MATTERS ARISING FROM THE WORK OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION AND ITS WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES AND COORDINATION

(b) Coordination of the follow-up to the statistical implications of recent major United Nations conferences including the coordinating mechanism that ACC has put in place

(Indicators Compiled by International Organizations)

Report prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division

1. To address the issue of coordination among agencies in the compilation and dissemination of indicators used to monitor follow-up to the global conferences, the ACC Task Force on an Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development requested the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) to develop an inventory of all the indicators produced by the United Nations system.

2. To fulfil this task, UNSD has developed a model for the collection of information related to the indicators produced by the United Nations common system and a database where the

SA/1997/1.
information will be included. This inventory has been designed to give sources with detailed description of each indicator and cover a wide range of concerns, e.g. economics, environment, energy, industry, trade, social, population, health, etc.

3. The United Nations Statistics Division has tested the database with information related to indicators produced and published by the Division and has prepared a report which describes how this database was developed and presents findings from the initial analysis of the data included. This report is made available as a background document for the subcommittee meeting.

4. Now, with the collaboration of the other agencies, UNSD is in the process of extending the database to the United Nations System. A request for information has already been sent to organizations (see Attachment B). The database intends to cover, as it is reported in Attachment A, all the indicators produced by the agencies which are results of either a process of data collection at the national level or an estimation by the agencies. An indicator has been defined as a simple or complex statistic which can be used to monitor the need for and the impact of programmes and policies.

5. The new extended database will provide a useful tool for all the United Nations organizations and agencies giving sources and detailed information on the indicators produced in different areas within the United Nations system. It will help in (a) identifying international sources for core sets of indicators to
be used to monitor international conferences; (b) strengthening joint and collaborative actions; (c) implementing system-wide consultations on policy and programme initiatives with a view to avoiding unnecessary overlaps; and (d) identifying gaps.

6. The goal of the database is neither to judge which indicators should be produced, nor by which agency. It is an effort to clearly illustrate the state-of-play as it now stands for the ACC.

7. UNSD will coordinate the development of the database and will be responsible for its finalization and updating. Using the information included in the database, UNSD will produce a report on Monitoring the Development of Statistical Indicators by the United Nations System which will be distributed to the ACC members. The database will be available to all.

8. The Subcommittee may wish to provide its guidance and comments on the above and request organizations to respond positively to the request from the United Nations to provide the necessary data in the appropriate format (see Attachment A).
Attachment A

Information to be included in the
Inventory of Indicators Produced by the United Nations
Common System

The Inventory of Indicators Produced by the United Nations
Common System will include:

1. Indicators produced in the last two years by the
   agencies which are results of either a process of data
   collection at the national level or an estimation by
   the agency. Only indicators that are collected by
   agencies directly from the countries or are produced as
   original estimates" will be included.

2. For each of the indicators above, information related
   to its dissemination, year of reference, breakdown
   variables (sex, age, urban/rural residence, products,
   activities, others), definition, methodology, unit of
   measurement, number of countries covered, estimates,

   "Indicators which are collected and published by the
   agency from other international organizations will not be
   included.
according to the attached codebook. The information should be provided by the agencies in a spreadsheet or database format such as Lotus, Paradox, Access, Quattro Pro, or Excel. Attached are examples, in Access format, of information collected for two indicators, economically active population by industry, sex, age and urban/rural residence, and number of public parks in selected cities.

In the context of the Inventory of Indicators Produced by the United Nations Common System, an indicator is defined as a simple or complex statistic compiled to measure and interpret a situation used to monitor and evaluate changes. A statistic is an indicator only when it can be used to monitor the need for and the impact of programmes and policies.

Since an indicator is directed to providing the information needed for policy purpose, it should be defined with particular areas of policy in mind. Therefore, each agency, in specialized area, may decide which of the statistics collected from the countries can be used as analytical decision-making tools and consequently be included in the Inventory.
1. **Indicator name** | Name of specific indicator (i.e. GNP per capita)
2. **Publication** | Title and reference of the publication or database through which the indicator is disseminated. Specify if the indicator is not published
3. **Agency** | Name of the office/department which produce the indicator
4. **Year of publication** | Publication's reference year. Specify if the publication is disseminated regularly, i.e. annually, monthly.
5. **Year of indicator** | Indicator's reference year. If the indicator refers to different years or is calculated annually specify the criteria, i.e. least year available, annually.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Sex</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>F</strong> = indicator calculated only for females</td>
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<td><strong>M</strong> = indicator calculated only for males</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MF</strong> = indicator calculated for males and females separately</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TMF</strong> = indicator calculated for total population, male and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>T</strong> = indicator calculated for total population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>NP</strong> = Sex breakdown is not pertinent for the indicator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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|    | Age group    | List of age groups for which the indicator is calculated, **T** if it is not broken down by age, **NP** if the breakdown by age is not pertinent |
|   | Urban/Rural | C = indicator calculated for cities  
|   |            | R = indicator calculated only for rural areas  
|   |            | TUR = indicator calculated for all country, urban and rural areas  
|   |            | U = indicator calculated only for urban areas  
|   |            | UR = indicator calculated for urban and rural areas  
|   |            | URC = indicator calculated for cities, urban and rural areas  
| 9 | Products   | Listing of products (or classification used for products) by which the indicator is broken down. NP if the breakdown by product is not pertinent  
| 10| Activities | Listing of activities (or classification used for activities) by which the indicator is broken down. NP if the breakdown by activity is not pertinent  
| 11| Other breakdowns | Listing classifications used in other breakdowns  
| 12| Definition  | Indicator's operational definition  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Information on the source (census, survey, registry) and on the calculation of the indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unit of measurement</td>
<td>Unit of measurement (i.e. years, dollars).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of countries covered</td>
<td>Number of countries covered in the indicator series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate/National Data</td>
<td>1 = The indicator has been collected from countries 2 = The indicator is a result of an estimation process 3 = For certain countries the indicator has been collected from countries, for others has been estimated (specify the number of countries with estimates in parenthesis)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Note</td>
<td>Any relevant note</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Examples of information collected for indicators included in the United Nations Indicators Database

**Indicator Name:** Economically active population by industry, sex, age and urban/rural residence

**Publication:** Demographic Statistics Database (unpublished), Demographic Yearbook, United Nations Publication Sales No E/F 97 XII 1

**Agency:** UNSD

**Year publication:** annually

**Year indicator:** annually

**Sex:** MF

**Age Group:** (6 plus; 6-14); 15 (16) plus; 15-19; 20-24; 25-29; 30-34; 35-39; 40-44; 45-49; 50-54; 55-59; 60-64; 65-69; 70 plus.

**Urban/Rural:** UR

**Products:** NP

**Activities:** ISIC 1-digit level

**Other breakdowns:** No

**Definition:** The economically active population is defined as all persons of either sex who provide the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services as defined by the United Nations system of National Account and balance’s during a specified reference period. Industry refers to the activity of the establishment in which an economically active person worked during the time reference period established for data on economic characteristics or last worked, if unemployed.

**Methodology:** censuses

**Unit of measurement:** person

**N. of countries covered:** 76
**Indicator Name:** Number of public parks/selected cities

**Publication:** Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics 1995, United Nations
Publication Sales No E.95.XVII.11

**Agency:** UNSD-Habitat

**Year publication:** 1995

**Year indicator:** last year available

**Sex:** NP

**Age Group:** NP

**Urban/Rural:** C

**Products:** NP

**Activities:** NP

**Other breakdowns:** No

**Definition:** "Public parks" refers to the green-surface areas in the city or urban agglomeration where motor-vehicle traffic is usually forbidden and whose main purpose is recreational. In most cities or urban agglomeration these areas are subject to local regulations and public maintenance.

**Methodology:**

**Unit of measurement:** park

**N. of countries covered:** 22

**Estimate/National data:** 1
Dear Sir/Madam,

During the course of work of the ACC Task Force on an Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development, it became apparent that coordination among agencies in the compilation and dissemination of indicators used to monitor follow-up to the global conferences needed improvement. This lack of coordination derives in large part from a simple lack of knowledge among the United Nations agencies and departments of the activities of other agencies, and sometimes within their own institutions. Quite naturally, the lack of information leads to duplication and potential gaps in the collection of indicators. The Task Force therefore requested the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) to undertake an inventory of all the work on indicators undertaken by the United Nations system as a first step toward addressing this situation. I am writing to solicit your assistance in this project.

The United Nations Statistics Division has designed a model for the collection of information related to the indicators and a database containing the information. The database will contain
a straightforward, factual inventory of indicators produced by the United Nations common system. It will cover the entire gamut of indicators produced by the system concerning economics, environment, education, labour, industry, trade, social, population, health, etc.

The Division has tested the database with information related to indicators it produces and publishes itself. The attached report (see Attachment B) describes how this database was developed and presents findings from the initial analysis of the data included in the inventory of UNSD indicators. It also provides a broad overview of the type of information that can be derived from the inventory once it has been extended to the entire United Nations common system.

With your cooperation the database can be extended to the United Nations common system. It is in this regard that I am seeking your collaboration to provide us with detailed information on the indicators produced by your agency as it is described in Attachment A, so that the data base can be updated to include the entire system. I would also appreciate it if you could indicate the name of a focal person by 1 October 1, 1997. A presentation on this project is on the agenda for the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistics to be held in Geneva on 16-18 September 1997.

The final inventory will provide sources and detailed information on the indicators produced in different areas within the United Nations system and will be available to all. I believe that the resulting comparative analysis based on the information collected will provide an important tool to identify duplications of efforts and existing gaps with regard to work on
indicators within the United Nations system. The goal is neither to judge which indicators should be produced, nor by which agency. It is an effort to clearly illustrate the state-of-play as it now stands for the ACC. A decision as to how, or whether, to take steps to rationalize the work on indicators by the United Nations system will be left to the ACC.

You may provide the information directly to the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, Mr Hermann Habermann at the following address: 2 United Nations Plaza, DC2-1420 New York, NY 10017; Tel: (212) 963-4996; Fax: (212) 963-9851; e-mail: habermann@un.org. Technical questions may be addressed to Ms. Angela Me at: 2 United Nations Plaza, DC2-1534 New York, NY 10017; Tel: (212) 963-4823; Fax: (212) 963-1940; e-mail: me@un.org.

Yours sincerely,

Nitin Desai
Under-Secretary-General
Department for Economic and Social Affairs
List of members of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistics
to whom the request of information on indicators was sent

Mr. Yves Berthelot  
Executive Secretary  
Economic Commission for Europe

Mr. Adrianus Mooy  
Executive Secretary  
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Mr. Gert Rosenthal  
Executive Secretary  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Mr. Hazem El-Beblawi  
Executive Secretary  
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Ms. K.Y. Amoako  
Executive Secretary  
Economic Commission for Africa

Mr. Antonio Enriquez Savignac  
Secretary-General  
World Tourism Organization

Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli  
Under-Secretary-General,  
Director General  
United Nations Office at Vienna

Ms. Carol Bellamy  
Executive Director  
United Nations Children's Fund
Mr. Carlos Fortin
Officer-in-Charge
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell
Under-Secretary-General, Director General
United Nations Environment Programme

Dr. Nafis Sadik
Executive Director
United Nations Population Fund

Mr. Wally N'Dow
Assistant Secretary-General
United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Mr. Michel Hansenne
Director General
International Labour Organization

Mr. Jacques Diouf
Director General
Food and Agriculture Organization

Mr. Federico Mayor
Director General
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Dr. Philippe H.P. Rochat
Secretary General
International Civil Aviation Organization

Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima
Director General
World Health Organization

Mr. Mauricio de Maria y Campos
Director General
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
Mr. Relato Ruggero
Director General
World Trade Organization
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Mr. James Gustave Speth
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United Nations Development Programme
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Mr. Yves Franchet
Director General
Statistical Office of the European Communities

Mr. C.L. Kincannon
Chief Statistician and Director of Statistics Directorate
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Ms. Carol Carson
Director
Statistics Department
International Monetary Fund

Ms. Shaida Badiee
Senior Manager
Development Data Group
International Economic Department
The World Bank