported information on individual loans); (ii) private nonguaranteed debt (derived from reported information where available; otherwise estimated); (iii) short-term debt (estimated from creditor and debtor sources); and (iv) use of IMF credits. Private nonguaranteed debt data are not available for all countries, but will be expanded to cover all countries for which this form of debt is believed significant. Additional debt and debt service ratios have been included in the annual publication to reflect the expanded debt range of information that is now available.

Cooperation with other Debt Data Compilers

The Bank has continued to cooperate with the other major official compilers of debt data through the International Compilers' Working Group. This Group is seeking both to harmonize practices and standards between the compiling institutions in order to facilitate reconciliation of their published data, and also to make these data more accessible to outside analysts by explaining the principal differences between them. The Bank has contributed working papers to the Group's Technical Subcommittee on (i) the operation of the DRS; and (ii) accounting for arrears and debt reorganization.