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STATISTICAL COMMISSION

PUBLICATION PROGRAMME OF THE STATISTICAL OFFICE

(Memorandum prepared by the Secretariat for consideration  
under Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda)

The following paragraphs deal with the status of the publication programme of the Statistical Office and with general plans for future development. They are submitted for the information of the Statistical Commission; the Commission is invited to make observations upon the matters dealt with especially as regards scope of the programmes.

I. MONTHLY BULLETIN OF STATISTICS

1. At present nearly 2,000 separate series are collected and maintained in connection with the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics. Not all of these series appear in every issue, it having been decided that certain tables should appear only once each quarter, thus permitting a somewhat broader coverage of statistics within the total number of the pages which has been considered practicable. The quarterly tables include such subjects as the numbers of deaths, births, and infant deaths, national income, shipbuilding, and various sub-divisions of the wholesale price index. The rates of births, deaths, and infant deaths are reported each month.
2. In addition, certain series are collected and maintained primarily for the benefit of one or more Specialized Agencies and do not regularly appear in the Monthly Bulletin.
3. The developmental work on the contents of the Monthly Bulletin is still under way; new series are constantly in preparation and are added as soon as they are considered suitable and as soon as arrangements for collection are made. Particular emphasis is being placed on series dealing with the production of basic commodities and raw materials, on improved figures and possible sub-divisions of wholesale price indexes, on series dealing with the terms of trade, and on additional series of social statistics. (The question of transport statistics is dealt with in a paper to be considered under Item 12 of the provisional agenda). The Secretariat has actively sought the views of many users of the Monthly Bulletin in order to obtain suggestions for new series and for other modifications of the contents with the result that a number of very useful suggestions have been received and adopted.

/4. In addition,

## II. SUPPLEMENT OF THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF STATISTICS

8. Members of the Statistical Commission have before them a draft copy of most chapters of the Supplement to the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics which will be ready for printing in a few weeks. The Supplement describes the content and limitations of series appearing in the Monthly Bulletin. Copies of the draft were sent to the central statistical offices in the latter part of March for verification. Many offices already have responded and no further delays are expected to be incurred in the publication of the Supplement. As anticipated, the preparation of the Supplement has revealed a number of instances where comparability among series was lacking and could be established by nominal changes in compilation procedures.

9. The chapters on employment, unemployment, wage rates and cost-of-living are being prepared by the International Labour Office, the chapters on exchange rates, gold and foreign exchange reserves, and on money supply are being prepared on the basis of materials made available by the International Monetary Fund which is the collecting agent for these figures.

## III. CO-ORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL YEARBOOKS

10. The attention of the Statistical Commission is drawn to the proceedings of the Social Commission during its Third Session in reference to suggestions from various Member governments for the inclusion of additional subjects at the time when the contents of the Demographic Yearbook were under discussion. These subjects included (E/CN.5/62): The number of children born prematurely, the registration of children still-born after the twenty-eighth week of pregnancy, mortality by months of life, the occurrence of social diseases, especially of tuberculosis and of occupational diseases, the number of persons handicapped physically and mentally, the number of persons insured against disease, invalidism and death, and statistics on unemployment.

11. The Social Commission decided that these matters be called to the attention of the Population Commission by its representative on that Commission.

12. The Statistical Commission will recall that it has arranged for a co-ordinated plan for the contents of the various yearbooks (see paragraph 5, Annex II, attached) prepared by Specialized Agencies and the United Nations. In view of the desirability of such a co-ordinated plan - which would result in the statistics of various subjects being included in the most appropriate yearbook for the purpose - the Statistical Commission may wish to recommend that all suggestions for tables which logically might be included in more than one yearbook be made without reference to a particular yearbook or yearbooks. This procedure would assure maximum flexibility and economy in operations.

/13. The attention

13. The attention of the Statistical Commission is called to the fact that a very considerable degree of interest has been expressed in the preparation of statistical yearbooks and that many important suggestions for tables have been made. While it must be noted that in the developmental period of several of the yearbooks, not all requests can be immediately honoured, it is nevertheless very desirable that official bodies and other agencies and individuals continue to make suggestions of subjects for inclusion so that the yearbooks may serve as many purposes as are practicable.

#### IV. STATISTICAL YEARBOOK

14. A draft summary of the main headings of the first issue of the Statistical Yearbook is attached as Annex I. Final decisions as to the details of the contents have not yet been reached; many of the decisions will depend upon the ability of various Specialized Agencies and of the United Nations to assemble the tables proposed. In general the proposed contents cover a much wider field of statistics than was covered in the Statistical Yearbook of the League of Nations.

15. The contents of the Statistical Yearbook will be integrated with the contents of the specialized yearbooks which are issued or will be issued by various Specialized Agencies. This procedure is in accordance with the desire of the Statistical Commission as expressed in its Second Session. (See paragraph 5, Annex II). The work of integration is just now being initiated on the basis of the draft table of contents prepared for the Statistical Yearbook.

16. Members of the Statistical Commission are invited to comment upon the draft outline in Annex I having in mind the general objectives to be sought by the Statistical Yearbook, the interests and responsibilities of the Specialized Agencies, and the probability that not all subjects selected for inclusion could be satisfactorily prepared for the first edition.

17. Every effort will be made within the framework of existing circumstances to publish the Statistical Yearbook by the end of 1948. The problem of compilation, however, is made considerably more difficult by the long lapse of time (nearly five years) since the last issue of the Statistical Yearbook of the League of Nations with the resulting break in statistical files and by a considerably revised table of contents. Nevertheless, it is considered of very great importance to issue the Statistical Yearbook as soon as possible even though it may be necessary to limit the contents, at least as regards certain detailed sub-divisions of tables, for the first issue.

#### V. DEMOGRAPHIC YEARBOOK

18. The status of the work on the Demographic Yearbook is discussed in some detail in Annex II to this paper, especially in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4. Planning for the volume was conducted jointly by the Population Division and the Statistical Office with the benefit of comments and suggestions from several Specialized Agencies. The production of the volume is the responsibility of the Statistical Office.

19. It is expected that it will be possible to publish the Demographic Yearbook late in 1948.

#### VI. EXTERNAL TRADE STATISTICS

20. At its Second Session the Statistical Commission stressed "the desirability of intensifying the work necessary for the compilation and the early publication of figures on external trade generally similar to those previously provided by the League". The Commission is now advised that preliminary work is under way including correspondence with national statistical offices looking toward the clarification of definitions of general and special trade, the inclusion or exclusion of gold (and in certain cases silver) and of other special commodities which may be handled in an unusual way. This work refers to total trade and is a necessary step in preparing comparable tabulations of trade statistics upon either a geographic or upon a commodity basis. This work, therefore, looks ultimately toward the publication on a periodic basis of various sub-divisions of external trade in a way designed to distinguish the important flows of trade and the patterns among different countries and groups of countries. The ability to achieve a high degree of statistical comparability among sub-divisions of commodities depends in large degree upon special tabulations of country figures in terms of some standard classification such as the one afforded by the Minimum List drawn up by the League of Nations. The present practice of countries as regards the Minimum List is shown in detail in E/CN.3/C.1/7.

21. In addition to the plans discussed in paragraph 20 for the compilation and publication of comparable value figures, attention has been directed toward the collection of additional statistical materials on the terms of trade. National statistical offices are being asked to furnish particulars of methods now used in the construction of import and export "unit value" indexes and the associated quantum indexes. Consideration is being given to the publication in the near future of necessary revisions of the methodology contained in Annexes I and II of the Review of World Trade, 1938, League of Nations Publications, II Economic and Financial 1939, II.A.11, which deal with the derivation of price and quantum indexes of world trade and with national price and quantum indexes of imports and exports.

#### /VII. NATIONAL

## VII. NATIONAL INCOME STATISTICS

22. A volume dealing with national income statistics for various countries is now being completed. The status of the collection and publication of statistics of national income is fully discussed in a paper considered under Item 6 of the provisional agenda (E/CN.3/40).

## VIII. METHODOLOGICAL STUDIES OF THE LEAGUE

23. After delays arising out of budgetary conditions arrangements have been completed for the printing of the three technical studies prepared under the direction of the League of Nations Committee of Statistical Experts. The study on the measurement of national income, with an appendix prepared by R. Stone, is in the final stages of proof correction and will be available very soon. The study on banking statistics and the note on balance of payments statistics are in type and will be printed within a few weeks. All printing is done in Geneva.

## IX. WORLD STATISTICAL CONGRESS

24. Almost all copy to be supplied by the United Nations for the volume of the proceedings of the World Statistical Congress has been sent to the central editorial staff for transmittal to Calcutta where the entire proceedings of the International Statistical Conferences are being printed. All papers presented to the Congress will be printed in full in either English or French, depending on the language in which the paper was originally prepared, with a summary in the opposite language. The entire proceedings of the Conference will appear in five volumes of which the World Statistical Congress is Volume II.

## X. CENSUS PROJECT MONOGRAPHS

25. The Statistical Office and the Population Division are co-operating in the preparation of technical monographs related to methodology and general plans for censuses of population. The Commission will recall that the Economic and Social Council at its Fourth Session requested that the Secretary-General keep Member States and the Statistical and Population Commissions informed on developments in this field. (For a fuller explanation see document E/CN.3/48).

26. So far three such studies have been prepared in the series of "Studies of Census Methods":

1. "Collation of Results of Population and Agricultural Censuses" (Population Division).
2. "1950 Censuses of Population, Preliminary Report of National and International Activities" (Statistical Office).
3. "Problems of Defining, Identifying, and Measuring the Agricultural Production" (Food and Agriculture Organization).

ANNEX I  
STATISTICAL YEARBOOK  
SUMMARY TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Population and Vital Statistics

- (1) Area and latest census and/or latest estimate of population.
- (2) Population (over an extended period).
- (3) Marriage rates.
- (4) Birth rates.
- (5) Death rates.
- (6) Infant death rates.
- (7) Divorce rates.
- (8) Expectation of life.
- (9) Migration.

II. Manpower

- (1) Active population.
- (2) Index-numbers of employment.
- (3) Number of hours worked.
- (4) Unemployment.

III. Food and Agriculture

A. General

- (1) World and continental index-numbers of agricultural production.
- (2) National index-numbers of volume of agricultural production.
- (3) Value of agricultural production (in national currency).
- (4) Livestock population.

B. Individual Commodities  
(Production)

- (1) Principal food and fodder crops.
- (2) Beverages and tobacco.
- (3) Vegetable oil materials and oils.
- (4) Raw textile fibres.
- (5) Livestock products.
- (6) Fisheries.
- (7) Forest products.

IV. Industry

A. General

- (1) World and continental index-numbers of production of industrial raw materials and of fuels and energy.
- (2) National index-numbers of industrial production.

B. Fuels and Energy  
(Production)

- (1) Solid fuels and derivatives.
- (2) Petroleum natural gas and derivatives.
- (3) Electricity.

/C. Industrial Raw

C. Industrial Raw Materials  
(Production)

- (1) Metallic ores and metals.
- (2) Non-metallic minerals.
- (3) Building and construction materials.
- (4) Semi-manufactured textiles and leather.
- (5) Wood products and natural rubber.
- (6) Industrial chemicals and fertilizers.

D. Manufacturing Industry

- (1) Structure of manufacturing industry.
- (2) Production of machine tools.
- (3) Production of agricultural machines and implements.
- (4) Shipbuilding.
- (5) Production of railway rolling stock.
- (6) Production of motor vehicles.
- (7) Production of radio sets (receivers).
- (8) Production of footwear.
- (9) Production of tobacco products.

E. Building and Construction

- (1) Residential building.
- (2) Non-residential building.

V. Transport and Communications

- (1) Merchant shipping.
- (2) Railways: length of existing track.
- (3) Railways: rolling stock.
- (4) Railway traffic.
- (5) Roads: length.
- (6) Number of motor vehicles registered.
- (7) Civil aviation.
- (8) Postal service.
- (9) Telegraph service.
- (10) Telephone service.
- (11) Broadcasting.
- (12) Radios.

VI. Trade

- (1) Internal trade.
- (2) Imports and exports (in national currency).
- (3) Imports and exports (converted to standard unit).
- (4) Volume of imports and exports: index-numbers of quantum.
- (5) Index-numbers of import and export prices.

VII. Balances of Payments

- (1) Money wages, per hour.
- (2) Index-numbers of wholesale prices.
- (3) Wholesale prices of staple commodities.
- (4) Index-numbers of cost of living.

/IX. Currency.

IX. Currency, Banking and Stock Exchange

- (1) Gold and silver production, in US \$.
- (2) Exchange rates, in New York.
- (3) Gold and foreign exchange assets, in US \$.
- (4) Money supply.
- (5) Commercial bank loans.
- (6) Money rates.
- (7) Index-numbers of security prices.

X. National Income

- (1) National income.
- (2) Income distribution.
- (3) Capital formation.

XII. Social Statistics

- (1) Housing.
- (2) Public health.
- (3) Social insurance.
- (4) Pensions.
- (5) Social allowances.
- (6) Criminality.
- (7) Other social statistics.
- (8) Education and cultural statistics.

Annex I

- (1) Weights, measures and conventional coefficients.



## ANNEX II

### DEMOGRAPHIC YEARBOOK

1. Stage of Work: The development of basic files of demographic data which form the foundation for the Demographic Yearbook is proceeding as rapidly as possible with available facilities. These files consist of data collected from various official sources as well as official data previously collected by the International Statistical Institute, the Inter American Statistical Institute, and the League of Nations. In order to obtain the latest and revised figures a detailed questionnaire has been prepared and sent to official statistical agencies throughout the world. The tables of this questionnaire follow in general the list of items proposed by the Statistical Commission and the Population Commission for inclusion in the Yearbook. Certain items, which will be obtained indirectly from specialized agencies have been omitted from the questionnaire. Other items, needed for purposes other than direct publication in the Yearbook, have been included.
2. Data files are being established for each country, colony, dependency, trust territory and other separate administrative units for the world. Approximately 250 separate geographic units are included. Obviously for many of these areas detailed demographic data are non-existent or inadequate. The Yearbook tables, to be drawn from these files will be compiled so as to have broad (or complete) geographic coverage in total or summary tables and coverage over the major available areas for detailed tabulations.
3. Special effort is being directed at the problem of obtaining series of data comparable within and between areas. The questionnaire has been designed to obtain detailed information on definitions of area and population and on the inclusion and exclusion of certain population groups. In addition, for most areas, provisional future estimates have been submitted to governments together with specific questions regarding components of the figures.
4. The principle of rotation of tables in successive years in order to increase the adequacy of detailed coverage, both geographically and by topics is being studied by the Secretariat. A specific practical plan for such rotation should take into consideration (a) materials readily available (b) materials available after more elaborate research (c) type of materials to become available from scheduled population censuses (d) type of materials available annually from registration sources.

/A preliminary

A preliminary plan of rotation can be prepared upon examination of the coverage and detail of the data now being compiled for the basic data files.

5. Co-ordination with other Yearbooks: Information received by the Secretariat shows that in addition to Yearbooks of general statistics and demographic statistics, statistical yearbooks are being published or planned in the fields of agriculture, labour, health, aviation, education and others. At its second session the Statistical Commission urged the Secretary-General to give special attention to the formulation of an integrated plan for the preparation and publication of international statistical yearbooks. The objectives of such a plan should be:

- (a) general recognition of the appropriate scope of each yearbook;
- (b) avoidance of duplication so far as consistent with the usefulness of each publication;
- (c) consistency among the data compiled and published and,
- (d) economy of budgets and staff and avoidance of unnecessary burdens upon national governments reporting to international organizations.

6. The Consultative Committee on Statistical Matters has considered this problem at its second meeting. The minutes of this meeting include the following decision: "It was agreed that the Statistical Office would receive the plans and tables of contents of specialized agencies' projected Yearbooks and new editions of existing Yearbooks, and would prepare a consolidated table of contents (including those of the United Nations) for circulation and comment. It was also suggested that the Regional Commissions should be asked for their comments and suggestions on proposed Yearbooks. The plan for a co-ordinated programme of Yearbook publications should include specialized yearbooks and annuals."

7. The kinds of supplementary economic and social statistics bearing upon population movements and problems, as well as the types of non-statistical material to be included in the demographic yearbook will be considered as a part of the general plan for an integrated series of yearbooks.

8. Additional types of material: Two tables have been included in the Yearbook questionnaire which have as their object, a survey of statistics available on divorce by number of children and duration of marriage. The questionnaire returns on these tables, when compiled, should give a comprehensive view of the availability and comparability of data on this subject.

/No statement

No statement on the available material in the field of morbidity has been prepared. The Secretariat has, however, collaborated with the Expert Committee of W.H.O. in the adoption of standard detailed classifications of causes of death and diseases.

These classifications will form the basis for more comparable statistics on mortality and morbidity whether compiled from registration data or from hospital, clinic or social security sources.

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