

**STATISTICAL COMMISSION****INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION RELATING TO ECONOMIC STATISTICS**

(Memorandum prepared by the Secretariat for consideration under Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda.)

1. The General Assembly of the United Nations at its Twenty-eighth Plenary Meeting on 10 February 1946, declared that the General Assembly is willing in principle, subject to the provisions of the resolution of that date and the Charter of the United Nations, to assume the exercise of certain functions and powers previously entrusted to the League of Nations. It expressed itself willing to ensure the continued exercise of those functions and powers and referred the matter to the Economic and Social Council.
2. In accordance with these instructions, the Economic and Social Council wishes to have the views of the Statistical Commission as to what action they recommend should be taken in respect of the International Convention relating to Economic Statistics which resulted from E.606(1) M184(1) 1928 II/ of the International Conference on Economic Statistics which met in Geneva under the aegis of the League of Nations at the end of 1928.
3. A Committee of Statistical Experts was appointed under Article 8 of the International Convention. It was the function of this Committee to make suggestions as to how national statistics could be improved and international comparability ensured between them. In performance of these duties the Committee had the responsibility of laying down standards to guide the compilation of economic statistics compiled in the different countries.

4. The nuclear Statistical Commission recommended that the Permanent Statistical Commission should take over the functions of this Committee of Statistical Experts. This however cannot be done unless and until the United Nations legally assumes the responsibilities entrusted to the League of Nations under the International Convention relating to Economic Statistics.

## II. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION RELATING TO ECONOMIC STATISTICS

5. A minimum programme of economic statistics was laid down in the Convention which the countries ratifying the Convention undertook to compile and publish. These covered:

External Trade  
Occupations  
Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Fisheries  
Mining and Metallurgy  
Industry  
Index Numbers of Prices.

6. In the Annexes to the Convention the programme was developed in further detail. The Final Act of the Conference contained a series of resolutions and recommendations amplifying the Conventions and these annexes.

7. The Convention was signed at the Conference by the Government representatives of twenty-six of the participating countries. The Final Act was signed on behalf of thirty-five of the forty-two countries represented at the Conference.

8. The Convention was subsequently ratified by the following twenty-seven countries and is in force (under Article 14 of the Convention) since 14 December 1930:

Year of Ratification		Year of Ratification	
Australia	1932	Czechoslovakia	1931
Bulgaria	1929	Denmark	1929
Canada	1930	Egypt	1930
Chile	1934	Finland	1938
Cuba	1932	Franco	1933
			/Greece

Year of Ratification		Year of Ratification	
Greece	1930	Norway	1929
India	1931	Poland	1931
Ireland	1930	Portugal	1931
Italy	1931	Roumania	1931
Latvia	1937	Southern Rhodesia	1931
Lithuania	1938	Sweden	1930
Netherlands	1932	Union of South Africa	1930
Netherlands Indies	1933	United Kingdom	1930

### III. COMMITTEE OF STATISTICAL EXPERTS

9. As already mentioned, a Committee of Statistical Experts was established under Article 8 of the International Convention and this Committee remains in existence unless and until an amending protocol to the Convention is ratified. The attention of members of the Commission however is drawn to the fact that the last sentence of paragraph 2 of this Article read as follows:

"The Committee shall not make any suggestions in respect of statistics relating to public or private finance (public debt, revenue and expenditure, banking, the money market, stock exchange, etc.), or without the previous agreement of the appropriate international institutions or organizations in respect of statistics relating to agriculture, labour or transport."

The first part of this limiting clause was in fact rendered obsolete when in May 1936 the Council of the League of Nations requested the Committee of Statistical Experts to expand the scope of its work to comprise also of the field of financial statistics.

10. If the Commission agreed that the United Nations should assume the responsibility for the International Convention it is a matter also for decision whether this limiting clause should be dropped in the amending

/protocol

protocol insofar as it may seem unduly restrictive in view of the power already vested in the Statistical Commission by the Assembly of the United Nations. Even if, however, this clause was not amended it would not limit defacto existing powers of the Statistical Commission.

#### IV. SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

11. If the Statistical Commission recommends at this Session in general principle that action should be taken by the United Nations to transfer the powers and functions exercised by the International Convention on Economic Statistics to the United Nations, it may wish to ask the Secretary-General to prepare a draft of an amending protocol to the Convention to be considered at the next meeting of the Statistical Commission. This would permit this draft to be considered in detail by the Commission prior to submitting an explicit recommendation with the draft protocol to the Third Session of the Economic and Social Council in 1947.

12. If such a procedure were adopted there would be time for the Economic and Social Council in turn to prepare a resolution for submission to the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 1947. Such a resolution might take the form of requesting the Members of the United Nations to give their representatives to the General Assembly, authority to sign the protocol.

13. If the Statistical Commission wishes the limiting clause to the powers of the Committee of Statistical Experts under Article 8 of the International Convention to be dropped, a request would have to be made for such an amendment to be included in the draft protocol to be prepared for the next session of the Statistical Commission.

7.

14. The Statistical Commission therefore is asked to consider:

(a) Whether it wishes steps to be taken to transfer the powers

/and functions

and functions from the League of Nations to the United Nations under the International Convention relating to Economic Statistics.

(b) Whether it wishes the limiting clause to the functions of the Committee of Statistical Experts set out under Article 8 under that Convention to be omitted in any amending protocol.

(c) If the Commission deems action desirable on either or both of the above points, whether the Secretary-General should be asked to prepare a draft protocol for consideration at the next session of the Commission.

-----