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PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES: IMPLEMENTATION AND PROSPECTS

STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Note by the Secretariat

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This note covers the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations since the seventeenth session of the Commission (November 1972). It also provides a brief indication of the contemplated main thrusts of its future activities. The report is divided into two parts: Part I gives an overview of progress in selected areas, under three headings: reorganization and recruitment; relations with other divisions and agencies; and assistance to developing countries. This is followed by a general indication of the main future thrusts. Part II gives detailed descriptions of the work accomplished under the several sub-components of the statistical programme. This note is intended to provide background information to the Commission.

2. The following documents before the Commission at its eighteenth session contain supplementary information on the work of the Office: E/CN.3/445 (electronic data processing of economic and social statistics), E/CN.3/446 (international technical assistance in statistics), E/CN.3/447 (African Census Programme), E/CN.3/448 (development programme for statistics), E/CN.3/450 (draft guidelines on social indicators within the framework of the System of Social and Demographic Statistics), E/CN.3/451 (System of Social and Demographic Statistics for developing countries), E/CN.3/453 (draft international recommendations on statistics of the distributive trades and services), E/CN.3/454 (international trade reconciliation study), E/CN.3/455 (recurrent publications of the Office), E/CN.3/456 (Draft Standard International Trade Classification, Rev. 2), E/CN.3/457 (Draft International Standard Classification of ALL Goods and Services), E/CN.3/460 (draft international guidelines on the national and sector balance-sheet and revaluation accounts of the System of National Accounts), E/CN.3/462 (draft guidelines for the developing countries on statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation), E/CN.3/464 (country practices in national accounting at constant prices).

### Part One: Overview

#### I. PROGRESS

##### A. Reorganization and recruitment

3. Early in 1973, a reorganization of the Office was effected which, while necessarily reflecting the constraints of available resources, was designed to carry forward the substantial achievements and skills built up in the Statistical Office in the past. A feature of the new structure is that it recognizes the need for horizontally oriented (across-the-board) functional responsibilities as well as vertically oriented line responsibilities.

4. Briefly, the new structure consists of:

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(a) Three subject-matter branches: economic statistics, except trade; international trade and related statistics; social and demographic statistics;

(b) One purely functional branch - standards and systems;

(c) A combined subject-matter and functional branch - external relations and dissemination, which includes, in addition to responsibility for inter-agency co-ordination and publications of general statistical compendia, a cost-of-living section and an international price comparison project;

(d) Three central units: (i) an internal co-ordination and planning unit; (ii) a computer systems design and programming unit; and (iii) a technical co-operation unit.

Concerted efforts have been made to heighten awareness of staff members of the interdependence of their activities.

5. To render the new structure effective for carrying forward the objectives set for the Statistical Office, and to help the Office cope with the vast and complex load with which it is charged, it has been essential to inject some additional skilled resources to supplement those already available. This has involved the acquisition of some new posts and a vigorous and sustained recruiting effort to fill vacancies. At the time of writing, almost all vacancies have been or are in the process of being filled, with the exception of those in the computer systems design and programmer area for which suitable candidates are being sought.

#### B. Relations with other divisions and agencies

6. Efforts have continued to render the good working relationships with the servicing and substantive divisions of the Secretariat stronger and more systematic. A focal point of contact has been established with the Publications Board, the Publishing Division, the Printing Service, and the Editorial and Official Records Division of the Department of Conference Services, and the Finance Section and the Resources and Programme Planning Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with beneficial results. A steering committee has been set up, with representation from the Electronic Data Processing and Information Systems Service and the Centre for Development Planning, Projections and Policy (CDPPP) to help review plans for computerization and the development of an integrated data storage and retrieval computer system. Increasingly, substantive problems and plans of the Statistical Office are explored in consultation with other units of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, such as the Resources and Transport Division, the Population Division, the Office for Science and Technology, CDPPP and other areas of the Secretariat. This is done through personal contacts, calling of meetings or setting up task forces on specific matters when necessary. The working

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relationships with the Office of the Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination have likewise received sustained attention.

7. Emphasis has been given to maintaining close working relationships with the statistical divisions of the regional commissions, especially those of the developing world. As in the past, the Statistical Office participated at the meetings of the Conference of African Statisticians (Addis Ababa, November 1973) and the Conference of Asian Statisticians (Delhi, December 1973) and expects to participate in the prospective meeting of statisticians and planners being organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America. These meetings are of help in providing guidelines for policies related to technical co-operation and for evolving programmes of relevance to the developing countries, as well as for rendering more effective the working relationships with the regional commissions. The collaboration on work programmes has been carried farthest with the Economic Commission for Africa, reflecting in part a priority decision by the Statistical Office and in part initiatives taken by ECA. The Statistical Office plans to establish a central liaison function to render communications more effective with the regions and to assist in the development of policies.

8. Priority attention was also given to strengthening the prevailing good working relationships with the specialized agencies, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

9. Special efforts are being made to bring closer selected elements in the work programme of the Statistical Office with corresponding activities of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, especially in national accounts, energy and technical co-operation, as well as the International Comparison Project which is carried out jointly with the World Bank and the University of Pennsylvania. A consultant, hired by the Bank, is studying the differences in the national income estimates published by the Bank and the Statistical Office and ways and means of eliminating or reconciling them.

10. Initiatives have, likewise, been taken to work out improvements in relevant programmes between the Statistical Office and the statistical services of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The use of a computerized prefilled questionnaire is being explored to replace the present conventional OECD-United Nations questionnaire on national accounts, resulting in reduction of the response burden to countries, more consistent and complete figures and some savings of resources. It is expected that the new questionnaire will be used in 1975. Discussions are also underway to rationalize the work on international trade statistics carried out by the two agencies.

11. Discussions have been held with the Secretariat of the United Nations

Environment Programme (UNEP) with a view to setting up within the Statistical Office a small group of statisticians and supporting staff, to be financed by UNEP, which would be dedicated to work on environmental statistics. In this connexion a comprehensive programme of work on environment statistics has been prepared with the help of a consultant, for discussion with UNEP. In compliance with decisions of the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, the Statistical Office has prepared a set of objectives for an inter-agency task force to study co-ordination in the field of environmental statistics and to propose specific steps ensuring such co-ordination as the various agencies develop their programmes in this field. The statement of objectives has been sent to UNEP which has been requested, at the suggestion of the Sub-Committee, to finance the meetings of the task force.

12. Arrangements are being completed for convening a small group of experts to make an over-all review designed to improve harmonization between various international classifications of goods, services, trade, industries, etc. against the background of possibilities afforded by the computer technology, and to make proposals for a programme of action. It is expected that the group will meet in New York for some three months beginning 1 September 1974. The Statistical Office will provide supporting staff.

13. The Statistical Office has been involved in the World Fertility Survey, sponsored by the International Statistical Institute, through participation at the meetings of its committees.

14. A one-day consultation has been arranged, to take place in Geneva, just prior to the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission, between the chief statisticians of the regional commissions and the members of the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities attending the Commission session.

#### C. Assistance to developing countries and related matters

15. High priority has continued to be given to activities designed to assist developing countries. This has involved, among other things, filling several technical advisory posts in the Statistical Office.

16. Strenuous efforts have been made, in close collaboration with ECA, the Population Division, the Office of Technical Co-operation, the Technical Assistance Recruitment Service and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, to provide substantive support to the African Census Programme. Some 40 country experts and regional advisers have had to be recruited. A steering committee has been set up which meets frequently to monitor progress within countries in census planning and execution and to work out solutions to the manifold difficult logistical and administrative problems that arise.

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17. Initiatives have been taken in the form of a proposal, worked out in detail by ECA, to evolve over a number of years, as circumstances permit, in various regions of Africa, a continuing household survey-taking capability, coupled with a long-term plan to take surveys on a range of related topics needed for planning and policy-making. This proposal, strongly supported by the Conference of African Statisticians, would provide an opportunity to international and bilateral donors to finance jointly a major project serving a common interest and thus amplify the effectiveness of the funds. The Conference of Asian Statisticians has also expressed strong interest in such continuing multi-purpose household capabilities.

18. An Interregional Seminar on Statistical Organization has been held in Ottawa, Canada, and it is expected that the report will be distributed in English, French and Spanish in the near future. It will be used, together with other material, as a basis for revising the Handbook of Statistical Organization. 1/

19. An interregional seminar is being planned to take place in November 1975, on various aspects of the new System of National Accounts (SNA), in the light of experience to date in implementing it in developing countries. It is expected that the results of the seminar will provide guidelines for modifying, as necessary, and assisting the implementation and use of the new SNA. Among the inputs for this seminar will be a manual on the production accounts, which is to be published before the end of 1974, and a manual on the income, outlay and capital finance accounts, which will be ready for publication early in 1975. A manual on the public sector, to be completed before the end of 1974, should also be useful for the seminar.

20. Work has begun on the development of guidelines for use by developing countries on various aspects of the evolving System of Social and Demographic Statistics, including the associated social indicators, and a consultant from a major developing country has been engaged to assist with this work. It is expected that sufficient documentation will be available to convene, if necessary, an expert group in the first half of 1975 to assess the work done to date and to provide guidance on further work in this field. Considerable progress is being achieved in a related project, statistics on children and youth, which is being carried out in collaboration with UNICEF, the regional commissions and the specialized agencies. A statistician has been seconded from UNESCO to carry forward this work.

21. A consultant was engaged to develop procedures for assessing the character and reliability of the statistics published by the Statistical Office. His report is now being studied with a view to implementation. While it is expected that the procedures being developed will eventually be applicable to all countries, priority is being given to the developing countries. The project, which will be carried out through the regional commissions and will involve assistance from

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1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. 1954.XVII.7.

regional advisers and country experts, will begin with the national accounts of developing countries. A questionnaire is being completed, designed to elicit systematic information on sources and methods used and subjective appraisals of reliability of the various components of the accounts. It is anticipated that this work will be conducive to a better comprehension of the limitations of the estimates, and ways of improving them within countries as well as at the international level.

22. In line with the objective of strengthening self-sufficiency, sustained support has been provided for the development of institutes of statistics. Assistance has also been provided to several large-scale projects, particularly those in Indonesia and Iran. However, the effectiveness of the Office in the provision of substantive support for such major projects, as well as in technical assistance in general, is in process of being examined carefully by a Statistical Office task force.

## II. PROSPECTS

23. At the time of writing this report the Statistical Office is in process of preparing a medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979. The propelling guidelines in preparing the plan, and later the budget documents, are the decisions of the Statistical Commission, especially at its seventeenth session, up-dated by recent events, particularly the Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly, in April 1974. What follows is a summary of the main thrusts which, it is expected, will be incorporated in the plan. Its fulfilment is, of course, subject to availability of the necessary resources.

24. In pursuit of the tasks outlined below, the growing collaboration with other divisions of the Secretariat, the specialized agencies and other international bodies will be maintained. Special attention will be given to strengthening co-ordination at the technical level.

25. The reorientation of activities with a view to accommodating more completely than in the past the statistical needs of the developing countries, without, however, losing momentum for servicing the evolving needs of developed countries, will continue. This is in recognition of the fact that, despite the huge efforts of the past years, much remains to be done. In many developing countries the statistical services are still weak and do not provide an adequate range of information for planners, policy-makers and administrators at the national and international level. Emphasis will be placed on:

(a) promotion of the development and strengthening of instruments, such as census and continuing household survey capabilities and vital registration systems, for the purpose of collecting basic information in a variety of social and economic fields;

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(b) further development and, as appropriate, implementation of national accounting, social, demographic and related systems and classifications adapted to the needs of developing countries;

(c) more effective provision of technical assistance in its various forms;

(d) more effective co-ordination of field activities, within countries, with the specialized agencies and bilateral donors.

26. Recent events have heightened the widespread concern about shortages in energy and natural resources. During the discussions of the Special Session of the General Assembly, much emphasis was placed on the need for reliable and timely systems of information on energy and primary commodities, including their prices and trade flows. Obviously, not enough emphasis has been placed on these areas in the past. The Statistical Office hopes to be able to pursue the following two tasks: (a) expansion and up-dating of statistics on energy and primary industrial commodities; (b) improvement of international trade statistics.

27. In regard to energy statistics, the Statistical Office has been publishing for many years World Energy Supplies (Statistical Papers, Series J), which is the most comprehensive compendium of energy statistics in existence. It includes data on production, imports, exports and apparent consumption for 185 countries and territories. The planned expansion is intended to cover:

(a) data on reserves, stocks and transformational and end-use consumption;

(b) preparation of national, regional and global balances of energy-type commodities. Both (a) and (b) will require special questionnaires, drafts of which have been prepared by a task force, which includes representatives from the Resources and Transport Division and CDPPP;

(c) improvements in the promptness of issue of the statistics by cutting the time lag of the annual publication by 6 months, of which three were already cut in 1974, and the preparation of a quarterly bulletin of world energy statistics.

28. In regard to industrial primary commodity statistics, the plan includes:

(a) expansion of the industrial commodity production data file;

(b) endeavours to collect and compile data on reserves and stocks, which would involve solution to difficult conceptual and classification problems;

(c) establishment of balances of major commodities.

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29. The Statistical Office will continue to work towards more consistent, more timely and more comprehensive computer-based statistical information systems of world trade flows;

30. Coupled with the growing concern among Member States about markets of raw materials and the terms of trade between developed and developing countries is the major problem of rising price inflation. While the Statistical Office has collected, compiled and disseminated data on prices and has worked on price statistics methodology for many years, much work remains to be done in this complex field. The medium-term plan calls for improvements in prices and unit value data of commodities entering international trade and more extensive collection and improvement of producer and consumer price data and price indexes, with special attention to energy and primary commodities; analysis of the costs of energy and industrial raw materials; promotion of and assistance in the introduction and implementation of the collection and compilation of price and quantity statistics, including national accounting in constant prices, especially in the developing countries; further work leading to the adoption of international guidelines on a system of price and quantity statistics and the completion of a manual on national accounting in constant prices.

31. In recognition of the fact that, together with economic growth, issues related to the quality of life and social equity have become great concerns of planners and policy-makers, the medium-term plan gives high priority to environment and social and demographic statistics. In regard to environment statistics, the plan includes work on formulation of guidelines on the objectives, scope, framework, content and methodology of statistics of the man-made (housing, urban and rural infrastructures, etc.) and natural (atmosphere, oceans, biological organisms) environment; promotion of and assistance in the national collection of these data; and collection of data from countries.

32. In regard to demographic and social statistics, countries will be encouraged to collect and compile more data at the local level. Further work will also be carried out on the System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS) and social indicators, with emphasis on versions, as already indicated, to serve the needs of developing countries in the context of their data problems; and on statistics on children and youth. Compendia of social statistics and housing will be published. The plan also calls for further development of demographic statistics with a view to rendering them more useful for planning, administration and research, improving their quality, extending their coverage and making them more readily available.

33. Since income distribution and related statistics represent a major gap in statistics, especially of developing countries, called for by the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, emphasis

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will be given to this field. In addition to publications of international guidelines and comparative studies of national practices, a handbook will be completed on the system, and on the collection and compilation, of income distribution and related statistics.

34. All countries, developed and developing, require internationally comparable statistics so that they can sharpen their perspectives by making comparisons with developments in other countries and appraising and reviewing their economic and social progress within an international setting. Accordingly, the Statistical Office will continue to assist the Statistical Commission in its long-standing work on standardization; in addition, the Office will continue the work on collection, compilation, evaluation and dissemination of statistical data during the medium-term plan. This will include further development and adaptation of national accounting and related systems to the requirements of developing countries; improvement of methods for international comparisons of national product and expenditure aggregates; extension of collection, compilation and dissemination of national accounts and other economic and social and demographic statistics.

35. The current system of international statistics has two defects which, it is hoped, can be reduced during the plan period: (a) the data collected from national statistical agencies are sometimes of doubtful reliability; (b) the international publications do not bear adequate indications of accuracy and comparability of the data shown. As already indicated, at the present time, in many cases, the Statistical Office is not aware of the character and reliability of the statistics it collects and compiles. Moreover, the timeliness, format and presentation of the publications need to be improved. These tasks, which have already been started, will get priority attention during the plan period.

36. As reflected in the discussion at the Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly, there is a great need for quick responses to various questions that arise in the economic and social fields. Information, both comprehensive and quickly retrievable, is often needed on unanticipated issues. This means that integrated computer systems have to be designed which facilitate the storage of a great number of statistical data from a variety of sources and their quick retrieval in ad hoc formats for analyses and projections.

37. At the present time, the Statistical Office finds it extremely difficult to respond in either a timely or an efficient manner to requests for information. In the past, computer programmes written for use of the Statistical Office had specific objectives and did not permit either generalization or general use. High priority has, therefore, been given to the development of a general and flexible computer-based interactive system for storage and retrieval. The purpose of this system is to increase the timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness

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in responding to requests for data from national and international users. Indeed, this system would support all of the work of the Statistical Office that deals with collection, summarization, analyses and dissemination of data.

### Part Two: Detailed Descriptions

38. The following detailed descriptions of the progress of the work of the Statistical Office are presented in accordance with the approach of the Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 1974-1975 <sup>2/</sup> and guided by the presentation of the programme of work approved by the Statistical Commission at its seventeenth session. <sup>3/</sup>

#### I. OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

39. Attached to the Office of the Director are three central staffs responsible for internal co-ordination and planning, computer operations and the co-ordination of technical co-operation activities (see para. 4).

##### A. Internal Co-ordination and Planning Unit

40. The activities of this unit include the continuing review of the publications of the Statistical Office regarding their contents, usefulness, cost, appearance and dissemination and the co-ordination and evaluation of the activities involved in producing the publications with a view to making them more effective and efficient. This work is carried out in close collaboration with the sections and branches concerned. The recurrent publications of the Statistical Office were thoroughly reviewed during 1973-1974. This review (E/CN.3/455) showed that the process could be more efficient and more timely if new techniques of printing were applied and if all publications were fully computerized. During the coming years the Statistical Office, together with the Publishing Division, will gradually improve the publications according to the proposals resulting from the review.

41. This unit also co-ordinates the use of classifications and statistics among the branches of the Office and co-ordinates procedures for the progressive improvement of the data. Currently the unit is involved in co-ordinating the study on the reliability of national accounts statistics (see para. 94) with FAO, IBRD and the regional commissions.

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<sup>2/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/9006), paras. 7.61-7.90.

<sup>3/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 2, paras. 193-198.

42. Other activities of this unit involve handling the over-all budgetary and administrative matters of the Statistical Office and servicing the staff in these matters.

#### B. Computer Systems Design and Programming Unit

43. The work of this unit involves providing guidance for modernizing data files and computer programmes to facilitate quick retrieval of both preplanned and unanticipated statistical tabulations and to develop guidelines for evaluating proposals for technical assistance related to the application of computer technology in statistics and for improving the effectiveness of such assistance.

44. Some progress has been made in extending the usefulness of the computer for preparing Statistical Office publications. As of 1974, Volume I of The Growth of World Industry is being produced using a computer-based system (see para. 103). Now data for both volumes I and II are being collected by computer-generated questionnaires, resulting in an increase in accuracy and completeness of the corresponding data files. The computer is also being used for preparation of the Directory of International Statistics. This will allow future versions of the Directory to be revised and produced with only a small fraction of the resources used to produce the present version.

45. Work commenced in 1974 on a strategy for the design and implementation of a more general and integrated computer system. The initial emphasis has been upon defining a plan for action in three areas: (a) evolving programmes and data structure development towards more general and flexible forms; (b) enlarging and strengthening the programming resources of the Office for this purpose; and (c) defining and obtaining access to a supportive computing environment in which development can proceed. Initial progress has been limited largely because of lack of qualified staff, but it is expected that this constraint will be removed during the last quarter of 1974.

#### C. Technical Co-operation Unit

46. This unit provides liaison, on a continuing basis, between the substantive branches of the Statistical Office and the administrative and operational divisions responsible for implementation of the projects. The Statistical Office has continued furnishing assistance in planning, organizing and administering national statistical systems and services. Work has been done to improve the backstopping of experts assigned to countries and to develop training programmes through either permanent centres or ad hoc courses. Work continues in the review and evaluation of experts, fellows, and the monitoring of technical co-operation activities in all the substantive areas of the Office. More detail on present and prospective technical assistance activities can be found in part One above. Also the Commission has before it document E/CN.3/446 on technical assistance activities in statistics.

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## II. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND DISSEMINATION BRANCH

### A. Co-ordination of the statistical programmes of the United Nations system

47. The primary objective of this activity is to promote the effective and co-ordinated use of resources at the international level for statistics in order to assist the national statistical systems in both developing and developed countries, particularly in the context of the Second United Nations Development Decade. Included is the preparation of documentation for and servicing of the Statistical Commission and its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination and the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities. During the period under review, one session of the Commission's Working Group and two sessions of the Sub-Committee were convened and serviced. A total of 10 documents for the Working Group and 24 for the Sub-Committee have been prepared.

48. In view of the system-wide interest in programme planning, two documents before the Commission are of special note, namely "International statistical programmes, 1975-1979" (E/CN.3/444) and "International technical assistance in statistics, 1975-1979" (E/CN.3/446). They cover, respectively, the planned, future activities of the system (including as well, some non-United Nations agencies) for regular programmes and for technical assistance. In its report to the Economic and Social Council, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination considered that "both reports represent considerable progress towards joint programme planning and reporting in this area of common concern" (E/5488, para. 71).

49. "International statistical programmes, 1975-1979" contains, as annex II, the "Classification of statistical projects by activity and field", requested by the Commission at its seventeenth session. 4/

50. Additional steps were undertaken to introduce more effective and systematic co-ordination of statistical activities with both the regional economic commissions and the agencies outside the United Nations system. To these ends, a special consultation between the chief statisticians of the regional economic commissions and of the specialized agencies is scheduled to be held at Geneva, 4 October 1974, just prior to the eighteenth session of the Commission. With respect to the agencies outside the system, the following were invited to participate in the eighth session of the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities as well as to contribute to the joint planning documents on programmes and technical assistance (see para. 48): the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA),

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4/ Ibid., para. 22 (d).

the European Economic Community (EEC), the Organization<sup>s</sup> for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI).

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1. United Nations Standard Country Code

51. At the end of 1973, work began on the revision of the United Nations Standard Country Code issued in 1970. 5/ Part I will be an English alphabetical list of countries and territories, showing the United Nations three-digit codes and four-, eight- and twelve-character abbreviations; in addition, it will show the two-letter alphabetical codes proposed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a non-governmental organization having consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Part II will be the French equivalent of part I. Part III will be an English/French list of countries and territories, in English alphabetical order, by continent. The revised publication is scheduled to be issued in 1974.

ISR  
2. International Statistical Reporter

52. At its seventeenth session, the Commission stated that "To facilitate the co-ordination of national work aimed at participation in international statistical activities, a means of regular communication concerning programmes at the international level was needed, possibly along the lines of rational 'statistical reporter' publications". 6/ In February 1973, the Statistical Office agreed to serve as the focal point for the editing of an International Statistical Reporter (ISR) and to assign a technical editor to the task and IBRD agreed to publish and distribute the English version. Plans were drawn up for the first issue, and much of the material therefor was received in 1973. In November 1973, the Inter-American Statistical Institute agreed to translate and publish the first two issues in Spanish on an experimental basis. The obstacle to commencing publication is the lack of a commitment for the translation and publication of a French version, which was deemed essential by the Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination (see E/CN.3/442, paras. 19-22). At the eighth session of the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities, IBRD agreed to explore the possibility of undertaking the translation and publication of the French version but, to date, no final decision has been made.

B. International computerized catalogues and data banks of economic and social statistics

53. Work to improve the interchange and joint use of economic and social statistics to avoid deficiencies, parallelism and duplication in the United Nations system is continuing.

54. Substantive work neared completion on the Directory of International Statistics. It will include a comprehensive, computerized classification and list of international statistical series collected by the United Nations system of

5/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.70.XVII.13.

6/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 2, para. 17(f).

organizations and an inventory of the organizations' computerized data banks of economic and social statistics. The completed publication will be approximately 800 pages in length. Due to a lack of resources, work on this project had, in the past, progressed slowly. It is now expected that the Directory will be published late in 1974.

C. Programmes for the collection and compilation of statistics for purposes of monitoring, appraising and diagnosing economic and social progress during the Second United Nations Development Decade

1. Interregional Seminar on Statistical Organization

55. The Interregional Seminar on Statistical Organization was held in Ottawa, Canada, from 3 to 12 October 1973, organized by the Statistical Office in co-operation with the Government of Canada. Funding was provided primarily by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Participating in the seminar were senior government statisticians from 23 African, Asian and Latin American countries; from 2 socialist States of Eastern Europe and from 4 western European and other States.

56. The seminar was designed to encourage a discussion of the organization of statistical systems in developing countries, particularly the ways and means of strengthening the statistical services in these countries to meet the requirements of the Second United Nations Development Decade. The discussions covered a wide range of issues related to the planning and carrying out of statistical programmes. Papers were prepared by the Statistical Office with the help of outside experts who also served as discussion leaders at the seminar. A list of these topics follows: the organization of statistical systems: centralization or decentralization; organization by function and by subject-matter of a statistical office; development planning and the organization of statistics; statistical legislation and confidentiality issues; objectives and priorities in statistical programmes in the United States and in developing countries; topical organization problems of statistical data collection and information activity; statistical organization: the needs of, and relationship with, different kinds of users; recruitment, training and status of government statisticians; organizational matters in relation to statistical services in the government hierarchy; organization of regional (or other local) statistical activities and the relationships between them and the central organization; organization of statistical processing, storage and retrieval; technical assistance in statistics.

2. Handbook of Statistical Organization

57. The Statistical Office is planning to issue a revision of the Handbook of Statistical Organization, published in 1954. The discussions and papers of the Interregional Seminar on Statistical Organization (see paras. 55-56), along with other source materials, will serve as a basis for the revision. In this regard, the participants of the seminar were asked to bring with them brief descriptions of statistical organization in their countries along with an accompanying organizational chart. It is hoped that the revised Handbook will be ready for publication in 1975.

D. Publication of data in general statistical compendia

1. Statistical Yearbook

58. Every effort has been made to improve the contents and timeliness of the Statistical Yearbook. The main subjects of the 1972 and 1973 editions, issued since the seventeenth session of the Statistical Commission, remain basically unchanged. In these editions, wider country coverage and more up-to-date statistics were presented. In the 1972 edition, tables on total population projections, by regions, for 1975-2000 and on estimates of urban and rural population, by regions and countries, for 1950-1985, prepared by the Population Division, were published. Starting with the 1972 edition, new information on sea-borne freight traffic at world ports and additional information on housing statistics were introduced. The Statistical Yearbook is issued at the beginning of July of each year.

2. Monthly Bulletin of Statistics

59. The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics is in its twenty-eighth year of publication. It shows data for six years and eighteen current months in 72 tables for about 200 countries and territories. Various aggregates of geographic regions and economic groupings of the world are shown in 26 additional non-monthly tables.

3. Supplement to the Statistical Yearbook and Monthly Bulletin of Statistics

60. At the time of writing, the 1972 issue of the Supplement was in press. The compiling of the methodological information, consisting of detailed definitions and explanatory notes for each series of the Statistical Yearbook and the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, was made possible by the co-operation of about 220 national statistical offices and the assistance of ten specialized agencies and 17 intergovernmental bodies.

4. Statistical Pocketbook

61. The Statistical Office has initiated the publication of the first issue of a Statistical Pocketbook, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2626 (XXV), para. 84, which called on the United Nations system to supply adequate basic information designed to broaden public awareness of the Second United Nations Development Decade. This pocketbook includes information on social, economic and cultural developments, presented in the form of regional aggregates and data for about 140 countries.



E. Gathering and analysis of price and expenditure data  
for post-adjustment measurement and for  
international comparisons of purchasing  
power and gross domestic product

1. Post-adjustment measurement

62. The Statistical Office has continued to provide substantive statistical servicing for the interagency Expert Committee on Post Adjustment (ECPA), established by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination for the purpose of preserving equivalent standards of living at the various duty stations where international civil servants are assigned.

63. Place-to-place studies were carried out in approximately 50 of the duty stations; these studies involve collecting price and family expenditure data, establishing weighting or consumption patterns and computing the post-adjustment indexes. Where no suitable local consumer price indexes were available (for about 70 cities) time-to-time comparisons were made in order to up-date the place-to-place results based on current price data.

64. A special Geneva/New York cost-of-living survey was undertaken between October 1973 and May 1974 so that the post-adjustment indexes for international civil servants may be rebased from Geneva to New York in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3194 (XXVIII). The results of the survey were reported to ECPA at its sixteenth session, June 1974.

65. In conjunction with this study, a family expenditure survey was conducted in New York in October 1973.

2. International Comparison Project

66. During the period under review, the first phase of the International Comparison Project (ICP), which is a joint venture of the United Nations Statistical Office, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the University of Pennsylvania, was successfully concluded. The detailed report describing the methods of international product and purchasing power comparisons and embodying the actual results of such comparisons among ten selected countries for the years 1967 and 1970 is awaiting publication. Eight more countries have joined in the second phase of the project. Arrangements are now under way for securing the co-operation of additional countries.

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### III. SYSTEMS AND STANDARDS BRANCH

#### A. Systems of national accounts and balances

##### 1. Promotion and implementation of the revised System of National Accounts

67. During the last two years, emphasis continued on promoting the use of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA) by countries with market economies, in particular on assisting the developing countries to improve and expand their national accounting and related basic data. Technical advice and assistance was furnished to a number of African, Latin American and Asian countries. Workshops were convened on household data of the system in Africa and Asia; they dealt with the sources, methods and problems of gathering and using basic data to estimate these accounts and tables, as well as with the relevant concepts, definitions and classifications. The convening of workshops and seminars has been hampered by the lack of technical assistance funds.

68. A draft of a practical technical handbook for developing countries in two parts - one on national accounting in respect of goods and services and the other on national accounting concerning income and outlay and capital finance - was also completed. The first part of the manual will be issued in 1974; the second part will be published in early 1975. The technical manual and a number of other papers are to be considered by an interregional seminar which, it is expected, will provide guidelines for modifying, as necessary, and assisting in the implementation of the revised SNA in developing countries. The seminar is to be held in November 1975.

##### 2. Input-output tables and analysis

69. A technical manual was issued on Input-Output Tables and Analysis <sup>7/</sup> in the context of the revised SNA. This manual supersedes an earlier version which was not keyed to the revised system; it deals with the principles and concepts, definitions and classifications, sources of data and methods of compilation, and uses of input-output tables and analyses.

##### 3. Balance sheets and reconciliation accounts and tables.

70. Substantial progress was made during the period under discussion on detailing international guidelines on the balance sheets and reconciliation accounts of institutional units of the SNA and on delineating the links between these data and the national wealth statistics of the countries using the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS). Papers on these subjects were prepared for and commented on at a session of the Working Party of National Accounts and Balances of the Conference of European Statisticians and through correspondence with national statistical authorities. Based on these comments and further research, final versions of the draft international guidelines and of the description of the

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<sup>7/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.XVII.11.

contents and linkages of national wealth statistics in the context of the MPS were prepared for the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/460 and E/CN.3/461, respectively).

71. A paper was also prepared for the aforementioned session of the Working Party on National Accounts and Balances on draft international guidelines on the one-dimensional approach to statistics of the stocks of durable assets of establishments. The Working Party considered that the scope of the draft guidelines should be widened to cover all stocks of goods held by establishments. It was not feasible to prepare the enlarged paper for the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission; it is to be drafted and circulated to national statistical authorities for comments in 1975.

4. Links between the MPS and SNA

72. A document was drafted on the links between the MPS and SNA in the case of data on goods and services. Because of lack of staff, this document cannot be prepared for publication before late 1974.

5. Economic accounts for agriculture

73. A member of the Statistical Office assisted in the preparation of a draft handbook on economic accounts for agriculture, based on the revised SNA. This handbook concentrates on the accounts on production and on the supply and disposition of commodities; it is a joint publication of the Statistics Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Statistical Office of the United Nations. The European version of the handbook is to deal with the economic accounts for agriculture in the context of both the SNA and MPS.

6. Supplementing the SNA to measure welfare

74. At its ninth session, the Committee for Development Planning received various suggestions for introducing better welfare-orientated measures of output and expressed the hope that this subject would be pursued by the appropriate bodies of the United Nations, especially the Statistical Commission. 8/ In order to furnish a basis for consideration of this question, a document (E/CN.3/459) is before the eighteenth session of the Commission. That document discusses the various proposals that have been made for improving the measures of welfare in the national accounts and suggests whether or not it is fruitful and possible to implement them and the steps that might be taken in the national accounts or in supplementary bodies of data for this purpose.

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8/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 5, para. 17.

B. Development of supplementary or correlated systems of statistics to the national accounts and balances

1. Statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation

75. A final draft of a comparative study of national practices in statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation was completed but could not be prepared for publication. It is expected that this study and the version of the international guidelines on a complementary system of statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation adopted at the seventeenth session of the Statistical Commission will be issued in late 1974 or early 1975. In the meantime, in view of the urgent needs for the data by the developing countries, steps have been taken to assist these countries to introduce, improve or expand statistics of the distribution of income and consumption. The African and Asian workshops on household national accounting data (see para. 67) also dealt with statistics of the distribution of income and consumption. A paper was prepared for the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission on a draft simplification and adaptation of the full complementary system of statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation for the use of the developing countries (E/CN.3/462). Based on the comments of the Commission on that paper and further research, a technical handbook on the subject is to be drafted in 1975.

2. Statistics of prices and quantities

76. Work continued on a system of statistics of prices and quantities and on national accounting in constant prices. Meetings were held on these subjects in Europe and the Middle East. The former meeting concentrated on the purposes, concepts and contents of the proposed system of prices and quantity statistics, including national accounting in constant prices and more frequent index numbers of production and prices; the latter meeting dealt mainly with the concepts, definitions and classifications, sources of data, methodologies and problems of national accounting in constant prices and of index numbers of production and of producers' and consumers' prices. A comparative study of national practices in national accounting in constant prices was prepared as an information paper for the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/464); work is under way on a comparative study of national practices in index numbers of prices and quantities. It is expected that the latter will be circulated for comment to national statistical authorities in 1975.

3. A System of Social and Demographic Statistics

77. The formulation and development of a System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS) continued to receive major attention during the last two years.

78. Meetings of working parties in Latin America and Europe discussed and commented on the SSDS in detail, based mainly on E/CN.3/432; sessions of the African and Asian conferences of statisticians considered the work on the system in more general terms. In the light of these discussions, comments at the seventeenth

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session of the Statistical Commission on E/CN.3/432 and further research, a preliminary version of the publication "Towards a System of Social and Demographic Statistics" (ST/STAT.68) that was recommended at the seventeenth session of the Commission, was prepared by a consultant - Professor Richard Stone; it was discussed in April 1973 at the second session of the expert group on the subject.

79. The expert group recommended that ST/STAT.68 should be circulated for information and comment and that certain modifications, improvements and extensions should be made before the final version of the document was published. They also suggested that future work on the SSDS should concern (a) developing social indicators in the context of the system, (b) examining the potential uses of the outputs of the SSDS in policy making, (c) reviewing the main types of analytical models to be served by its data, (d) detailing its classifications, definitions and linkages, (e) elaborating the statistical techniques of gathering, linking and storing the data of the SSDS and (f) preparing an adaptation of the SSDS for the use of developing countries.

80. The expert group emphasized that in addition to evaluating the usefulness of the SSDS in national policy making, a study of the feasibility of national implementation of the system should be undertaken in the near future.

81. Since the meeting of the expert group, work on the SSDS has focussed on (a) preparing the final version of "Towards a System of Social and Demographic Statistics" for publication, (b) formulating draft international guidelines on social indicators in the context of the SSDS, (c) evaluating the potential uses of the SSDS in policy making and in the development of coherent bodies of social and demographic statistics at the national level, and (d) the issues and problems of formulating a version of the SSDS for the use of the developing countries.

82. The typescript for "Towards a System of Social and Demographic Statistics", prepared by Professor Richard Stone as consultant to the United Nations, has been submitted for printing and translation. <sup>9/</sup> It is hoped that the English version of the publication will be available in 1974.

83. A document on draft guidelines on social indicators (E/CN.3/450) has been prepared for the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission. The paper has already been considered by a session of the Working Party on Social and Demographic Statistics of the Conference of European Statisticians; the report of that session (CES/WP.34/15) will be a background document for the Commission. Document E/CN.3/450 will be circulated to national statistical authorities for written comments.

84. A consultant has prepared a document on the potential uses of the SSDS in national policy making and statistical development (E/CN.3/449), which is presented at the eighteenth session of the Commission.

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<sup>9/</sup> To be issued as a United Nations publication (Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 18).

C. Preparation of guidelines and manuals on basic statistics

85. Considerable attention was devoted to the outline of a publication on requirements for the series and the sources and methods of collection of basic economic and social statistics and derived analytical data in the case of developing countries. The first version of the outline was considered at the fifth session of the Statistical Commission's Working Group (E/CN.3/442, paras. 72-78); the first and second versions were discussed at the seventh and eighth sessions, respectively, of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities and commented on at conferences of statisticians of the developing regions, specialized agencies and other international organizations. The third version of the outline of the publication (E/CN.3/448), which is before the eighteenth session of the Commission, reflects the results of those discussions and comments and of studies of the uses, supply and sources of economic and social statistics in developing countries.

86. Work has been under way since mid-1973 on a comparative study of national practices in the collection, compilation and use of statistics of the structure and of the financial operations and holdings of enterprises. When completed, the study will be issued as a means of interchanging information on national work and experience in this field. It will also be used to formulate international guidelines on these statistics.

D. Development of schemes of classifications

87. A second version of the International Standard Classification of All Goods and Services (ICGS) was completed. It reflects the comments on the first version of the classification and considerable work on the definition of the categories of the classification and of their links with the Standard International Trade Classification and the Brussels Tariff Nomenclature. The second version of ICGS is presented to the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/457, parts I and II).

E. Development of statistics of the environment

88. The first phase of activities on statistics of the environment during the last year and one-half was devoted to formulating and detailing a medium-term programme of work on this subject, in the light of the requirements for, and concepts and character of, statistics of the environment. The paper on the proposed medium-term programme of work (E/CN.3/452), which was prepared with the assistance of a consultant is before the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission. Other facets of formulating this programme of work related to statistics in the proposals of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for a major project on the environmental aspects of human settlements and for the agenda of the 1976 Conference - Exposition on Human Settlements, Vancouver, Canada. The work of the Statistical Office on statistics of the environment is being carried out in close co-ordination with the other divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with the statistical and relevant substantive divisions

of the Economic Commission for Europe, with the United Nations Environment Programme and with the statistical divisions of the specialized agencies.

#### IV. ECONOMIC STATISTICS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS BRANCH

##### A. Collection and dissemination of national accounts data

89. National accounts data have been collected from 143 countries and territories through questionnaires and other sources. These were processed on the computer at the United Nations and stored on magnetic tape. This tape has increasingly become the main source of basic national accounts data for anyone interested in undertaking analyses for a large number of countries for which such data are available. A number of units of the United Nations, e.g. CDPPP and Resources and Transport Division; some specialized agencies and other international organizations have depended heavily on the data contained in this tape.

90. The Statistical Office continued its publication programme in the field of national accounts. The Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics, 1971 was the first to be issued in three volumes. Volumes I and II, "Individual Country Data", show detailed national accounts estimates for 119 countries and territories; volume III, "International Tables", contains data for 139. Owing to improvements in presentation and programming, it was possible to reduce the total number of pages in the 1971 edition to 1531 as compared with 1574 in the 1970 edition. The Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics, 1972 was also issued in three volumes. Volumes I and II show detailed national accounts for 120 countries and territories; volume III contains data for 143. As a result of the increased response to the National Accounts Questionnaire and the Material Product Balances Questionnaire, the 1972 edition of the Yearbook shows an increase of 170 pages over the 1971 edition.

91. The increasing coverage of the Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics was also reflected in the other Statistical Office publications which carry national accounts tables, namely, the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, the Statistical Yearbook, the Compendium of Housing Statistics, as well as in the ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics.

92. The Office continued to publish the public finance chapter in the Statistical Yearbook. A total of 90 countries were covered, an increase of four countries over the 1971 edition.

93. Further work on national accounts data involved various manipulations of national accounts series. Approximately 8000 printouts were prepared containing manipulations such as growth rates, ratios, implicit price deflators and other related computations. These are unpublished data, primarily intended to serve the various users of national accounts data, and especially other units of the United Nations, specialized agencies, and other international organizations. Work has been completed on rebasing national accounts series to 1970.

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94. The Statistical Office has begun work on the reliability of national accounts data. The purpose of this study is to survey and assess the sources and methods used by the countries in constructing their national accounts estimates with a view to obtaining as much relevant description as possible. Work is concentrating on value-added statistics of the industrial origin of gross domestic product; emphasis is on current price data. Information is being collected on the elements of the expenditure and income approaches.

95. Work to improve co-ordination between OECD and the Statistical Office on the collection of national accounts data is continuing (see para. 10).

#### B. Methodology of sample surveys

96. Two publications were issued since the last session of the Commission.

97. The first, Sample Surveys of Current Interest (twelfth report), is based on information made available since the completion of the eleventh report. 10/ Sample surveys carried out in 58 countries and territories are described in part I of the issue. Part II, the subject index, not included in previous reports, was computerized. In part II, the sample surveys are classified by subject and arranged alphabetically by country under each classification so as to render the publication more useful for reference purposes.

98. The second, A Short Manual on Sampling, Vol. II, Add. 1, Computer Programmes for Sample Designs 11/ is a supplement to Vol. II. 12/ These both contain FORTRAN IV computer programmes for each of the processes described in A Short Manual on Sampling, Vol. I, Rev. 1, Elements of Sample Survey Theory, 13/ Vol. II contains a set of 22 FORTRAN IV computer programmes, corresponding to the 22 processes initially described in Vol. I. 14/ Vol. II, Add. 1 contains computer programmes for ten additional processes included in Vol. I, Rev. 1. It is expected that such a presentation of exact programme instructions will enable those who have not had much previous experience in computer programming to process large amounts of data collected from sample inquiries.

99. It was expected that preparation of Sample Surveys of Current Interest (Thirteenth report) and A Short Manual on Sampling, Vol. III, The Operational

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10/ United Nations publication, Sales No.:E.73.XVII.5.

11/ United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.73.XVII.8.

12/ United Nations publication, Sales No.:E.71.XVII.4.

13/ United Nations publication, Sales No.:E.72.XVII.5.

14/ United Nations publication, Sales No.:61.XVII.3.



Aspects of Sample Surveys would have begun since the seventeenth session of the Commission. Due to lack of manpower resources, the Statistical Office has been unable to do any work on either of these.

C. Servicing the General Assembly's  
Committee on Contributions and  
other United Nations bodies

100. With the growing tendency among the units of the United Nations and other international agencies to use statistics as a basis for administrative and other decisions, the Statistical Office has provided substantive statistical servicing for the General Assembly, Office of the Secretary-General, the Committee on Contributions, the Office of Financial Services, the Office of Personnel Services, the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, the Department of Administration and Management, the Special Sahelian Office, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial <sup>Development</sup> Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the specialized agencies.

101. For the work of the Committee on Contributions, the Statistical Office in 1973 and 1974 provided for each Member State national accounts data and estimates, population estimates, exchange rates, prices and data on the amortization of external debt. The Statistical Office also prepared tables concerning the geographical distribution of staff at the professional and higher categories for the Office of Personnel Services. In addition, it prepared an analysis of the guided lecture tour operations for the Administrative Management Service, consisting of a study of the operations with a view to providing the basis for future manning plans taking into account such factors as flow of visitors, size of tours, seasonal patterns and the like.

D. Data on the distribution of income and consumption

102. In view of the needs of developing countries in the Second United Nations Development Decade, particularly as expressed in the International Development Strategy, the Statistical Office of the United Nations is engaged in activities designed to increase the knowledge of the distribution of income, consumption and wealth among households. Data on income distribution for about seventy countries have already been collected and work has begun on updating and expanding this inventory.

E. Industrial, construction and  
distributive-trade statistics

1. Dissemination of data

103. During 1973, the 1971 edition of The Growth of World Industry was published.<sup>15/</sup> Volume I included annual general data up to 1970 on the industrial activity for over 90 countries, and volume II contained annual commodity detail up to 1971 on 397 industrial commodities for 191 countries and territories. Volumes I and II of the 1972 edition were issued during 1974. Volume I included general data up to 1971 on the industrial activity of over 95 countries, and volume II contained commodity detail up to 1972 on 438 industrial commodities for 196 countries and territories. Computerization of the processing of general industrial statistics was completed during 1974. A data bank, initially covering 1963-1971 data for countries included in volume I was prepared and, for the first time, the 1972 issue produced from computer printouts. Starting in 1974, the General Industrial Statistics Questionnaire was changed to a pre-filled, computerized basis. Centralization of the collection of annual data on commodity production statistics was completed during 1974. Requests for energy statistics and for commodity data other than energy are now made by means of a single questionnaire in the form of computer printouts.

104. The publication of industrial, construction and distributive-trade statistics in the Statistical Yearbook and Monthly Bulletin of Statistics continued during 1973-1974.

105. Value added and employment estimates for industry for 1970, at the major-group level of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), were completed during 1974 for more than 100 countries. These estimates are utilized as weights for the new base year of the world and regional indexes of industrial production and employment.

106. The first issue of an annual publication on construction statistics, scheduled for 1973, was postponed to 1974. The new publication contains 1963-1972 data on the construction activity for more than 60 countries.

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<sup>15/</sup> The Growth of World Industry, 1971 Edition, Vol. I General Industrial Statistics (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E/F.73.XVII.6); Vol. II Commodity Production Data (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.73.XVII.7).

2. Development of methods and guidelines for the organization and improvement of statistics

107. At the request of the Commission, a revised draft document of the International recommendations on statistics of the distributive trades and services, was prepared and is before the Commission (E/CN.3/453).

108. Work is continuing on the fourth revision of the Bibliography of Industrial and Distributive-Trade Statistics.<sup>16/</sup> Letters requesting information were sent to approximately 130 countries in February 1974. As of June 1974, replies had been received from more than 50 countries.

V. INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND RELATED STATISTICS BRANCH

A. Collection and dissemination of external trade data

109. The compilation and issue of international trade data for publication in Commodity Trade Statistics, the Yearbook of International Trade Statistics, the World Trade Annual and Supplement, the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and the Statistical Yearbook are performed on a continuing basis.

1. Commodity Trade Statistics

110. The difficulties which arose when it was decided to shift the processing of commodity trade statistics from an IBM 7044 in New York to an IBM 360 in Geneva, without providing the necessary programmer support to rewrite the required programmes, have been solved. No backlog now exists in the phases of the work prior to printing and the output is higher than previously. Thus, during the 12-month period, 1 April 1973 to 31 March 1974, the average number of country/periods processed each month was: 21.3 (7.1 for yearly data and 14.2 for quarterly data) versus 14.3 (5.7 yearly and 8.6 quarterly) for the 1962-1970 period. A decision was taken in 1973 not to publish quarterly data for the years 1972 and 1973 in order to eliminate the backlog in the Printing Service, but due to physical or financial limitations, a backlog still occurs from time to time. It is expected that conversion to photo-composition methods will ease the situation substantially. The emphasis which was placed, in the early months of 1971, on the compilation of data for developing countries (and which ended with the termination of the availability of the IBM 7044) has now been re-established and amplified. During the last four years, approximately the same number of annual developing country/periods have been introduced into the D series (Commodity Trade Statistics) data bank as in the eight previous years, reflecting

<sup>16/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. 67.XVII.20 (third revision).

the trend towards computerization.

111. Since complete computerization of the work can be accomplished only if the coverage of international trade is available on magnetic tapes, and since many developing countries are not in a position to provide their statistics in a form readable by a computer, a new series (referred to as non-D series) was created by extracting manually from national publications all information available since 1967 in a form compatible with SITC, Rev. 1.<sup>17/</sup>

112. As of 30 April 1974, 350,000 entries have been collected and compiled into the non-D series data bank which is similar to that of the D series (but not as exhaustive or as detailed). It is hoped that in the future, the number of countries able to provide data in computer readable form will continue to increase and that the non-D series will progressively disappear, replaced by the D series.

113. For the present, however, a combination of D and non-D series gives a relatively good coverage of international trade statistics and permits the computerization of a large part of the work.

## 2. Yearbook of International Trade Statistics

114. Due to the disruption resulting from the transfer of the computer to Geneva, the Yearbook of International Trade Statistics, 1970, was not published in December 1972 as expected. However, due to improvements in regard to the D series, the creation of the non-D series and computerization, it has been possible to issue a Yearbook of International Trade Statistics in October 1973 for the years 1970-1971 containing the following improvements:

(a) the amount of information contained in the Yearbook was increased by 45 per cent (420,000 individual entries, of which 210,000 were new in the 1970-71 issue; against 290,000, of which 70,000 were new in the 1969 issue);

(b) the presentation of the data has been standardized. For instance, in order to provide a better comparison among countries, all values have been expressed in the same unit, the United States dollar.

115. A 1972-1973 issue (580,000 entries, of which 310,000 will be new) will be sent to the Printing Service in July 1974 and is to be released in August 1974. In addition to external trade data by country, new tables (190,000 new entries) will provide distributions by commodity, which have not been published previously.

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<sup>17/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No.:61.XVII.6.

Moreover, a large number of data for 1973 (covering 98 per cent of the global series, 85 per cent of the partner-country tables, and about 60 per cent of the commodity tables) will be included with a gain in timeliness of 14/16 months compared with the situation prevailing in 1965-1970.

### 3. Indexes of world trade

116. The work on constructing the various indexes relating to foreign trade and for compiling the tables on world trade has continued to be carried out manually as a result of shortages of programming resources. Furthermore, the adoption of a new country classification and the changes in the grouping of countries (for instance, modifications in the membership of the European Economic Community and the European Free Trade Association) have caused a laborious manual revision of all chronological index series. The fluctuations of the United States dollar, the value unit used by the Statistical Office, also necessitated many supplementary calculations.

#### B. Formulation of standards and guidelines concerning the concepts and definitions, classifications and methodology of external trade statistics

117. In compliance with the request of the Statistical Commission at its seventeenth session, another draft of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) Rev. 2 has been prepared. Jointly with the Customs Co-operation Council, a one-to-one correlation between the SITC, Rev. 2, and the Brussels Tariff Nomenclature has been established. See E/CN.3/456.

#### C. Compilation of related energy, transport and other statistics

##### 1. Energy statistics

118. The compilation and dissemination of data on the energy fuels produced and consumed in individual countries and on a global basis have been assigned a high priority in the work of the Statistical Office. The compilation and publication of the annual World Energy Supplies (Statistical Papers, Series J) received concentrated attention.

119. A new computerized system was designed and developed and, at present, the statistical files covering the twelve consecutive years 1961-1972 are available for retrieval. This publication provides quantitative annual data on the production, imports, exports and gross consumption of solid fuels, petroleum and its refined products, gases (both natural and manufactured) and electricity (thermal, hydro, geothermal and nuclear) for 185 countries on a per capita basis with sub-regional, regional and global totals. In addition, special tables in matrix form showing the flows of trade in crude petroleum, natural gas and solid

fuels between regions and between principal exporting and importing countries are also available.

120. In order to provide energy data for the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, the Statistical Office published a ten-year study entitled World Energy Supplies, 1961-1970<sup>18/</sup> which expanded and revised, where necessary, the statistical series which were shown in the six previous issues. It is intended to compile a similar ten-year study every five years.

121. New statistical series, published for the first time in this issue on a global basis, were: production, trade and apparent consumption of liquefied petroleum gases; world movement of natural gas petroleum refinery capacity; and installed capacity of industrial and public electric generating plants (end-of-year).

122. This ten-year study was released on 15 January 1973 and the number of logical records in the file at that time was 36,400.

123. World Energy Supplies 1968-1971<sup>19/</sup> continued and updated, where necessary, the historical data of the previous ten years and was released in November 1973. A net increase of close to 4,000 records were added to the file, making a total of over 40,000 records.

124. The timeliness of the latest issue, covering the four-year period 1969-1972, has been improved by about three months and is scheduled to be issued in August 1974.

125. The new statistical series which will appear are: production of enriched uranium; production of non-energy petroleum products; liquefied petroleum gases produced in special plants and in petroleum refineries, as well as separate data on the production of jet fuel and kerosene.

126. With the addition of these new series, plus the commencement of a programme to enlarge the data file to cover the six years 1955-1960, the number of records increased by more than 60 per cent, reaching a total of 65,000 logical records.

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<sup>18/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No.:E.73.XVII:2.

<sup>19/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No.:E.73.XVII.10.

## 2. External trade statistics by mode of transport

127. In the progress report prepared for the seventeenth session of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/436), a project of compiling the network of goods movement in maritime transport as a part of the mode-of-transport study was briefly described. Although the project was originally expected to yield results for the period 1966-1968 by the end of 1972, the need for re-writing all the computer programmes for the new computer IBM 360/370 and the lack of programming resources following the transfer of the International Computing Centre from New York to Geneva in 1971 compelled a temporary suspension of the project from September 1971 to September 1972. Since then, the progress of programme re-writing and testing was slow, reflecting in part problems in communication. However, by late 1973, all the re-written programmes and a few new ones became operational. At the end of 1973, 140 tabulations representing export flows of 140 countries to the 30 reporting countries were produced. However, due to the urgent need for resources to produce statistics in other areas, particularly energy statistics, the personnel who were expected to work on this project had to be diverted with the result that this project has again been suspended for several months.

### D. Special studies

#### 1. World trade matrices

128. Computer programmes have been written in such a way that trade matrices by commodity or country or by groups of commodities or countries can be constructed from the D and non-D data banks. These matrices, some examples of which are given in the study on the reconciliation of trade (E/CN.3/454, annex II, section 1), are in general very helpful for the analysis of world trade. They are particularly useful in the Statistical Office for assessing the reliability and accuracy of data, for estimating from partner countries the trade of a country for which data are not available or for recomputing the weights to be applied to certain commodities or certain groups of countries when rebasing the indexes of quantum and unit value, etc. However, shortages of resources in the Printing Service seem to preclude the publication of these matrices in the near future.

#### 2. Reconciliation of international trade

129. A study on this topic is before the Commission (E/CN.3/454).

#### 3. Trade of Southern Rhodesia

130. The work undertaken at the request of the Security Council committee established in pursuance of resolution 253 (1968) concerning the question of

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Southern Rhodesia is being continued. A note containing a short analysis of Southern Rhodesian trade, together with statistical data, is provided to the Committee once or twice annually.

## VI. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS BRANCH

### A. Collection and dissemination of demographic and social statistics

#### 1. Recurrent publications

131. A review of all of the recurrent publications of the Statistical Office, including the Demographic Yearbook, the Population and Vital Statistics Report and the Compendium of Housing Statistics (formerly referred to as Yearbook of Housing Statistics) is before the Commission (E/CN.3/455). The data compiled for the Compendium of Housing Statistics proved to be particularly useful in connexion with collaboration of the Statistical Office with the Centre for Housing, Building and Planning on the statistical aspects of the first issue of a world housing survey currently being prepared by the Centre. In addition to the planned improvements in the Demographic Yearbook reported in E/CN.3/455, consideration is now being given to publishing with the 1978 edition (which will be the 30th edition of this publication) a historical supplement setting forth time series data for the most significant demographic indicators.

#### 2. World Population Year, 1974

132. Activities designed to make available a larger spectrum of information on demographic phenomenon for use during World Population Year have included:

(a) Preparation of a United Nations World Demographic Atlas, which will contain 52 maps setting forth information for each country on total population, density, natural increase, urbanization, age and sex structure, educational characteristics, economic characteristics, marital status, fertility, mortality, international migration and selected economic and social indexes. The Atlas is expected to be published before the end of 1974.

(b) Expansion of two issues of the quarterly Population and Vital Statistics Report. In addition to the usual data shown therein on total population, number of births, deaths and infant deaths, and the respective rates, the January 1974 issue has forty-six tables presenting the basic data used for the majority of the maps in the World Demographic Atlas and the April 1974 issue contains ten tables of the latest information available for selected statistical series on population, fertility and life-table values.

(c) Preparation of a document for the World Population Conference on "The



availability of demographic statistics around the world," (E/CONF.60/BP/21) dealing with the sources of national data on population size and characteristics, births, deaths and international migration and with the availability and quality of the statistics.

### 3. Compendium of Social Statistics

133. In accordance with the programme of work approved by the Commission at its seventeenth session, a draft list of tables for the third edition of the Compendium of Social Statistics was submitted to the seventh session of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities, February 1973. The original intent had been to complete the tables in 1973, but the work has had to be deferred. Current plans call for presentation to the Sub-Committee of a revised list of tables in 1975. If the list is agreed at that time, publication could take place in 1977. For the third edition, although some effort will be made to present statistics on the full range of topical areas included in the two earlier issues, particular emphasis will be placed on obtaining statistics and calculating derived measures that throw light on efforts to promote a national and equitable world economic and social order and to improve conditions of living.

#### B. Development of standards and recommendations on the collection and processing of data on demographic and social conditions

134. The major increase in activity during the period since the seventeenth session of the Commission has been in the provision of planning and substantive support for technical co-operation field programmes and projects. This has necessitated the transfer of one regular staff member from his usual duties related to standards and recommendations to full-time participation in technical co-operation activities and an increase in the time devoted to such activities by several other regular staff members, in addition to the staff provided by extra-budgetary sources. A further reduction in the man-months available for other activities in the work programme resulted from the fact that the post of Chief of the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch was vacant for nine months of the two-year period. As a consequence, the work on standards and recommendations, which is directed at long-term benefits to national statistical organizations, has suffered but it is hoped to strengthen it in the coming months.

#### 1. 1970 and 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programmes

135. Work continued on the Handbook of Population and Housing Census Methods, of which two parts out of a planned six parts were issued prior to 1972.<sup>20/</sup>

<sup>20/</sup> Part III, Topics and Tabulations for Housing Censuses (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.70.XVII.6) and Part VI, Sampling in Connexion with Population and Housing Censuses (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.70.XVII.9).

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136. Part IV, Survey of Population and Housing Census Experience, 1955-1964, was completed in two sections. The first section, published in 1973,<sup>21/</sup> covers experience in respect to the relationship between population and housing censuses, the preparation of census control lists and the topics investigated and classifications employed in housing censuses held during the decade. The second section, dealing with topics and classifications in population censuses, is in press and expected to be published during 1974.

137. Substantive work on part V, Methods of Evaluating Population and Housing Census Results, was completed in the fourth quarter of 1973, as a combined effort of staff members and a consultant, but editing for publication has been delayed and will not be done until later in 1974.

138. Preparation of part I, Planning, Organization and Administration of Population and Housing Censuses is planned for 1975-1977. Either in part I or as a separate but closely related publication, it is hoped to present a set of guidelines for determining staff and cost requirements, based on the systematic study of national experience, in an effort to help countries avoid the expense of ad hoc costing without benefit or carry-over from previous experience.

139. Concurrent with work on the Handbook, information is now being gathered concerning the methods employed in carrying out all phases of the 1970 rounds of censuses. This information is required on a continuing basis to interpret and evaluate national data included in United Nations publications. It will also provide the basis for an analysis of the extent to which the world-wide and regional recommendations for the 1970 censuses were followed and hence some indications of revisions needed for the recommendations for the 1980 censuses.

## 2. World Programme for the Improvement of Vital Statistics

140. Following the completion of the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System,<sup>22/</sup> work has been initiated on the revision of the Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods.<sup>23/</sup> It is now anticipated that the revised Handbook will be completed in 1976.

141. Efforts are now under way to update the information available in the Statistical Office on national practices in relation to vital registration, which is required in the preparation of the Handbook as well as for the interpretation and evaluation of national statistics shown in United Nations publications.

## 3. Improvement of migration statistics

142. At its seventeenth session, the Commission was presented with proposals for

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<sup>21/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.70.XVII.7.

<sup>22/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.73.XVII.9.

<sup>23/</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.55.XVII.1.

revising the existing international recommendations on international migration (E/CN.3/434) and with tentative draft guidelines on internal migration statistics (E/CN.3/435). The Commission recommended that studies should be prepared of national practices in the collection and compilation of statistics of international migration and internal migration and that the two sets of proposals be revised on the basis of the studies and of the Commission's comments, in consultation with national statistical authorities.

143. The study of national practices is now almost completed. On the basis of the information available early in 1973 and taking into account the Commission's comments, revisions of the proposals were prepared <sup>24/</sup> and submitted for discussion at the first session of the Meeting on Migration Statistics of the Conference of European Statisticians, September 1973. A further revision, taking into account the comments at the Meeting, will be prepared for consideration at the second session and for circulation to Governments and regional commissions for comment. It is planned that the studies of national practices will be circulated at the same time. It is expected that the response from the second session of the Meeting and from the circulation of the documents to regional commissions and Governments will provide a sufficient basis for the preparation of final drafts. If the response from Governments proves insufficient, consideration will be given to convening regional working groups or an international meeting of experts to provide the necessary support. In either event, it is envisaged that final drafts will be submitted for consideration by the Commission at its nineteenth session, 1976.

#### 4. Study of housing sample survey methods

144. Limited staff resources have not permitted work on this project to be carried forth, but collection of methodological information on national surveys has continued with a view to eventual preparation of the study.

#### C. Technical co-operation activities

145. The Commission has before it a report on the African Census Programme (E/CN.3/447). In summary, it should be noted that the largest part of the support activities in demographic and social statistics has been devoted to the

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<sup>24/</sup> "Proposals for the improvement of international migration statistics" (ST/STAT/65) and "Proposals for the improvement of internal migration statistics" (ST/STAT/66).

countries in the African Census Programme, with considerable effort also directed to the countries of Latin America and of the ECWA region.<sup>25/</sup> To date, there have been comparatively few projects in the ECAFE region. At present, support activities in demographic and social statistics are occupying the full time of three professional staff members and substantial amounts of the time of several others of the professional staff.

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<sup>25/</sup> The Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) began operations on 1 January 1974, incorporating the former United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut (UNESOB).