Ninth session
STATISTICAL COMMISSION
16 April to 4 May 1956

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

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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 ninth session to the beginning of the tenth session.

2. Adoption of the agenda
   The Commission may wish to add or suppress items on the provisional agenda
   (document E/CN.3/193), and will wish to consider the order in which items should
   be discussed.

3. General survey of developments in international statistics
   This report (document E/CN.3/196) covering the period since the last review
   (document E/CN.3/170) summarizes developments in the main subjects of economic
   and social statistics with particular reference to progress in the preparation and
   application of uniform statistical standards by the United Nations and the
   specialized agencies. It also contains a description of the technical assistance
   programme in statistics, with observations upon various aspects of the programme,
   and a review of the developments in statistical sampling.

4. Minimum programme of economic and social statistics
   This paper (E/CN.3/197) is submitted in response to the request of the
   Commission at its eighth session that a basic list of important statistical series,
   especially related to problems of economic development and the maintenance of
economic stability, be drawn up for use by statistically under-developed countries. The Commission is asked to examine the preliminary list contained in the paper from the point of view of suitability for use as a guide in drawing up national statistical programmes.

5. **External trade statistics**

Reports are submitted for the consideration of the Commission dealing with the replies received from Governments to inquiries undertaken by the Secretary-General at the request of the Commission at its eighth session concerning the following subjects: (i) valuation practices (document E/CN.3/198); (ii) uniform definitions and treatment of (a) re-exports and transit trade and (b) attribution by country of provenance (document E/CN.3/199); (iii) indexes of quantum and unit value (a) their analyses by commodity classes according to the Standard International Trade Classification and (b) the periodic verification of their reliability (document E/CN.3/200).

Document E/CN.3/201 includes views of governments on the question of framing a standard definition of customs area. Distributed with it is a pre-publication draft of a revised List of Customs Areas of the World (E/CN.3/L.35) upon which governments have been invited to comment.

6. **Distribution statistics**

At its eighth session the Commission considered a resolution of the 80th session of the Council of the International Chamber of Commerce recommending that an international working party be set up to investigate certain problems of method for statistics of distribution (wholesale, retail and service trades) for purposes of developing concepts and definitions suitable for international use. The Commission requested that preparatory work be undertaken to clarify and define the basic concepts and methods involved in distribution censuses prior to the establishment of the working party. This preliminary study was completed in June 1955 and an expert group met in October 1955 at the request of the Secretary-General to consider working papers incorporating draft standards and summaries of country practices. The report of the group, containing a set of proposed standards, is submitted to the Commission for its consideration in document E/CN.3/L.36. Document E/CN.3/195 summarizes country comments on the report of the experts and indicates possible next steps.
7. **Industrial statistics**

(a) **Statistics of enterprises**

This report (E/CN.3/202) is submitted in response to the request of the Commission that the Secretary-General report further on the statistics of enterprises (as distinguished from statistics of establishments) compiled by different countries, the sources of these statistics and their usefulness in the better understanding of economic systems. An introductory paper (E/CN.3/169 and Corr.1) on this subject was taken up at the eighth session of the Commission.

(b) **Basic industrial statistics**

At its seventh session the Commission requested that international standards be formulated for the tabulation of data in basic industrial enquiries and gave this subject high priority in the recommended work programme drawn up at the eighth session. The present report (E/CN.3/203) sets forth draft recommendations for the consideration of the Commission. The report also summarizes the activities of countries in this field during the last ten years, as a basis for a review of the standards adopted by the Commission at its seventh session.

8. **Wholesale price statistics**

At its eighth session the Commission drew the attention of countries which were not experimenting in the compilation of sector-type index numbers to the value of studying the usefulness of this method. It was suggested for such experimentation that these countries select initially those sector index numbers of primary economic importance. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to collect information on the progress of these experiments, to circulate this information to countries, and to report to the ninth session on the developments since the eighth session. This report is therefore submitted to the Commission in document E/CN.3/204.

9. **National accounts**

The Secretary-General has collected information on the experience of countries in applying the concepts and definitions proposed in *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables* (Studies in Methods, Series F. No. 2), and has prepared a draft questionnaire for the compilation of national accounts data which has been circulated for comment among governments and interested international organizations. A progress report (E/CN.3/205) reviews the status of current work in this field and
an annex sets forth the comments of countries on the proposed standard system of accounts and tables. Reference will be made also to Methods of National Income Estimation (Studies in Methods, Series F. No. 8) which was issued since the last session of the Commission. The report will contain proposals for the continuation of the work on international standards, the collection of national accounts data, and on methods of estimating national income.

10. Price and quantity indexes in national accounting

At its eighth session the Commission requested the Secretary-General to continue the study of methods expressing estimates of national product and expenditure in constant prices, as well as of the uses of index numbers prepared for this purpose. The present report (E/CN.3/206) summarizes the information recently collected from countries, discusses the principal conceptual and statistical problems in this field, and presents exploratory proposals for consideration by the Commission.

11. Statistics of capital formation

The Secretary-General has collected information on the experience of governments in applying the international standards which were approved at the seventh session of the Commission. The work on capital formation statistics undertaken by the Conference of European Statisticians has also been taken into account. The present report (E/CN.3/207) contains information on methods of estimating capital formation, and draft proposals aimed at greater uniformity in the presentation and description of estimates of capital formation. In addition it presents suggestions for the compilation of capital formation statistics in the less developed countries.

12. Statistics of the distribution of income

The Secretary-General has continued the study of the principal methods of compiling statistics of the distribution of income and has collected information from countries on their experience. This report (E/CN.3/208) discusses a number of technical problems which arise in the compilation and presentation of these statistics and presents exploratory proposals for the improvement of methods in this field for consideration by the Commission.

13. Balance of payments statistics

A progress report is submitted by the secretariat of the International Monetary Fund in response to the Commission's request to be kept informed on the
activities in the field of balance of payments statistics with special reference

14. **Classification of government financial accounts**

A progress report (E/CN.3/209) is submitted in response to the Commission's request at its eighth session for current information on the status of a draft manual for the classification of government financial accounts.

15. **Demographic statistics**

(a) **World population census programme**

The Commission at its eighth session recommended that certain activities related to population censuses be undertaken. Document E/CN.3/210 outlines the status of the work on this programme and makes proposals for future work. Preliminary draft recommendations relating to general aspects of census planning and organization, topics to be included, their definition and classification, and tabulation programme outlines are given in document E/CN.3/211. Basic studies of census methods used in preparing the draft recommendations, and comments made by various regional groups of statisticians on the census programme and on the draft recommendations are available as background papers. The basic studies are contained in ST/STAT/P/L.1-16.

(b) **Vital statistics**

A progress report on the work of the Secretariat in implementing previous recommendations of the Commission in the field of vital statistics is given in document E/CN.3/212.

16. **Social statistics**

(a) **International definition and measurement of standards and levels of living**

At its last session the Statistical Commission considered a report on International Definition and Measurement of Standards and Levels of Living, drawn up by a Committee of Experts in pursuance of resolutions passed by the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, which was submitted for the consideration of the Statistical Commission and the Social Commission. The Statistical Commission expressed general approval of the major conclusions contained in the report but postponed the discussion of the specific recommendations made by the Experts asking that the Secretary-General circulate the report to
Governments with a request that they examine and comment on the proposals therein. Document E/CN.3/213 gives a summary of comments which have been received by the Secretary-General from governments and interested specialized agencies. Document E/CN.3/214 contains the Secretary-General's general conclusions on this subject.

(b) Family living studies

At its eighth session the Commission noted that the International Labour Office proposed to establish an expert group to study the technical problems involved in the organization and conduct of family living studies with a view to enlarging their scope, and developing methods for their application to rural and less developed areas. This group met in Geneva from 14 to 24 September 1955 and a report from the International Labour Office on the results achieved so far is presented to the Commission in document E/CN.3/215.

(c) Housing statistics

At its eighth session the Commission emphasized the importance of adequate and current statistics of housing and asked the Secretary-General to examine the various problems involved and report on the progress achieved. A comparative study of certain basic definitions used in recent housing censuses is submitted to the Commission in document E/CN.3/216.

(d) Educational and cultural statistics

A progress report (E/CN.3/217) on the improvement of educational and cultural statistics is presented by the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization in response to a request of the Commission at its eighth session.

(e) Classification of occupations

In response to the Commission's desire to be kept informed on the status of work on the International Standard Classification of Occupations, the International Labour Office has prepared a report (E/CN.3/218) on the progress achieved in this field which includes the recommendations of a group of experts which considered the subject in 1955.
(f) Status of social statistics programme

At its seventh session the Commission gave priority to social statistics in its programme of work and received a general survey on this subject at its eighth session. The present report (E/CN.3/219), drawn up in co-operation with the specialized agencies, is submitted to the Commission in response to its request that the study of social statistics be carried forward.

17. Matters referred to the Statistical Commission by other international bodies

(a) Regularization of production and employment at a high level in the metal trades

The Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation communicates, in a document E/2797-E/CN.3/194, a memorandum adopted by their Metal Trades Committee and invites the Commission to consider how to obtain more detailed and internationally comparable data on inventories of metal trade products and on the extent to which these products are used in other industries.

(b) Statistical information necessary for the work of the Commission on International Commodity Trade

The question of the adequacy of existing current statistics for the work of the Commission on International Commodity Trade will be discussed at the second session of that Commission late in 1955. It is possible that the assistance of the Statistical Commission will be requested and, if so, a document will be prepared by the Secretary-General.

(c) Subjects referred by the Population Commission

The eighth session of the Population Commission requested the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Statistical Commission reports of certain sessions of the World Population Conference and certain recommendations of a committee of experts appointed by the Secretary-General on gaps in the existing knowledge of the relationships between population trends and economic and social conditions. These matters are introduced in document E/CN.3/220.

(d) Statistics of tourism

In its resolution 563(XIX) dealing with the development of international travel, its present increasing volume and future prospects, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General "to study the statistics
available relating to tourist travel and to report to the Statistical Commission as early as possible with a view to the establishment of uniform definitions, standards and methods". The Secretary-General's report on this subject is submitted to the Commission in document E/CN.3/221.

18. *Priorities of the Commission's work programme*

As in the past, the Commission will wish to draw up a work programme, and to assign priorities to this work. A paper reflecting the views expressed during discussion of the various items on the ninth session agenda will be prepared towards the end of the session for consideration by the Commission.


The report of the Statistical Office to the Economic and Social Council on its ninth session will be prepared by the Rapporteur, with the assistance of the Secretariat, upon termination of the discussion of each item on the agenda. Should there be any financial implications in the recommendations made by the Commission at its session, a separate paper will be prepared containing an estimate of the costs involved.

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

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