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Lake Success, N. Y.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS

Statement prepared by the International Labour Office for consideration
under item 6 of the provisional agenda

1. At the fourth session of the Statistical Commission, the representatives of the International Labour Organisation presented an oral statement on the status of the work on the classification of occupations to the Committee on Statistical Classification of the Statistical Commission. This was to the effect that a draft classification was being prepared for discussion at a preliminary meeting of experts called for the week immediately following the meeting of the Commission, after which a revised draft would be prepared for submission to the Seventh International Conference of Labour Statisticians to meet in the autumn. Copies of the draft report in mimeographed form were made available to the members of the Committee. In passing upon the report of the Committee on the subject, the Statistical Commission requested (E/1312, paragraph 22 c) the Secretary-General to transmit to the International Labour Office the observations made by the members of the Committee on Classification. This was done in order that the delegates to the Seventh Conference might be able to take into account the comments made by the different members of the Committee on Classification on the draft proposals. The Statistical Commission also requested the International Labour Office to submit a further report on the progress made in establishing the classification of occupations to its fifth session.

2. Following the fourth session of the Statistical Commission, the Preliminary Meeting of Statistical Experts, convoked for May 1949, met and examined the draft proposals for the classification of occupations. Statistical experts from eight countries attended the meeting; Mr. Herbert Marshall, Dominion Statistician, (Canada) served as Chairman; a representative of the United Nations also attended.

/3. Following
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3. Following the meeting the draft report was revised in accordance with the suggestions made by the experts, and was printed and distributed to the Governments of the different countries: International Standard Classification of Occupations, International Labour Office, Studies and Reports, New Series, No. 15, Geneva, 1949.

4. The Seventh International Conference of Labour Statisticians was convened in Geneva for 26 September - 8 October 1949. Mr. Ewan Clague (United States of America) was elected Chairman; Mr. Flores Cabrera (Venezuela) and Mr. Stefan Szulc (Poland) Vice-Chairmen. The Conference set up a Committee on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (Mr. R. B. Ainsworth (United Kingdom), Chairman) to consider the revised document prepared by the Office on the Standard Classification of Occupations. The Committee and the Conference had also to consider the extracts from the summary records of the Committee on Classification of the United Nations Statistical Commission, which had been transmitted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Director-General of the International Labour Office in accordance with the request of the Statistical Commission.

5. The Committee on the International Standard Classification of Occupations and later the Conference in plenary session adopted three resolutions on the subject, the first giving the major groups of an international standard classification, the second providing for further work on the subject, and the third providing for work on a standard classification by industrial status. These are attached as an annex to the present note.

6. The record of the Seventh International Conference of Labour Statisticians was submitted to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office at its 110th session at Mysore, December 1949 - January 1950. The Governing Body authorized the Director-General to transmit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, copies of resolutions I, VI, and VII dealing with the subject of the classification of occupations and industrial status, as already mentioned. Also authorized to be transmitted was the report of the Committee on the International Standard Classification of Occupations, which includes a brief summary of the discussions at the meetings of the Committee.

7. The Governing Body also authorized the Director-General of the Office to transmit to Governments of the States Members of the International Labour Organisation the resolution on the International Standard Classification of Occupations.

/8. A full

8. A full account of the proceedings of the Conference including the reports of its Committees will be published in the Studies and Reports Series of the International Labour Office. This report will include the final texts of the resolutions as adopted by the Conference.

9. In summarizing the progress made to date, substantial agreement has been reached on the major groups of an international standard classification of occupations after discussions at two preliminary meetings of experts and at the Seventh International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Before the second of these preliminary proceedings, the different Governments were asked for their observations on the draft classification, a procedure which brought into the picture comments, criticisms and observations which were most useful in obtaining the general agreement on these major groups in the final consideration given to the classification at the Seventh Conference. This agreement reached at this international Conference represents the first major step towards an international standard classification of occupations.

10. There remains, of course, a most considerable task. While it appeared comparatively easy to reach agreement on the major groups, the discussion showed that much further work, with exchange of views, discussion and compromise was necessary before agreement could be reached on the sub-groups or on international occupational unit groups. It was suggested that it might be possible to reach agreement more quickly and in respect of a larger number of groups in regional meetings of experts than in an international conference, and that such regional groups might thus advance the classification of occupations for use in the region. The Conference adopted a resolution on further work on the classification of occupations with a paragraph looking toward the exploitation of these possibilities.

11. The comments made on the classification of occupations by the Committee on Classification of the United Nations Statistical Commission gave rise to discussion as to the independence of the classification of occupations from that of industrial status. While the Conference considered that the two classifications were logically distinct, there was agreement on the necessity of cross-classification showing industrial status with occupations in order to give its full meaning to the classification of occupations.

12. The discussion also led to the adoption by the Conference of a resolution on the subject of an International Standard Classification according to

/Industrial

Industrial Status, since it was felt that in view of the comments made by various delegates further work on this subject was needed, especially in view of the emphasis on the close connexion between industrial status and occupation.

13. In the programme of work on the classification of occupations, the needs of the different countries for a classification for use in the tabulation of the materials on occupations in coming censuses of 1950 and 1951 have been kept constantly in mind. It may be recalled that the Sixth International Conference of Labour Statisticians meeting in Montreal in August 1947, adopted a resolution on an international standard classification of occupations, work on which was authorized by the Governing Body of the Office in December, 1947. Two preliminary meetings of experts have examined the draft classification. The draft has been circulated to Governments for their observations. The date of the Conference in October was advanced to 26 September - 8 October in order to permit the classification adopted to be transmitted to the meeting of the Committee on the 1950 Censuses of the Americas, meeting in Bogota, originally scheduled for the middle of November. The resolution on occupations adopted by the Conference, as already noted, was transmitted to the session of the Governing Body of the Office, Mysore, India, December, 1949-January, 1950, the first after the close of the Conference, to authorize the formal transmission of the resolutions to the States members and to the United Nations.

14. Plans are being drafted looking towards the carrying forward of further work in this field. These will include formulation of the problems of sub-groups, the setting up of certain occupational unit groups of international interest, analysis of the uses to be made of occupations and occupational groups in relation to wage comparisons. Special attention will be paid to those occupational designations and those groupings which touch on the related classification of industrial status. The possibilities of holding regional meetings of experts to study occupational classifications will also be examined.

ANNEX

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LABOUR STATISTICIANS

I

Resolution on the International Standard
Classification of Occupations

The Seventh International Conference of Labour Statisticians,
Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International
Labour Office, and having met from 26 September to 8 October 1949,

Recognizing the desirability of establishing an International Standard
Classification of Occupations and noting in particular the need for such a
standard classification for use in connexion with the national censuses recommended
by United Nations Statistical and Population Commissions, and

Considering the definition adopted by the Sixth International Conference of
Labour Statisticians, that "occupation is the trade, profession or type of work
performed by the individual, irrespective of the branch of economic activity to
which he is attached",

Adopts this eighth day of October 1949 the following resolution:

1. Each country should classify its civilian labour force^{1/} as shown by its
population censuses, according to occupational groups, as well as according
to industrial status and industry.
2. When classifying its labour force, each country should take into
account:
 - (a) the recommendations of the Sixth International Conference of
Labour Statisticians;
 - (b) the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical and
Population Commissions;
 - (c) the relevant documents issued by the United Nations Secretariat.
3. (a) The basis of any classification of occupations should be the
trade, profession or type of work performed by the individual,

^{1/} As defined by the Sixth International Conference of Labour Statisticians.

/irrespective

irrespective of the branch of economic activity to which he is attached or of his industrial status.

(b) Proprietors or owners who mainly perform the same work as that performed by employees in their own or in a similar enterprise should be allocated to the same group to which the employees are allocated.

4. Since many of the problems encountered in the classification of individuals according to their occupation are due to the vagueness or insufficiency of the information furnished, particular attention should be paid to the formulation of the questions referring to the occupation, and to obtaining the full information needed to identify the occupation: for example, answers such as employer, owner, proprietor, foreman, worker, employee, where given, should be supplemented with information as to the actual kind of work performed.

5. In order to ascertain clearly the occupation of an individual, information on industrial status and industry should always be collected simultaneously with that on the occupation itself.

6. (a) The following are recommended as the groups into which the occupational unit groups in national classifications for census purposes should be assembled:

- 1 - Professional, technical and related workers.
- 2 - Managerial, administrative, clerical and related workers.
- 3 - Sales workers.
- 4 - Farmers, fishermen, hunters, lumbermen and related workers.
- 5 - Workers in mine, quarry and related occupations.
- 6 - Workers in operating transport occupations.
- 7 - Craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified.
- 8 - Service workers.
- 9 - Occupations unidentifiable or not reported.

(b) It is suggested that these groups should be utilized for other types of statistics where appropriate.

7. (a) For purposes of international comparisons, each country should provide for the necessary subdivisions of its occupational classifications to make possible the classifying or reclassifying of

/the data

the data in conformity with the above list of groups which form the International Standard Classification of Occupations.

(b) Each country should make available to the International Labour Office a list of the occupational unit groups of its own classification which it proposes to include under each of the groups of the International Standard Classification of Occupations.

8. Each country should make available to the International Labour Office a classification of its civilian labour force data in the following way: each division of the international standard industrial classification of all economic activities adopted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, should be subdivided by industrial status groups, and each of these subdivisions should be classified according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations. Where this is not possible, the labour force should at least be classified by industrial status and within each industrial status group according to occupation.

VI

Resolution on future work on the International Standard Classification of Occupations

The Seventh International Conference of Labour Statisticians,
Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met from 26 September to 8 October 1949,

Recognizing the importance of carrying the international standard classification of occupations to subgroups and occupational unit groups,

Recognizing further the great difficulties at the present time in obtaining clear definitions of subgroups and occupational unit groups in all countries,

Realizing that as a first step it should be of considerable value to obtain comparable and well defined occupational groups within regional groups of countries having similar structures of their labour market,

Requests the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to instruct the Office

(a) to consult and advise Member States with regard to their problems of interpretation and application of the International Standard Classification
/of Occupations,

of Occupations, for example by distributing a list of occupations for one or more countries grouped on the basis of that Classification;

(b) to continue its studies as to the differences regarding definitions of occupational groups in different countries and the possibilities of developing useful subgroups and unit groups;

(c) to consider the desirability of convening experts from regional groups of countries in order to develop comparable occupational subgroups and unit groups based upon population census information, upon information from wage surveys, or upon any other survey as well as upon information obtained from employment offices;

(d) to develop on the basis of the experience obtained by studies in the different regions, a list of occupational subgroups and unit groups which may be applicable to a greater number of countries;

(e) to submit the list thus developed to Member States for their comments;

(f) to report on the progress achieved in this field at the next session of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians.

VII

Resolution on an International Standard Classification according to industrial status

The Seventh International Conference of Labour Statisticians,

Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met from 26 September to 8 October 1949,

Having considered the communication of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Director-General of the International Labour Office, of 27 July 1949, and the minutes of the sixth session of the Committee on Statistical Classification of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations, during which the progress report on classification of occupations was examined,

Considering that the International Standard Classification of Occupations which it has adopted would be usefully supplemented by a standard classification, even very brief, of industrial status, especially with a view to more comparable presentation of the results of the census taken in the various countries, and possibly of data on employment and unemployment,

/Noting

Noting resolution VIII concerning statistics of employed and unemployed classified according to degrees of skill, adopted on 12 August 1947 by the Sixth International Conference of Labour Statisticians,

Requests the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to instruct the Office to study, in co-operation with the United Nations and the appropriate specialized agencies, the problems involved in the establishment of a standard classification of industrial status, with a view to the possible placing of this subject on the agenda of a future session of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians.
