UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Seventh session
New York, 2-13 February 1953

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of agenda.
4. Principles for a vital statistics system.
5. Proposed recommendations for migration statistics.
6. A system of wholesale price statistics.
13. Requested reports and new items:
   (a) Balance of payments statistics
   (b) Manual on money and banking statistics
   (c) Censuses of distribution
   (d) Construction statistics
   (e) Living standards
   (f) Transport statistics
   (g) Customs areas
   (h) Construction of price and quantity indexes in national accounting
   (i) Insurance statistics.
14. Other business.
STATISTICAL COMMISSION
14th Session
Mr. Z., 2-13 February 1953

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

(Memorandum by the Secretary-General)

This memorandum is intended to assist the members of the Commission by indicating the history and the current status of each item on the agenda for the seventh session.

The documents are now in preparation and will be forwarded to the members of the Commission in due course. To date, E/CN.3/141 is the latest in the series to have been published.

1. Election of Officers

The Commission should choose a chairman, a vice-chairman and a rapporteur to serve from the beginning of the seventh session to the beginning of the eighth session.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Commission should decide whether items should be added or deleted from the provisional agenda (E/CN.3/141) and the order in which the items are to be discussed.

3. Principles for Statistics of External Trade

The Commission examined a preliminary report on this subject at its sixth session and requested that a re-examination be made of the main concepts, definitions and practices used by Governments with particular reference to the provisions of the International Convention relating to Economic Statistics.

A complete technical paper (E/CN.3/142) is presented for consideration by the Commission incorporating the views of an international group of experts and dealing with the following five questions: (a) coverage; (b) valuation; (c) analysis of trade by country; (d) quantity data; (e) conformity with

/definitions
E/CN.3/L.12
definitions previously recommended. The Commission also asked to consider a summary of country comments, together with background contained in a supplementary document (E/CN.3/142/Add.1).

It is hoped that the Commission will discuss the principles contained in the technical document and reach conclusions which might be recommended to the Council as a suitable basis for the collection of trade statistics in lieu of the provisions set forth in the annexes of the International Convention.

4. Principles for a Vital Statistics System

As a result of a request at its fourth session, the fifth session of the Commission considered a report on a preliminary survey of the methodological procedures and practices of various countries in the registration of vital events and compilation of vital statistics. The Commission requested that detailed recommendations for the improvement and standardization of vital statistics be prepared for its consideration at its sixth session and the Population Commission endorsed this request.

At their sixth sessions the Statistical Commission and the Population Commission studied the recommendations and requested that certain modifications be made, that attention be given to priorities among the different vital occurrences as well as to the characteristics attached to each occurrence, and that the recommendations be circulated to Governments for comment and a further revision prepared for the Commissions to consider.

The paper (E/CN.3/143) presented for consideration by the Commission takes account of the views of the Commission and contains the revised principles for the preparation of vital statistics as follows: general principles; principles for legal registration of vital events; principles for the recording, reporting and collecting of data for statistical purposes; principles for compilation of vital statistics (including proposed tabulations). A background statement is also included in the paper. The discussion section following each principle is only included for the convenience of the Commission members.

The Commission is asked to give further consideration to the proposals as it is hoped to obtain final action in the form of a Council resolution drawing these principles to the attention of Governments. The views of the seventh
session of the Population Commission will be available to the Statistical Commission when it meets in February.

5. Recommendations for Migration Statistics

The Commission, at its sixth session, considered the proposals made by the Population Commission looking toward improvement in international migration statistics and concurred with their recommendation that the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the International Labour Office complete the consultations with Governments and interested agencies and prepare revised recommendations. It expressed the wish to study the statistical aspects of migration in detail. The Commission is therefore asked to consider the proposed revised recommendations (E/CN.9/95), prepared by the Secretariat and the International Labour Office in the light of the comments and suggestions received from Governments and interested agencies, most of which are analysed in three previous reports. The views of the seventh session of the Population Commission and their recommendations regarding the proposed recommendations will be made available to the Statistical Commission in a separate paper at the time the Commission meets. It is hoped that final action will be taken at this session of the Commission and may receive the sanction of a Council resolution.


In accordance with the recommendation of the Commission, the technical report on wholesale prices which was presented to the sixth session has been circulated to countries for comment and further study has been undertaken in the light of the views obtained. The comments tend to raise fundamental questions which are presented in summary form (E/CN.3/144) in the hope that guidance may be obtained from the Commission looking towards the establishment of a definitive system acceptable to all countries, or alternative systems suitable for countries at different stages of development.

7. Definitions for Industrial Statistics

At its fourth session the Commission recommended that a survey be made of the current form and scope of industrial censuses in various countries. This survey was undertaken and the results were considered at the fifth session when the Commission recommended that the survey be circulated to Governments for their information.
information and assistance. Further recommendations were made at the fifth
session regarding specific items to be covered in censuses of industry. In
addition, the Commission requested that the study of the subject be continued
and that draft recommendations for the improvement of current practices looking
toward comparability be submitted for its consideration.

The Commission studied these draft recommendations at its sixth session and
decided that while they could be useful to countries as a framework for basic
industrial enquiries, it was desirable that they be supplemented by a set of
precise definitions accompanied by notes on different methods by which the data
could be collected.

The Commission requested that the recommendations, amended in the light of
the discussion, be circulated to countries inviting their adoption and also
affirmed the list of items to be collected in taking a census of industrial
production. The Commission further requested that study on the existing practices
and concepts in the field of basic industrial statistics be continued and that a
report be made to its seventh session.

Document E/CN.3/145 contains a set of definitions which take account of the
Commission's views and the views of experts of various countries as well as
discussions by regional conferences of statisticians in Beirut and Bangkok.
These definitions are submitted to the Commission for detailed discussion which
should include the relation of the proposed definitions to those contained in
the International Convention relating to Economic Statistics. It is hoped that
the Commission will be in a position to take final action on this subject with a
Council resolution in view.

8. Concepts and Definitions of Statistics of Capital Formation

At its fourth session the Commission stressed the need to bring up to date
the work of the League of Nations Committee of Statistical Experts contained in
a study published in 1938 (Statistics Relating to Capital Formation: A Note on
Methods. No. 4 in the series Studies and Reports on Statistical Methods).

A progress report on work on national income, capital formation etc. was
considered by the fifth session. The Commission requested that the technical
study on capital formation be completed and that it include a survey and analysis

/of methods
of methods used in various countries which prepare estimates of capital formation on the basis of questionnaires.

At its sixth session the Commission considered a report prepared on the basis of information collected from Governments. The Commission decided that the formulation of standard concepts, definitions and classifications required further study in consultation with interested Governments and that a report should be presented to the seventh session. It also requested that detailed information on recent experiences in compiling statistics of capital formation be solicited.

Following the recommendations of the Statistical Commission, the report was circulated to Governments and international organizations for their views. Comments from about 20 countries and organizations were received and formed the basis for a revision of the original paper. The revised paper was then submitted to the members of the Statistical Commission in June 1952 for their information and comments. Document E/CN.3/146 takes account of these comments and summarizes the proposals for standard concepts and classifications now being submitted to the Commission for its consideration and approval. As it was not found possible to include information on methods of measurement of capital formation in this document, a further study dealing exclusively with the problem will be presented to the Commission at a future session.

It is intended to use this study in various regional statistical conferences and eventually it is hoped to widen its scope by including a chapter on methods of measuring capital formation, and to publish it in the United Nations Studies in Methods series. It is hoped that the Commission will be able to take final action on the conceptual aspects of the study at this session.

9. A System of National Accounts

At its first session the Commission stressed the importance of continuing the work of the League of Nations Committee of Statistical Experts commenced in its study Measurement of National Income and the Construction of Social Accounts. In this connexion the Statistical Office of the United Nations undertook an enquiry the results of which were published in a study entitled National Income Statistics of Various Countries 1938-1947 and a subsequent study covering the period 1938-1940. These publications include certain material dealing with concepts, definitions and the like.

/At its fourth
At its fourth and fifth sessions the Commission stressed the need for establishing standards to provide a uniform basis for the reporting of national income statistics and at its sixth session allocated high priority to this work. An expert committee was therefore convened to review the experiences of various countries and prepare a technical report entitled A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables. This report took into account the work of the League of Nations, the experience of the Statistical Office of the United Nations and other international organizations and the work of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation in this field. The report was circulated to the members of the Statistical Commission for comments. The paper before the Statistical Commission for consideration contains a summary of the experts' report together with the comments obtained from the members of the Commission (E/CN.3/147).

It is hoped that the Commission will be able to endorse the proposed system of national accounts in general and recommend that it be used in the development and reporting of national income statistics.


The report of the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling on its fifth session1/ (E/CN.3/140) has been circulated.

In paragraph 165 of the Sub-Commission's report a number of topics are suggested for examination by an ad hoc group of experts in 1953. The Commission may wish to comment upon the work of the Sub-Commission as a whole; to express its views on subjects which should be examined at some appropriate time; and to suggest procedures for continuing the work previously undertaken by the Sub-Commission.

1/ In accordance with Council resolution 41(III)B.1(c) the fifth session was to be the final session:
'The Economic and Social Council decides ... (c) to discontinue the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling, after a final session in December 1951, until 31 December 1954, its work being taken over by the Secretary-General, the Statistical Commission or ad hoc bodies as appropriate ...'.

This survey (E/CN.3/148) is presented in accordance with the request of the Commission at its sixth session for an overall report concerning developments in the status of international statistical activities (paragraph 85, E/1994). The survey is intended to assist the Commission in assigning priorities to its work programmes and to provide an opportunity for comment or recommendations concerning the conclusions of the international conferences reported herein.

12. Social Statistics

The Commission had expressed its interest in the development of social statistics at previous sessions and at its sixth session placed the subject high upon its list of priorities. This document (E/CN.3/149) is intended as an information paper presenting a summary of the current situation in this field and drawing attention to the difficulties involved as well as proffering suggestions for possible lines of action. Guidance is sought from the Commission as to steps to be undertaken in the development of the various branches of social statistics.

13. Balance of Payments Statistics: The International Monetary Fund submits this report in accordance with the Commission’s request at its sixth session to be kept informed on the progress made in the field of balance of payments statistics.


Censuses of Distribution: Progress report on recent developments presented by the International Chamber of Commerce.

Construction Statistics: Status report submitted by the Secretariat in accordance with the Commission’s wish that high priority be given to this field, with particular reference to statistics of residential construction.

Living Standards: At its fourteenth session the Economic and Social Council passed a resolution (434(XIV)B) requesting that a report be prepared on "the most satisfactory methods of defining and measuring standards of living and changes therein in the various countries, having regard to the possibility of international comparisons, to obtain the comments and recommendations of the Statistical
Statistical Commission and the Social Commission thereon, and to report to the Economic and Social Council at an early date". A description of the background and status of this work is submitted for the consideration of the Commission.

**Transport Statistics**: Progress report on development in this field since sixth session of Statistical Commission.

**Customs Areas**: Progress report submitted in accordance with the wishes of the sixth session of the Statistical Commission.

**Construction of Price and Quantity Indexes in National Accounting**: A memorandum prepared by the secretariat containing a progress report on developments in this field.

**Insurance Statistics**: Report submitted in response to a request that statistics of private insurance be compiled.

14. **Other Business**

The Commission may wish to discuss subjects not appearing on its agenda and such items will be considered under this heading.


The report will be prepared by the Rapporteur assisted by the secretariat upon termination of discussion of each item on the agenda. Financial implications of the recommendations of the Commission will be reported in a separate memorandum.