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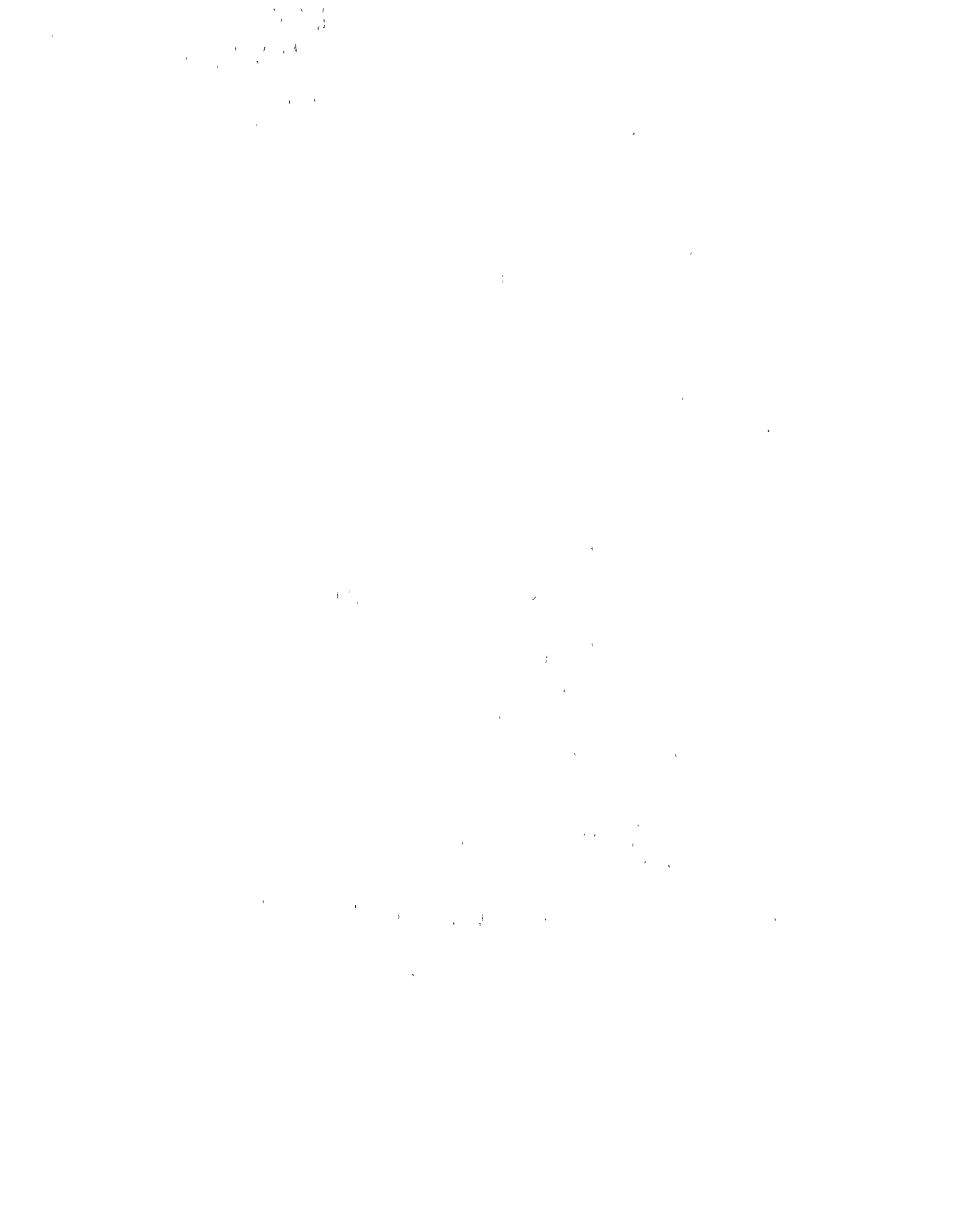


STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Eighth session
Geneva, 5 April 1954

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E/CN.3/L.30
14 January 1954

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STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Eighth session
Geneva, 5 April 1954

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

(Memorandum prepared by the Secretary-General)

1. Election of officers

The Commission should elect a chairman, a vice-chairman and a rapporteur to serve from the beginning of the eighth session to the beginning of the ninth session, which is scheduled to be held in 1956.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Commission will wish to decide if items should be added to or deleted from the provisional agenda (E/CN.3/164) and also to consider the order in which the items are to be discussed.

3. General survey of developments in international statistics

This review (E/CN.3/170) is presented in response to the Commission's desire expressed at the seventh and previous sessions that a survey of international statistical activities be presented to each session covering developments in the between-session period. The review deals in particular with the development of statistical standards under the auspices of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. In addition it makes some reference to the work of other agencies. The review is intended as general background for the Commission's discussions at its eighth session, especially in reference to the direction of future work and the assignment of priorities. The Commission will no doubt wish to comment upon the status of the various activities discussed. The present review is intended to supplement the similar one presented at the seventh session (E/CN.3/148) which

is hereby incorporated by reference. Additional documentation is available in document E/CN.3/188 which contains proposed definitions in the field of educational statistics.

4. External trade statistics

The Commission has given attention at several sessions to improving the usefulness and the international comparability of external trade statistics. It has promulgated the Standard International Trade Classification (E/1696/Rev.1, para. 28) in terms of which about 65 per cent of world trade is now expressed. At its last session the Commission established the concept of the transaction value which was recommended for use by all countries. It also gave preliminary approval to the series of definitions for external trade statistics subject to further consultations and investigation by the Secretariat (E/2365, paras. 25-42). At its third session the Commission recommended (E/795, para. 98) the development of standards for price indexes and the related indexes of quantum and unit value for external trade. Since quantum and unit value indexes are based on external trade statistics, their standardization could not properly be undertaken before the fundamental steps now accomplished towards standardizing the basic trade statistics had been made. The documentation for this session therefore includes a paper exploring the possibilities of improving the usefulness of quantum and unit value indexes (E/CN.3/171).

The paper entitled "Valuation in external trade statistics" (E/CN.3/172) discusses the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the Commission and the Economic and Social Council on the valuation for statistical purposes of goods moving in external trade and presents a summary of views expressed by a number of the national statistical authorities. It shows that most governments either already produce figures or will shortly produce figures in accordance with the recommendation.

A statement is presented (E/CN.3/173) of the progress made and problems encountered in the examination recommended by the Commission, of the questions of defining the coverage of the statistics, country of provenance and destination of goods and the remainder of the questions examined in the Report of the Group

of Experts on definitions for external trade statistics. The Commission's advice is sought on the nature of work required to consolidate the progress made and to extend the area of agreement.

At its sixth session the Commission recommended, and the Economic and Social Council adopted, a resolution inviting the Secretary-General to compile with the concurrence of each country, and to issue, a summary of official definitions made by Governments themselves of their customs areas. A paper containing the first listing of the customs areas of a number of countries as defined by the Governments themselves is submitted in response to this request (E/CN.3/174).

5. Wholesale price statistics

The construction of wholesale price index numbers has been the subject of considerable study by the Commission at previous sessions. The Commission's work has prompted reconsideration by many countries of their national practices in this field and has revealed the fundamental problems involved. At this session the Commission is invited to review the development of ideas in this field and to consider the results of the consultations that have taken place following the Commission's instructions at its last session, (E/CN.3/175).

6. Industrial statistics

(a) Statistics of individual industries

The subject of basic industrial statistics was developed by the Commission in previous sessions to the stage where recommendations were made covering the whole field of industrial production. The related fields of stocks, consumption and foreign trade may be dealt with either as separate subjects or as supplementary statistics for economic analysis of industry. The presentation of statistics of industrial production, stocks, consumption and foreign trade on an individual industry basis is illustrated in document E/CN.3/176 for the purpose of enabling the Commission to consider the approach to be followed in future work in this field.

(b) Statistics on enterprises

The Commission's work to date on basic industrial statistics has used the concept of the establishment as the basic unit for presentation of industrial statistics. At its last session the Commission indicated that methods should

be examined of presenting industrial statistics using the enterprise as the basic unit. This matter is discussed in E/CN.3/169. The Commission's views on the direction and content of future work on this subject are required.

(c) Industrial activities of households

At its seventh session the Commission requested the Secretary-General to report further upon the treatment of the industrial activities of households in situations where a household may carry on industrial and agricultural activities. Statisticians in a number of countries were consulted and the comments are summarized in E/CN.3/168. The Commission may wish to consider whether the stage has been reached at which final recommendation should be made.

7. Survey of methods used in the construction of price and quantity indexes

At its fifth session the Commission recommended that work be completed on a study of methods for expressing national income estimates in constant prices. Work on this project was not completed and at its seventh session the Commission recommended the continuation of the study of methods used by various governments in compiling these estimates and an analysis of the relationship between commonly used index numbers and corresponding components of national product and expenditure. Document E/CN.3/177 submitted for the consideration of the Commission at its present session contains a progress report.

8. Work programme in social statistics

At its seventh session the Commission emphasized the need for a higher priority to be given to social statistics. The present report (E/CN.3/178) indicates a number of possible sources of improved statistics in this general field. It is intended that the Commission also will have available to it (but not as part of the official documentation) a general background paper containing a comprehensive inventory of the present status of activities carried on by all the international agencies responsible for work in this field. The Commission is expected to record its views on what particular aspects of the work should be emphasized in the immediate future.

9. Report on International Definition and Measurement of Standards of Living

At its sixth session the General Assembly passed resolution 527 (VI) requesting that the Economic and Social Council "...provide for the working

out of adequate statistical methods and techniques so as best to facilitate the gathering and use of pertinent data in order to enable the Secretary-General to publish regular annual reports showing changes in absolute levels of living conditions in all countries which would permit the study of this problem in the light of changing general economic conditions....". The Economic and Social Council therefore requested the Secretary-General "in co-operation with the International Labour Organisation and other appropriate specialized agencies, to convene a small group of experts to prepare a report 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 Commission and the Social Commission thereon, and to report to the Economic and Social Council at an early date", (resolution 434B (XIV)). These resolutions were brought to the attention of the Statistical Commission at its seventh session which expressed the desire that the points made in its discussion on the subject be brought to the attention of the group of experts (E/2365, paragraph 130). Document E/CN.3/179 introduces the report of this group of experts which convened in June 1953. The Statistical Commission will wish to comment upon the report and to make recommendations addressed to the Economic and Social Council, upon the next steps to be taken in defining, extending and improving statistics on this subject. The comments and recommendations would be communicated to the Social Commission.

10. International Convention relating to Economic Statistics (1928)

The Commission requested at its seventh session that parties to the Convention be consulted as to difficulties encountered in implementing the compulsory sections of the Convention in view of the recommendations on statistical matters of the Economic and Social Council. The Secretary-General was also to seek the observations of signatory parties as to possible solutions to the problem. Document E/CN.3/180 contains a report on the comments received from the States signatory to the Convention. The Commission may consider itself in a position to recommend at this session whether (a) a new convention should be drawn up, (b) the present Convention should be denounced, or (c) the present Convention should be amended especially as regards the application of Part I of Annex I (external trade statistics) which has been considered by legal authorities to be binding.

In addition, the Commission requested an annotated list be compiled of existing international recommendations on statistical concepts, definitions and methods. This list is contained in document E/CN.3/181 and is submitted for the information and comments of the Commission. The annotated list summarizes the recommendations which the international agencies consider to be in effect at the present. The list is limited to standard concepts, definitions, classifications and methods.

11. Reports on work in progress

(a) Balance of payments statistics

A progress report, prepared by the secretariat of the International Monetary Fund, is submitted in accordance with the wishes of the seventh session of the Commission that it be kept informed of developments in balance of payments statistics (E/CN.3/182).

(b) Money and banking statistics

The secretariat of the Fund also submits a progress report on developments in money and banking statistics since the seventh session E/CN.3/183.

(c) Classification of occupations

The International Labour Office submits a statement (E/CN.3/167) on the status of work on the International Standard Classification of Occupations. The Commission will recall that the 1-digit arrangement already has been adopted, the proposed two-digit arrangement is now being circulated for comments preparatory to action by the Eighth International Conference of Labour Statisticians.

(d) National accounts

The Commission at its seventh session received the report of a committee of national income experts which had been convened in accordance with recommendations made by the Commission at its fourth and fifth sessions. The report entitled A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables set out a standard national accounting system proposed for use as a framework by countries for the reporting of national income statistics. The Commission took note of the report and requested that it be circulated to governments after certain differences between it and the Organization of European Economic Co-operation (OECE) document A Standardized System of National Accounts had been reconciled.

Document E/CN.3/166 is a progress report on the steps taken to carry out the Commission's recommendations and on the present status of the preparation of the Manual on Methods of Estimating National Income.

In compliance with the Commission's desire expressed at its seventh session, document E/CN.3/k84 contains a report on the methods used in various countries in the collection and analysis of data relating to the distribution of incomes. The Commission is asked to comment on whether attention should be given to the preparation of standard categories, for statistics of income distribution taking account of the fact that the system of national accounts does not contain any suggestions on this subject.

(e) Statistics of capital formation

A memorandum entitled "Concepts and Definitions of Capital Formation" (E/CN.3/146), containing a set of definitions and classifications relating to capital formation, was submitted to the Commission for consideration at its seventh session. The Commission decided that with a few modifications the proposed recommendations could be considered for adoption as a general framework by countries preparing estimates of capital formation, and requested that they be made consistent with the study A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables and be circulated to governments. A progress report on this subject is submitted to the Commission in document E/CN.3/165.

(f) Population census activities

A short progress report is submitted to the Commission in document E/CN.3/185 on continuing activities in the field of censuses of population.

(g) Vital statistics

A progress report (document E/CN.3/186) contains information on developments in the implementation of the Commission's recommendations at its seventh session.

(h) Housing

At its seventh session the Commission stressed the importance of studies being undertaken in the field of statistics of housing (E/2365, para. 99). Document E/CN.3/187 contains proposals for future developments in this work and includes preliminary results of an analysis of items included in recent housing censuses.

(i) Other reports

Since the preparation of the provisional agenda (E/CN.3/164) some additional items have been placed upon the agenda. The secretariat of the FAO is to submit a document (E/CN.3/189) requesting the Commission's view upon the preferred treatment in tabulations of statistics referring to a year other than the

conventional calendar year. There will be a brief statement of the status of statistics of insurance, transport and possibly other subjects upon which the Commission has acted at various times. In addition a brief report describing the work done by the European Conference of Statisticians since its Third Meeting will be submitted to the Commission (E/CN.3/191). The report of the Third Meeting, (E/CN.3/CONF.3/11-E/ECE/167) is hereby incorporated by reference.

12. Statistics of distribution

The International Chamber of Commerce presents a statement of progress (E/CN.3/190) on the distribution census study being carried on by the Chamber as a special study.

The 80th session of the Council of the International Chamber of Commerce has approved a resolution on distribution dealing with the desirability of improved international comparability and suggesting that an international working party be established under the auspices of the United Nations. The resolution circulated to the Economic and Social Council and to the Statistical Commission for consideration, is contained in document E/C.2/377.

13. Priorities in the Commission's work

The Commission will wish to assign priorities for the work programme in the next period, taking account of the fact that, under present arrangements, the Commission will not meet again until 1956. A paper containing possible priority arrangements will be prepared in Geneva after the Commission has considered the various items on the agenda.

14. Other business

The Commission may decide to discuss additional items not appearing on its agenda; these matters will be considered under this heading.

15. Report of the eighth session to the Economic and Social Council

The report will be prepared by the Rapporteur, assisted by the secretariat, upon termination of discussion of each item on the agenda. A separate memorandum will contain the financial implications, if any, of the recommendations of the Commission.

The reference numbers of the reports of previous sessions are given below:

Nuclear	-	E/39	(1946)
First	-	E/264	(1947)
Second	-	E/577	(1947)
Third	-	E/795	(1948)
Fourth	-	E/1312	(1949)
Fifth	-	E/1696/Rev.1	(1950)
Sixth	-	E/1994	(1951)
Seventh	-	E/2365	(held in 1953 but considered as the 1952 session).

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Eighth session

ANNEXATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Document number E/CN.3/183 has been reallocated to Priorities of the Commission Programme which will be issued subsequently.

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