

# **STATISTICAL COMMISSION**

## **REPORT ON THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION**

(25 February-6 March 1985)

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

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#### NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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## Chapter I

### MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

#### A. Draft resolutions

1. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

#### DRAFT RESOLUTION I\*

##### International economic classifications

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 299 B (XI) of 12 July 1950,

Considering:

(a) The marked improvement in the international comparability of external trade statistics which has resulted since 1976 from the implementation by Governments and international agencies of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Revision 2,

(b) The action taken by the Customs Co-operation Council to maintain the correspondence of the Customs Co-operation Council Nomenclature (CCCN) with SITC Revision 2,

(c) The action taken by the Customs Co-operation Council to revise CCCN and divide the headings thereof into a detailed Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS),

(d) The proposed revision of SITC Revision 2, 1/ as described in the report of the Secretary-General on the harmonization of international economic classifications, 2/ to be known as the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3,

1. Recommends that Member States should report internationally data on external trade statistics according to the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3, as far and as soon as possible, it being understood that Member States may not wish to make the change until they would in any case be reviewing their customs nomenclature;

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\* For the discussion, see chap. IV.

1/ PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/34/Rev.3 (second draft) and Corr.1.

2/ E/CN.3/1985/7.

2. Requests the Secretary-General:

(a) To publish SITC Revision 3, together with commodity indexes and correlation codes between SITC Revision 3, the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System and the Customs Co-operation Council Nomenclature and between SITC Revision 3 and the Classification by Broad Economic Categories; 3/

(b) To continue and complete, as a matter of priority, the development of the convertibility indexes between the first revision (SITC Revised) and the Standard Foreign Trade Classification (SFTC) used for external trade by States members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and to establish similar convertibility indexes in respect of SITC Revision 3 and the Standard Foreign Trade Classification;

(c) To arrange that, beginning not later than with data for the full year 1988, the publication of SITC data by United Nations bodies should be, as far as possible, in the form of SITC Revision 3.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II\*

1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme

The Economic and Social Council,

Having examined the report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-third session,

Recalling its resolution 1947 (LVIII) of 7 May 1975, in which it endorsed the development of the 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme and recommended that States Members of the United Nations should take into account international recommendations relating to population and housing censuses when undertaking national censuses during the period 1975-1984, as well as its earlier resolutions endorsing previous decennial programmes,

Noting with satisfaction the unprecedented efforts made by States Members of the United Nations, in all regions, to carry out population and housing censuses as part of the 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme and also the activities of the Secretary-General in support of national efforts in this regard,

Further recalling the importance placed on population censuses in the World Population Plan of Action adopted by the United Nations World Population

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\* For the discussion, see chap. VII, sect. B.

3/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.XVII.7.

Conference held in 1974 4/ and reaffirmed by the International Conference on Population held in 1984, 5/

Noting in particular recommendation 65 adopted by the International Conference on Population, by which all countries were requested to participate in the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme in order to assist, inter alia, in the evaluation of population and development trends at all levels, 6/

Convinced that periodic population and housing censuses, since they provide comparable information for a country as a whole and for each administrative area therein, are one of the primary sources of data needed for effective development planning, monitoring of population trends and policies and the sound administration of national and local activities aimed at fostering the improvement of living standards,

Stressing that population and housing censuses should provide valuable statistics and indicators for assessing the situation of various special population groups, such as women, children, youth, the elderly, refugees and the homeless, and changes therein,

Recognizing that population and housing censuses place heavy demands on the statistical and administrative resources of countries, and that careful preparatory work is essential for maximizing the usefulness and efficiency of census activities,

Further recognizing that census methodology is constantly advancing and that an exchange of national experience and know-how will significantly contribute to the quality and timeliness of census results and the efficiency and effectiveness of census operations,

1. Recommends that States Members of the United Nations should undertake to carry out population and housing censuses during the period 1985-1994, taking into account international and regional recommendations relating to population and housing censuses and giving particular attention to the timely publication of census results so that the censuses meet national data requirements;

2. Requests the States Members of the United Nations, in carrying out population and housing censuses, to continue to provide basic census results to the United Nations and other appropriate intergovernmental organizations to assist in the study of global and regional issues;

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4/ Report of the United Nations World Population Conference, Bucharest, 19-30 August 1974 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.XIII.3), chap. I.

5/ See Report of the International Conference on Population, Mexico City, 6-14 August 1984 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.XIII.8 and corrigenda).

6/ Ibid., chap. I, sect. B, para. 33.

3. Requests the Secretary-General to proceed with the development of a 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme, to be carried out during the period 1985-1994, and to make all necessary preparations with a view to assisting interested Member States to plan and carry out improved censuses in the 1990 census decade.

B. Draft decision

2. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-third session and provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-fourth session of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-third session;

(b) Approves the provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth session of the Commission set out below, together with the documentation listed.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH  
SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Special issues:

(a) Communications between national and international statistical agencies;

Documentation

Report on current and potential future communications among national and international statistical agencies and ways to enhance them

(b) Special problems in the statistically least developed among the developing countries;

Documentation

A report, following up discussion of this matter at the twenty-third session of the Commission (see paras. 121-125 below) and including a consideration of the statistical problems and priorities and the appropriateness of existing international statistical guidelines for these countries

(c) The interrelations between statistical services and the emerging network of data bases.



Documentation

Report on the development of networks of data bases incorporating data bases of interest to national and international statistical agencies and their implications for statistical services

4. Dissemination of international statistics.

Documentation

Report on action taken following the Commission's consideration of agenda items 3 (a) and (c) at the twenty-third session (para. 17 (c))

5. National accounts and balances:

- (a) System of National Account (SNA);

Documentation

Report on progress in the revision of the System of National Accounts (para. 33 (a))

Report on the state of basic economic information used in the System of National Accounts (para. 139 (c))

Report on links between the System of National Accounts, balance-of-payments statistics, government finance statistics and financial institution statistics (para. 146)

- (b) System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS);

Documentation

Report of CMEA on the revision of the System of Balances of the National Economy (para. 37)

Draft basic methodological provisions for the compilation of the System of Balances of the National Economy (para. 37)

- (c) Links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy.

Documentation

Report on the elaboration of the conceptual framework of SNA and MPS comparisons and related experimental calculations (para. 43 (c))

6. International economic classifications.

Documentation

Progress report on the harmonization of international economic classifications (para. 57 (c))

Draft of the revised International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) (para. 57 (b))

Draft of the Central Product Classification (para. 57 (b))

7. Price statistics.

Documentation

Report on phase V of the International Comparison project (ICP) (para. 68 (c))

8. Industry, energy and environment statistics:

(a) Industrial statistics;

Documentation

Report on draft recommendations for a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries (para. 146)

Draft recommendations for a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries (para. 146)

(b) Energy statistics;

Documentation

Report on energy statistics, including statistics on new and renewable sources of energy (para. 86 (b))

(c) Environment statistics.

Documentation

Report on the environment statistics programme, including the methodological work carried out and progress towards collection and dissemination of environment statistics (para. 86 (f))

9. Demographic and social statistics:

(a) Population and housing censuses;

Documentation

Report on preparations for the World Population and Housing Census Programme, 1985-1994 (para. 97)

Draft supplementary recommendations for the World Population and Housing Census Programme, 1985-1994

(b) Social statistics and indicators.

Documentation

Progress report on the co-ordination of work on social statistics and social indicators (para. 139 (c))

10. Technical co-operation.

Documentation

Report on technical co-operation in statistics rendered by the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries (para. 111 (a))

Report containing an assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics (para. 111 (b))

Report on the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) (para. 117 (e))

Report of the World Bank on prototype surveys of the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and plans for future work (para. 120 (c))

11. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

Documentation

Report on the eleventh session of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination

12. Programme implementation.

Documentation

Overall review of the results of the statistical work of the international organizations (para. 134)

Updated information on the work of the Statistical Office (para. 147)

13. Programme objectives and planning.

Documentation

Report on the plans in statistics of the international organizations, concentrating on important planned changes, that is, new activities and activities to be cancelled or significantly modified (para. 137)

Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1988-1989 and information on the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995

14. Provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Commission.

15. Report of the Commission on its twenty-fourth session.

C. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

3. The attention of the Council is drawn to the recommendation of the Commission (para. 129 (c)) regarding the convening of the eleventh session of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination at Geneva from 2 to 4 September 1985.

4. The attention of the Council is drawn to the decisions and other recommendations of the Commission (paras. 17, 25, 33, 37, 43, 57, 68, 75, 86, 97, 111, 117, 120, 125, 129, 134, 137, 144, 149 and 150).

## Chapter II

### SPECIAL ISSUES

5. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 391st to 394th meetings, on 25 and 26 February 1985.

A. Meeting user needs for, and improving the dissemination of, international statistics; and publication policy for statistics

6. For its consideration of items 3 (a) and (c), the Commission had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on meeting user needs for, and improving the dissemination of, international statistics (E/CN.3/1985/2) and on broad aspects of the publication policies of statistical agencies (E/CN.3/1985/4).

7. The Commission considered that the report of the Secretary-General concerning publication policies (E/CN.3/1985/4) was valuable and expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for preparing it. In particular, it commended the Secretariat for compiling data on sales, free distribution, costs and revenues for nine regular publications of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. The Commission generally endorsed the policies and principles enunciated in the report with respect to the sale and free distribution of publications, in particular the principle that profit should not be the primary consideration in undertaking publication and dissemination activities but that such activities should be conducted in the most effective and economical manner possible. The Commission commended the work that had been done on improving publications and disseminating them. It made a number of suggestions for the further improvement of publications, their dissemination, and user satisfaction with international statistics in respect of timeliness, accuracy, coverage, comprehensiveness, comparability and other aspects of content.

8. Timeliness was considered the key to improving product quality and permitting effective utilization of data for the formulation of policies and programmes. In that regard, the Secretariat was urged to set deadlines and to issue, on a more timely basis each year, publications containing the information provided by countries before the deadline, rather than waiting to receive information from all countries for the latest common reference year. The statistical capability of countries differed greatly and, moreover, some countries might not have the requested data to provide. Technical assistance to enhance current capability was considered essential to improve timeliness in several developing countries. At the same time, efforts should be directed towards using modern technology to reduce the time-lag between the receipt of information and its dissemination.

9. With regard to the dissemination of international statistics, the Commission urged that attention be given first to improving the quality and usefulness of statistical publications and, second, to the promoting and marketing of publications. It further urged that the United Nations Secretariat seek out low-cost marketing techniques, many of which were available and had been used successfully at the national level. Such means of promoting dissemination as press releases or press conferences in countries and increased use of existing machinery, such as United Nations information centres, national statistical offices, journals,

meetings of professional associations and the like, should be actively pursued. In that respect, the Statistical Office should also take action which would supplement the promotional efforts being made by the Sales Section of the Publishing Division, Department of Conference Services, United Nations Secretariat.

10. With regard to soliciting the advice and views of users of international statistics, the Commission noted that user surveys had in general not been very successful at the national level. Several countries had found user conferences a valuable means of gaining user advice on the content, format and periodicity of statistical publications; it was felt, however, that such conferences might be too difficult and expensive to convene at the international level. The Commission suggested that national statistical offices might play a larger role as points of contact between the Statistical Office and other international producers of data and the users of international data in their respective countries.

11. The Commission noted that better services were effectively made available to users through the establishment of on-line data base systems. There was general agreement that an effective on-line system had many advantages, such as very rapid searching of data and calculations based on data retrieved. The Commission also pointed out that the linking of the data bases of the international statistical agencies would be an important development in the services provided to the users of the statistical output of those agencies. The eventual linking of those data bases to those of national statistical offices was also considered desirable. The suggestion was made that the Directory of International Statistics 7/ could be converted into a reference data base and used more broadly as an aid to dissemination of information on sources.

12. In addition to improving the quality of data, it was considered valuable to include a descriptive summary or analysis of data through graphs, charts and the like to make a greater impact on users, and to have an appropriate layout in the manner of commercial publications to attract readership.

13. The Commission agreed that the primary objective in the production of statistical publications was to ensure a wide dissemination of statistics and that the free distribution of publications was a major element in that regard. It cautioned, however, that constant attention to and updating of the distribution lists were needed to ensure that the publications reached those users most needing them and that the level of free distribution was appropriate, in view of both the high cost of production and the potential impact on sales.

14. The Commission was informed that the United Nations did not normally retain copyright of its publications, since its policy was designed to facilitate rather than restrict dissemination of the content of publications. Exceptions were made when the publications included material that had been furnished by Member States. Consequently, statistical yearbooks and other recurrent publications were copyrighted. The United Nations is however generous in granting permission for reproduction.

15. The importance of consistency of data when the same series was published by more than one international agency was stressed.

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7/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.XVII.11.

16. The Commission expressed its support for the planned improvements in the content of recurrent publications and in the use of advanced technology for the production of statistical publications.

Action taken by the Commission

17. The Commission:

(a) Urged further cost-effective efforts to improve the content of publications and the dissemination of comparable international statistics in a timely and efficient manner, taking into account suggestions made by the Commission;

(b) Requested that work should be continued by the Statistical Office on the development of closer contacts with users and producers of statistics to improve the quality and dissemination of international statistics;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session a progress report on action taken in response to the Commission's comments.

B. Future direction of work on social indicators; social indicators and the integration of social, demographic and related statistics

18. The Commission considered item 3 (b) in conjunction with item 8 (a). The Commission had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on the future direction of work on social indicators (E/CN.3/1985/3), and on progress in the development of social indicators and the integration of social, demographic and related statistics (E/CN.3/1985/11), and a conference room paper - containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office in that field.

19. The Commission agreed that the two reports provided an excellent basic overview of work on social indicators at the national, regional and international levels and that they set out in an orderly way the main lines of work that might be emphasized in the future as a basis for the consideration of those questions. Several representatives noted that suggestions concerning the future work of the Statistical Office in that field were directly related to agenda item 12 (Programme objectives and planning). The Commission agreed to consider the implications of the discussion of items 3 (b) and 8 (a) for the programme of work of the Statistical Office when it considered item 12 (see chap. XI).

20. In a wide-ranging discussion, the Commission stressed the necessity of viewing social indicators as an integral part of basic social and related statistics. While there might be considerable variation in approaches to the uses of social indicators among countries and international organizations, indicators must not be developed as an independent branch of social statistics. Indicators should be seen as a bridge between producers and users of social and related statistics and, at the same time, should stimulate interest in and improvement of the basic statistics.

21. The Commission reviewed various approaches to work on social indicators and the integration of social, demographic and related statistics that had been undertaken at the national and international levels and considered the results that

had been or could be achieved and their applications. It agreed that three types of uses of indicators had been identified in official work: (a) public administration and policy-making; (b) general information on significant aspects of social conditions; (c) in-depth review and analysis of social phenomena. In that context, the Commission identified the following significant criteria for social indicators: pertinence to accepted social concerns; clarity and brevity for users; and timeliness and identification of trends.

22. Representatives expressed a range of views concerning the practicality and usefulness of a general framework of integrated social statistics and indicators. Some were of the opinion that work on an overall system and on systematization of social and related statistics and indicators should be considered an essential element in work on social indicators, whatever the purpose in view. Others suggested that social indicators for specific purposes - for example, concerning special population groups or policy concerns - could be developed from underlying basic statistics without reference to a fixed general framework. The Commission agreed that a pragmatic approach oriented to users should have priority, but that co-ordination and improvement of the underlying data should proceed in parallel, and that a detailed overall system was clearly impractical. It noted that the primary objective of international work on the framework for integration and on indicators was not international comparability but promotion of and assistance to national work.

23. The Commission agreed that certain methods of co-ordination had been fairly effective in many countries in achieving improved integration and co-ordination of social statistics and indicators. Those included integrated household survey programmes, harmonization of classifications and adoption of common classifications, such as those on occupations and socio-economic groups, and inter-sectoral technical co-ordination groups. The Commission also stressed that both the need for and the difficulties of technical co-ordination at the national and international levels were increasing as emphasis on integrated social and economic policies and programmes expanded. In that context, the Commission noted with interest the recent development of specialized social statistics data bases on microcomputers and agreed that new technologies could have a significant impact on the compilation and dissemination of social statistics and indicators in the near future. Some representatives expressed scepticism, however, as to the short-term impact of such technologies in many of the developing countries. In that and in other aspects of work on social statistics and social indicators at the national level, the Commission also emphasized the value of exchanging national experiences in resolving key issues in indicator selection, compilation and co-ordination for various purposes. Several representatives noted the serious problems encountered in trying to utilize administrative statistics for social indicators.

24. The Commission also discussed several issues concerning international comparability of social indicators. Many representatives expressed considerable concern that internationally published indicators were often assumed by users to have a high degree of comparability when in fact the comparability might be minimal, and underlined the importance of having essential qualifications included in a prominent position in the relevant international publications. The Commission suggested that international requests for indicators should be minimized and carefully geared to standardized series that could feasibly be provided, keeping in mind essential social concerns endorsed in international forums. In that connection the Commission noted that the international recommendations for population and housing censuses provided a central core of social and related



economic topics for which a high degree of international comparability had been achieved, so that those recommendations could provide a useful starting-point for the development of indicators for international use. The Commission felt that if international organizations could minimize their requests for indicators, simplify those requests as much as possible and avoid overlap in them, national statistical services would be better able to provide the desired series and ensure their comparability.

#### Action taken by the Commission

##### 25. The Commission:

(a) Requested that work on social indicators should continue as part of the overall work programme in social statistics of the Statistical Office;

(b) Agreed that, with respect to subject areas, the work of the Statistical Office on social indicators should give the highest priority to the development of methodologies and the compilation of statistics, indicators and data bases on special population groups, such as women, children, youth, the elderly and disabled persons, which had been designated by the United Nations as population groups of special interest and concern;

(c) Expressed its broad support for the continuing work of the Statistical Office and the Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) on the co-ordination of international work on social statistics and indicators within the framework for integration of social, demographic and related statistics and in the context of the development of basic statistics;

(d) Requested that the planned handbook on social indicators should be prepared with a view to providing countries with extensive technical information, suitable for training activities, on various approaches to the development and use of social indicators, as well as on data sources for indicators, and emphasized the need for international co-ordination in the preparation of the handbook;

(e) Expressed strong support for the role of the regional commissions and the specialized agencies in developing and promoting the development of social statistics and indicators;

(f) Agreed that many countries would benefit from exchanges of national experience in resolving specific problems related to the development of social statistics and indicators, and that the United Nations should give a high priority to promoting and facilitating such exchanges;

(g) Commended the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on its plans for revision of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) and requested the ILO, in preparing the draft revision, to take a variety of uses of ISCO into account, including statistics on special groups and the development of social statistics and indicators in developing countries in a variety of social and economic fields, as well as the need of many developing countries for technical guidance in developing for statistical purposes detailed national classifications of occupations;

(h) Concluded that international requests to countries for indicators for international use should be limited to the minimum essential information that could readily be provided by countries on a comparable basis and that was not already available to international statistical services, and that national sources of internationally published indicators should be carefully identified in publications.

### Chapter III

#### NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES

26. The Commission considered item 4 of its agenda at its 394th and 395th meetings, on 26 and 27 February 1985.

##### A. System of National Accounts (SNA)

27. For its consideration of item 4 (a), the Commission had before it the progress report of the Secretary-General on the review of the System of National Accounts (SNA) (E/CN.3/1985/5) and a conference room paper containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office in that area.

28. The Commission commended the report as an excellent review of the progress made with regard to the revision of SNA and its co-ordination through the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts. It agreed to the series of expert group meetings tentatively scheduled for the period 1986-1990, while taking note of the specific offer of the International Monetary Fund to sponsor meetings on external transactions in 1986 and on public sector accounts in 1987. Several representatives emphasized the need for continuity and co-ordination in the execution of the SNA review work and recommended that a small core of experts should participate in all meetings, with subject specialists who would participate in specific meetings. It was recommended that the United Nations Secretariat should act as host to the first expert group on the SNA structure in 1986 and the final co-ordinating expert group meetings in 1989 and 1990 because all countries, developing and developed, were represented in the United Nations. In order to keep member countries informed on the progress of the review and its implications for their data compilations it was thought useful that a progress report on the implementation of the review should be issued at least once a year.

29. There was general support for the view that the new SNA should include a set of "core" accounts to which various "building blocks" establishing links with related sub-systems would be added to meet particular analytic requirements. The building blocks would bring flexibility to the system while the central core would ensure continuity with existing statistics compiled according to the current SNA. On the latter point, several representatives stressed the importance of avoiding breaks in the time series of SNA data that had been built up over the past two decades. There was general agreement that the core should not be extended beyond the current SNA. It was also suggested that, in delineating the core, consideration should be given to the quality of the underlying data; "soft" data might be eliminated from the core, which would then consist only of soundly based "hard" estimates.

30. The Commission agreed that in the next version of SNA it would be important to take full account of both the analytic needs and the statistical possibilities of developing countries. Of the various aspects of SNA currently under review, several were identified as being of particular importance to developing countries. Those included subsistence activities, public sector accounts, dual sectoring and subsidies designed to redistribute income to particular groups of consumers. It was also suggested that the next version of SNA should distinguish small-scale "informal" producers from large-scale "modern" enterprises. Some representatives

noted that the current SNA was still not being fully implemented by all countries, owing to the weakness of basic information. Two conclusions could be drawn from that: first, the next revision should be simpler to apply and easier to understand and, second, international organizations should provide technical assistance for the application by developing countries of both the current SNA and its successor. Several representatives strongly supported the proposal to publish a series of handbooks describing the sources and methods for compiling SNA accounts. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that the handbooks published before the final adoption of the revised SNA related to the current system and did not anticipate possible changes. It was suggested that the first of the handbooks should deal with the production accounts, and that all the manuals should describe what basic data were needed for compiling the accounts.

31. Of the various aspects of the existing SNA that were currently under consideration, representatives mentioned the following points as needing clarification: financial leasing, the treatment of private pension and life insurance transactions, the calculation of price indices for new types of "high-technology" equipment, the definition and classification of "information" and other types of services, and the definition of statistical units. The conceptual treatment of interest, which affected such matters as the imputed bank service charges, was a further matter needing review.

32. It was stated that a precise date for bringing the new SNA into operation, probably around 1990, should be set as soon as possible.

#### Action taken by the Commission

33. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the work programme proposed by the Secretariat for the SNA review and requested the Secretariat to provide annual reports on its implementation;

(b) Welcomed the co-ordinating role provided by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts, which it regarded as an excellent example of co-operation between international organizations;

(c) Emphasized the need to maintain as far as possible a small common group of experts in all the specialized expert groups on the SNA revision so as to ensure continuity and co-ordination;

(d) Recommended that special attention should be paid to the difficulties faced by developing countries as a consequence of the weakness of the basic information they used; that the basic data used should be evaluated with the object of analysing the viability of SNA concepts and classifications; that handbooks on sources and methods of compiling national accounts should be prepared; and that technical assistance and training facilities should continue to be provided;

(e) Reiterated the importance of maintaining continuity in data series by avoiding major changes in definitions and classifications of SNA.

## B. System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)

34. For its consideration of item 4 (c), the Commission had before it a note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1985/22), transmitting a report of the secretariat of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) which contained a summary of the main points in the draft basic methodological provisions for the compilation of the System of Statistical Balances of the National Economy (MPS).

35. The Commission was informed of the work carried out by the CMEA Standing Commission on Co-operation in the Field of Statistics on the elaboration and development of MPS. It was noted that the work had resulted in improving the conventional balances of MPS (for example, the material balance) and in introducing in MPS some additional tables and balances dealing with new aspects of macro-economic analysis. They related, in particular, to the System of Indicators of Non-Material Services (SINS).

36. Several delegations expressed the view that the improved version of MPS provided a better methodological basis for improving the international comparability of national income data in countries with centrally-planned economies. It was also emphasized that, because it was more comprehensive, the updated version of MPS represented an appropriate instrument for economic analysis and planning in countries in which the system was used.

### Action taken by the Commission

37. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the progress achieved in the development of MPS and urged that work on the further elaboration of the system be continued;

(b) Agreed to consider the improved version of MPS at its twenty-fourth session.

## C. Links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy

38. For its consideration of item 4 (b), the Commission had before it the progress report of the Secretary-General on links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances on the National Economy (E/CN.3/1985/6) and a conference room paper containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office in this area.

39. The Commission was informed of the progress achieved since its twenty-second session in the study of links between SNA and MPS, in particular of the work carried out by the Statistical Office in clarifying selected conceptual issues of comparison between the two systems. It was noted that the objective of the work was to prepare material for the forthcoming revision of the publication, Comparisons of the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy, Part One: Conceptual Relationships, 8/ which contained the basic

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8/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.XVII.6.

principles of linkage of the two systems of national accounting. The Commission was also informed of the results of experimental calculations of the gross domestic product for selected countries using MPS and of the net material product for selected countries using SNA that had been carried out by the Statistical Office in close co-operation with the statistical offices of those countries.

40. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the bilateral co-operation between France and Hungary in that area continued. The Commission took note of a background paper presented by France and Hungary, which dealt with a conceptual framework for comparisons between the systems. The Commission was also informed of the forthcoming similar comparison to be made between Finland and Bulgaria. The Commission emphasized the advantages of bilateral comparisons and expressed the opinion that such comparisons should be encouraged and expanded. Some delegations expressed the view that it would be desirable for selected developing countries to be involved in experimental calculations.

41. Some representatives felt that, despite the differences between SNA and MPS, both systems were useful for economic analysis and could supplement each other. The opinion was also expressed that some differences between SNA and MPS referred to accounting conventions and could be reduced or eliminated.

42. The Commission emphasized the need for broader international co-operation in linking SNA and MPS and, in particular, for co-operation between the Statistical Office and the regional commissions, especially the Economic Commission for Europe. Co-operation with CMEA was also urged.

#### Action taken by the Commission

43. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the report of the Secretary-General on links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy (E/CN.3/1985/6) and agreed that the work in this area should continue;

(b) Decided that priority should be given to the revision of the publication entitled Comparisons of the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy, Part One: Conceptual Relationships; 8/

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session a report on the progress achieved in linking the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy.

## Chapter IV

### INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS

44. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 395th to 397th and 402nd meetings, on 27 and 28 February and 4 March 1985. The Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the harmonization of international economic classifications (E/CN.3/1985/7), a conference room paper containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office in that area, and the following draft classifications: draft revision of the part of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) covering activities producing transportable goods (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/4/Rev.3 (Part I)); draft of the Combined Trade/Production Goods Classification (CPC) <sup>9/</sup> (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/77); and second draft of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Revision 3 (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/34/Rev.3 (second draft) and Corr.1).

45. The Commission was informed about the work on the harmonization of ISIC, CPC and SITC. Because of the requirement that the structures of both ISIC and SITC were to be maintained and that CPC should be closely related to ISIC, harmonization was established as follows: CPC in general combined headings and sub-headings of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) into categories grouped according to their industrial origin, following ISIC. SITC also combined HS items, although in a different way, such that each SITC item corresponded with a part of only one CPC item. That implied that only if data were obtained in sufficient detail could comparable categories be formed. The Commission confirmed that that was in accordance with the strategy previously approved. While some representatives stressed that further work should be done towards harmonization at a higher level, it was generally felt that that should not delay the work on ISIC and CPC or prevent SITC from being adopted.

46. In relation to ISIC and CPC, the Commission was informed that the current revised drafts had been discussed at a number of expert group meetings, some at United Nations Headquarters, some at the Statistical Office of the European Communities and recently one at Geneva in conjunction with the Conference of European Statisticians. It was acknowledged that, in order to harmonize with other international classifications, it was necessary to introduce a considerable number of changes in the current ISIC. It was further noted that it had proved to be impossible to introduce special categories in ISIC for activities dealing with traditional techniques. There was general agreement that ISIC categories should be defined in terms of activities and CPC categories in terms of products.

47. Some representatives expressed the view that the current definitions of statistical units were acceptable. Others, however, believed that those definitions should be updated so as to comply with the different practices in their countries. It was agreed that no major changes should be made, but that the definitions should be improved and that more systematic descriptions should be introduced.

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<sup>9/</sup> Now known as the Central Product Classification (CPC).

48. Several representatives noted that the requirement of a strict relationship between ISIC and CPC had led to inadequate descriptions of ISIC and CPC categories and in some instances to unrealistic regroupings in CPC. It was agreed that all CPC sub-items should consist of products that had their origin in only one ISIC group. Some representatives argued that the sub-items should be arranged in accordance with industrial origin, but several others suggested that, in order to obtain a better harmonization with SITC and to establish a useful product classification, they should be arranged according to their physical properties.

49. It was suggested by several representatives that energy-related activities should be given a separate treatment in ISIC or in some way treated outside the classification. Many considered that such activities should be represented at the two-digit level. The current draft contained certain exceptions to that approach, which would need to be resolved in further discussions. It was agreed that efforts should be made to arrive at an internationally agreed classification for energy and to publish correspondence tables between the revised ISIC and the General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities within the European Communities (NACE). Several representatives expressed the view that recycling activities deserved a separate category in ISIC and, although some representatives suggested that such a category should be placed in wholesale, many others expressed the view that it was better placed in the manufacturing areas.

50. The Commission was informed that work on the second part of ISIC and CPC was in progress. A first draft of the Integrated System of Classifications of Activities and Products (SINAP) dealing with construction and services would be finalized in February 1985 and that draft would be discussed at the 5th meeting of the Joint Working Group on World Level Classifications of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the Statistical Office of the European Communities in Luxembourg in June 1985. A second draft, based on the results of that meeting, was expected to be discussed at an expert group meeting in 1986, resources permitting. Meanwhile, work on the parts of ISIC and CPC dealing with the production of transportable goods should be further developed. It was recommended that a first draft of the complete ISIC and CPC, including the parts dealing with services, should be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session and that the work should be finalized in 1989.

51. There was general agreement that, when ISIC and CPC were finalized, there would no longer be a need for the International Standard Classification of All Goods and Services (ICGS) and for the Classification of Commodities by Industrial Origin (CCIO). It was also agreed that indexes should be established to ISIC (in terms of activities) and to CPC (in terms of products) and that correlation tables should be made to relate ISIC Revision 2 to ISIC Revision 3. There was strong support for the recommendation to the Customs Co-operation Council to ensure that its future revision of HS would take into account, to the extent possible, the industrial origin of goods. The representative of CCC promised co-operation in that field.

52. Regarding SITC the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1985/7) contained a description of the revised draft of the classification, various factors considered in its construction and circumstances affecting its application.

53. The Commission was informed that the revised draft had taken into account the views expressed by experts from national statistical offices and interested international organizations and at expert group meetings. The Commission was also



informed that the structure and character of SITC had been maintained but that consideration of technological changes that had taken place over a period of time, together with the need to harmonize with ISIC, had resulted in an increase in the number of basic headings and some loss of comparability with the headings of SITC Revision 2.

54. It was recognized that the correspondence codes in respect of SITC Revision 2 which were included in the draft SITC Revision 3 had been based on the draft explanatory notes to HS upon which the draft SITC Revision 3 was based, and that such correspondence codes were therefore tentative and subject to change when the final CCC explanatory notes became available.

55. The representative of CCC informed the Commission that every effort was being made to ensure the implementation of HS on 1 January 1987 and that CCC had already received from a large number of countries positive indications for its adoption. He also stated that the new explanatory notes to HS would be submitted to CCC in June 1985 and that correlation tables between HS and the current Customs Co-operation Council Nomenclature (CCCN) with its statistical sub-headings would be published towards the end of April.

56. The Commission welcomed the draft of SITC Revision 3. It was noted, however, that the breakdown of refined petroleum products in SITC Revision 3 would cause difficulties for certain countries that did not subdivide their petroleum data on the basis drafted. It was further noted that a number of editorial corrections needed to be made in the draft of SITC Revision 3 before its final promulgation, and several representatives requested that other minor modifications should be made.

#### Action taken by the Commission

57. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the continuation of the work of the Statistical Office, in conjunction with appropriate international organizations, particularly the Statistical Office of the European Communities, on the harmonization of international economic classifications;

(b) Requested that a draft of the complete revised ISIC and a draft of the complete Central Product Classification (previously known as the Combined Trade/Production Goods Classification) should be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the harmonization of international economic classifications to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session;

(d) Approved SITC Revision 3 as it appeared in the second draft of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Revision 3 (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/34/Rev.3 (second draft) and Corr.1), subject to the Statistical Office making a number of editorial corrections to the correspondence codes in respect of SITC Revision 2 when the explanatory notes to HS of the Customs Co-operation Council were finalized and subject to amendments to take into account the various suggestions made during the session concerning the identification or reclassification of specific headings, to the extent that they could be incorporated into the revised classification;

(e) Recommended:

- (i) That member States should report internationally data on external trade statistics according to SITC Revision 3 as far and as soon as possible, it being understood that member States might not wish to make the change until they reviewed their customs nomenclature;
- (ii) That member States that were not able for one reason or another to adopt the full detailed classification for certain commodities should adopt the special coding procedures described in paragraph 47 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1985/7);

(f) Requested the Secretary-General:

- (i) To publish SITC Revision 3 together with commodity indexes and correlation codes between SITC Revision 3, HS and CCCN and between SITC Revision 3 and the Classification by Broad Economic Categories; 10/
- (ii) To continue and complete, as a matter of priority, the development of the convertibility indexes between SITC Revised and the Standard Foreign Trade Classification (SFTC) used for external trade by States members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and to establish similar convertibility indexes in respect of SITC Revision 3 and SFTC;
- (iii) To arrange that, beginning not later than with data for the full year 1988, the publication of external trade data by United Nations bodies should be, as far as possible, in the form of SITC Revision 3.

58. At the 397th meeting, on 28 February, the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland introduced a draft resolution (E/CN.3/1985/L.5) entitled "International economic classifications". The draft resolution was orally amended as follows:

(a) In operative paragraph 2 (a), the words "CCCN and its subdivided headings" were replaced by "HS and CCCN";

(b) In operative paragraph 2 (c), "1987" was replaced by "1988";

(c) Operative paragraph 3 was deleted.

59. At its 402nd meeting, on 4 March, the Commission adopted the draft resolution, as orally amended (see chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution I).

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10/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.XVII.7.

## Chapter V

### PRICE STATISTICS

60. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 396th meeting, on 27 February 1985. The Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the International Comparison Project (ICP) and the International Price Statistics Programme (IPSP) (E/CN.3/1985/8 and Corr.1) and a conference room paper containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office in that area.

61. The Commission was informed of the completion of phase IV of ICP by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in joint collaboration with the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). While the results of a number of regional comparisons had been published by the concerned agencies in 1983 and 1984, those of the world comparisons carried out under phase IV would be published by the Statistical Office in the forthcoming few months. The results of the detailed comparisons, together with methodological descriptions, would be published in the latter half of 1985.

62. The Commission was also informed of the finalization of plans for phase V of ICP (with 1985 as reference year), in accordance with the proposals made by the interorganizational group on ICP. While there had been a positive development in respect of the participation of developed countries (their number was expected to increase to 25 in phase V, compared to 21 in phase IV), the situation with regard to the developing countries varied from region to region. In the African region, with the technical and financial assistance of the European Economic Community, the number of participating countries was expected to increase from 15 to 20. For one part of the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, thanks to the financial assistance provided by the Government of Japan, increased participation could also be expected. However, for the ECLAC region, mainly owing to a lack of resources, participation was likely to diminish significantly. For the region of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, participation in respect of ICP was yet to emerge. Funding problems might cause various difficulties also in connection with the core-country comparisons, especially where two developing countries from different regions were to be compared.

63. The Commission expressed its continued support for the programme in general and for the programme for phase V in particular. It took note of the changing role played by the Statistical Office in ICP, which was now restricted to the monitoring of the world comparisons through the core-country approach and to the general co-ordination of ICP at the world level. While recognizing the necessity for the Statistical Office to reduce its research activities in view of the limited resources at its disposal, the Commission stressed that research directed towards the satisfactory implementation and co-ordination of the project should continue to receive high priority.

64. The Commission took note of the circumstances leading to the deferral of the preparation of the manual on ICP. It stressed, however, that all documents required for the implementation of phase V of ICP should be updated or prepared for the use of the participating countries and other concerned agencies.

65. Many participants felt that, in spite of the considerable methodological developments in the past few years, the results of ICP were still not precise enough to be applied for various financial and policy purposes, such as the determination of credit eligibility, contributions to international organizations, and so on. The view was also expressed that, since transfers and similar international payments were carried out on the basis of existing exchange rates, converted values of exchange rates still reflected economic realities and continued to play an important role, in addition to that played by converted values of purchasing power parities (PPPs). Aware of the possible weaknesses in the basic data in a number of countries and of the considerable differences in the quality of certain goods, especially in comparison-resistant services, problems which are not easily resolved, the Commission felt that further development and investigations would be required before ICP results could be used for policy purposes at the international level. In that connection, the view was expressed that the work currently under way on PPPs should be confined to tradeable goods and services, so as to assess the extent of over- and under-valuation of the prevailing exchange rates. The suggestion was also made that studies should be undertaken by suitable agencies to estimate the productivity of labour and capital in real terms for different sectors. Such studies, inter alia, were expected to be very useful in providing an empirical basis for making required adjustments for quality differences in comparison-resistant services. The need for cross-checking the ICP-based ranking of countries with other available economic indicators relating to fulfilment of basic needs in different countries was also emphasized.

66. Some representatives considered that the resources of the overall price statistics programme of the Statistical Office should be concentrated more heavily on ICP. It was suggested that additional resources taken from other elements of the work programme (programme elements 1.5, 5.2 and 5.3) and placed in ICP would enable the Statistical Office to expand its co-ordinating role and its roles in assisting countries with data collection and in computing world-level comparisons, and might also allow the Office to sponsor a series of meetings for countries to discuss existing practices and views on problems related to the measurement of economic activity in the service sector. Other representatives recognized that ICP was a very useful project in its own right and, in addition, contributed to the improvement of national statistics in general and to the training of national statistical staff; they felt, however, that the relative priorities, as currently established, should not be altered. It was stated that, given the lack of statistical development in many countries, it would be difficult for them to take advantage of the greater resources which could be allocated to the programme.

67. The suggestion was made that the Statistical Office should examine the feasibility of preparing PPPs on an annual basis instead of the current quinquennial basis. It was argued that that would eliminate the start-up problems and costs associated with the five-year benchmark schedule and allow for smoother distribution of resources by national and international statistical offices. It would also help to prevent the loss of acquired technical training in developing countries when such surveys were not often part of their work programme.

Action taken by the Commission

68. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the plans for phase V of ICP and noted that, in addition to the methods and concepts of the programme, the question of quality of data and further methodological improvements would also receive attention;

(b) Emphasized the need for the Statistical Office to play a strong co-ordinating role in ICP as one of its major functions;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, at its twenty-fourth session, a progress report on phase V of ICP;

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to obtain extrabudgetary resources to support ICP;

(e) Reaffirmed the decision taken at its twenty-second session to assign a low priority to other work on the International Price Statistics Programme.

## Chapter VI

### INDUSTRY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

69. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at its 397th meeting, on 28 February 1985.

#### A. Statistics of mineral resources

70. For its consideration of item 7 (a) the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on progress in the development of statistics of mineral resources (E/CN.3/1985/9 and Corr.1).

71. The Commission was informed that, in response to the recommendations of the Group of Experts on the Standardization of Definitions and Terminology for Statistics on Mineral Production and Consumption, the Statistical Office had taken steps to enlarge its coverage of minerals and to change the methods and form of reporting on production of some minerals. The Commission was also informed that the specialized nature of work related to the further development of mineral consumption statistics, raw material balances and secondary recovery of metals would require the allocation of specialized additional resources.

72. The Commission agreed that work on the development of statistics of mineral resources should proceed, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (paras. 11-14). Some representatives acknowledged the potential value of the activity, not only as a unique source of world-wide information that would facilitate indirect measurement of consumption of minerals but also because of its great significance for those developing countries whose minerals constituted an important economic resource. The Commission also recognized the need for expertise in that field because of the complexity of measuring production of many of the minerals and because of wide variations in national reporting practices. Several participants provided details on those variations, and it was stressed that the reporting unit of measurement, however defined, should be identical for both the production and the trade data.

73. Representatives also expressed agreement on the growing importance of the secondary recovery of metals, and supported the recommendation that it would be very useful to convene an expert group to develop appropriate standards for data collection.

74. Several representatives emphasized that, in order to avoid duplication in work on mineral statistics, the Statistical Office should utilize all existing sources of statistics, including data available in regional commissions, and should continue to maintain close contact and co-operation with all other international and regional organizations that might be engaged in similar or related efforts.

## Action taken by the Commission

### 75. The Commission:

(a) Strongly supported the recommendations of the Group of Experts on the Standardization of Definitions and Terminology for Statistics on Mineral Production and Consumption;

(b) Decided that the work in that field should go forward, provided that the appropriate specialized resources were made available.

### B. Energy and environment statistics

76. For its consideration of item 7 (b), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on standards, methods and classifications of energy statistics and the environment statistics programme (E/CN.3/1985/10) and a conference room paper containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office in that area.

77. The Commission welcomed the progress made in the area of energy statistics, in particular the improvements in the quality and the utility of the data, as well as the methodological work under way. It was noted that the expansion of the programme to include energy balances and electricity profiles for developing countries had generated useful results.

78. The Commission agreed to the emphasis given to further methodological work in the area of energy statistics, most notably the development of guidelines on the statistical coverage of new and renewable sources of energy. The report resulting from those activities was expected to be of particular importance to developing countries. The expansion of work to include the development of price and cost statistics was welcomed.

79. Regarding the technical report on Concepts and Methods in Energy Statistics, with Special Reference to Energy Accounts and Balances, 11/ it was stated that it would be desirable to receive comments from developing countries before draft guidelines could be submitted to the Commission for consideration.

80. It was stressed that, in addition to technical reports and manuals, training through workshops and regional advisers on energy statistics was very much needed, especially to assist least developed countries in expanding and improving their energy statistics programmes.

81. The Commission noted the ongoing co-operation between the Statistical Office and the regional commissions pertaining to methodological work and training activities. The Statistical Office should continue to make full use of information collected regionally.

82. The Commission was informed of further developments in the environment statistics programme. The Directory of Environment Statistics 12/ had been

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11/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.XVII.13 and corrigendum.

12/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.XVII.12.

published in 1983, and A Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics 13/ in 1984. Draft guidelines on freshwater statistics had been prepared, discussed by an expert group and widely circulated for comments. The Statistical Office had co-sponsored a seminar on natural resources and environment statistics in west Africa in November 1983 and a workshop on ecological baseline surveys and monitoring in Asia and the Pacific in February 1985.

83. The Commission reconfirmed the importance of a continued programme on environment statistics and noted with appreciation the progress that had been achieved since its twenty-second session. The Commission commended in particular the publication of A Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics. It was pointed out that the Framework had already been applied successfully in a number of countries and was considered a useful methodological tool for those countries that were at an early stage of developing their environment statistics. The Commission agreed that environment and methodological publications in all other fields should be published in several languages to promote their accessibility and application in countries.

84. The Commission was informed about national and international activities, programmes and plans in environment statistics and related areas. The Commission stressed the need for establishing environment statistics programmes, especially in developing countries. In that context, it was suggested that an expert group, with appropriate representation of developing countries, should be convened on the development, planning and dissemination of environment statistics.

85. The Commission stressed the need for continued close collaboration between the Statistical Office and other United Nations bodies and international organizations for the implementation of the work programme. With the exception of the Economic Commission for Europe, data collection by the regional commissions was considered to be premature in view of existing resource constraints and data availability. Assistance should be given, however, to national statistical offices to develop data collection programmes. Some representatives felt strongly that the level of resources allocated to the environment statistics programme of the Statistical Office should be maintained if not increased.

#### Action taken by the Commission

86. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Statistical Office to continue its work programme on the collection and compilation of energy statistics, pursue its efforts in the methodological field, particularly in regard to new and renewable sources of energy, and further explore the development of energy statistics in value terms;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session a progress report on energy statistics;

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13/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.XVII.12.



(c) Noted with satisfaction the progress that had been achieved in environment statistics since its twenty-second session, in particular the publication of A Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics; 13/

(d) Requested that the environment statistics work programme of the Statistical Office should focus on:

- (i) Promoting the application of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics;
- (ii) Preparing a technical manual for the compilation of selected high-priority statistics in the areas of human settlements and natural resources;
- (iii) Developing gradually an international programme of collection and dissemination of selected environment statistics;
- (iv) Providing support for technical co-operation projects;

(e) Urged the Statistical Office to continue to co-ordinate international activities relating to environment statistics;

(f) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on environment statistics to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

## Chapter VII

### DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

87. The Commission considered item 8 of its agenda at its 393rd, 394th, 398th and 402nd meetings, on 26 and 28 February and 4 March 1985.

#### A. Social indicators and the integration of social, demographic and related statistics

88. The Commission considered item 8 (a) in conjunction with item 3 (b) (see chap. II, sect. B, above).

#### B. Population and housing censuses

89. For its consideration of item 8 (b), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the World Population and Housing Census Programme, 1985-1994 (E/CN.3/1985/12) and a conference room paper containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office in that area.

90. The Commission considered that the report was very timely and expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for preparing it. It noted that the subject was a very important one in which all countries were interested. There was agreement that the 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme had been an unprecedented success, with 191 countries or areas of the world carrying out a census between 1975 and 1984 and over 95 per cent of the world's population enumerated. The Commission was also gratified to learn that the international recommendations on population and housing census had been widely used by countries in all regions of the world.

91. The Commission considered national experience at length. It discussed a variety of issues in connection with population and housing censuses carried out in the 1980 census decade and noted that the importance of those issues differed somewhat among countries or regions. Some countries had already faced most of the issues while others were facing some new and different issues. The view was expressed that although the "emerging issues" listed in the report of the Secretary-General were all interesting and important, it might not be possible to produce a publication that would be helpful to countries in resolving or dealing with those issues. The Commission urged that the views of the regional commissions be sought regarding any publication on emerging issues.

92. The Commission strongly endorsed the importance and usefulness of the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme. In that connection the Commission was pleased to learn that the International Conference on Population, held at Mexico City from 6 to 14 August 1984, had urged all countries to participate in the 1990 Programme and to endeavour to improve their censuses further, giving particular attention to the timely publication of census results. The Commission stressed the importance of the census as a source of basic data on the general population as well as on special population groups, such as women, children, youth and the elderly. It also stressed the importance of considering the population and housing census as one element of an integrated national statistical system.

93. The Commission considered that the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses 14/ had been a very useful document for national population and housing census-taking in the 1980 census decade. It agreed that it remained largely valid as a guide for census-taking in the 1990 Programme, and several representatives urged specifically that it not be rewritten for the 1990 Decade. However, in view of recent developments, the Commission endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General to prepare draft supplementary recommendations for the 1990 Programme to be considered by the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

94. The Commission felt that the revised ILO standards concerning statistics of the economically active population would need to be taken into account as far as possible in censuses in order to ensure comparability between census and survey results. It recognized, however, that the new concepts were more suited to household surveys than to censuses. For that reason, it strongly emphasized that the issue required careful study and recommended that the Statistical Office and ILO should jointly prepare documentation on the subject, on a high priority basis, for detailed consideration by the expert group on the 1990 Programme. In regard to the adoption of the revised ISIC and ISCO, concern was expressed about their timely availability, so that they might be used in national censuses carried out in the 1990 census decade. The Commission noted that the existing classifications would certainly continue to be used in the case of censuses carried out early in the decade.

95. The Commission also stressed that a comprehensive assessment of the 1980 Programme, including related technical co-operation activities, should be undertaken. Several such assessments were reported to be under way or already completed by the regional commissions and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, among others. The Commission considered that the assessment reports that were available would be a useful starting-point for the work of the expert group.

96. The Commission was pleased to learn that the United Nations Fund for Population Activities expected to continue to provide support for national population census activities in accordance with its new policy guidelines and of the interest of the United Nations Children's Fund in providing at least some support for census activities as a valuable source of data on infant and child mortality. Concern was expressed that resources available for technical co-operation for the 1990 Programme might well be less than for the 1980 Programme. Many representatives stressed the importance of co-ordination of technical co-operation activities to be undertaken in connection with the 1990 Programme. The Commission was pleased to learn that the Statistical Office, in co-operation with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, planned to organize a meeting, as had been done in the 1980 Census Programme, to consider, inter alia, technical co-operation needs in connection with the census programme, ways of providing needed technical and other co-operation, and mechanisms for ensuring full co-ordination between multilateral and bilateral technical assistance activities.

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14/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.XVII.8.

Action taken by the Commission

97. The Commission:

- (a) Commended national, regional and international efforts undertaken in successfully implementing the 1980 World Population and Housing Census Programme;
- (b) Strongly endorsed the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme to be carried out between 1985 and 1994;
- (c) Approved the proposed work programme pertaining to the 1990 census decade;
- (d) Requested the Secretariat:
  - (i) To submit to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session draft supplementary recommendations on population and housing censuses for consideration;
  - (ii) To work closely with the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and interested multilateral and bilateral donors to undertake the preparation of needed technical documentation and training to ensure adequate planning and successful implementation of the 1990 Programme.

98. At the 398th meeting, on 28 February, the representative of India introduced a draft resolution (E/CN.3/1985/L.6) entitled "1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme".

99. At the 402nd meeting, on 4 March, the representative of India revised the draft resolution by replacing the words "such as youth, the elderly, women" in the seventh preambular paragraph by the words "such as women, children, youth, the elderly".

100. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposed an amendment to operative paragraph 1, whereby the word "fully" would be deleted before the word "meet national data requirements", which was accepted by the sponsor.

101. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft resolution, as orally revised and amended (see chap., I, sect. A, draft resolution II).

## Chapter VIII

### TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

102. The Commission considered item 9 of its agenda at its 399th and 400th meetings, on 1 March 1985.

#### A. Technical co-operation in statistics

103. For its consideration of item 9 (a), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on technical co-operation in statistics rendered by the organs and organizations of the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries (E/CN.3/1985/13).

104. The Commission was informed that the Statistical Office had issued, in English, French and Spanish, the Directory of Technical Co-operation in Statistics (ST/ESA/STAT/105 and Add.1), which contained descriptions of the kinds of technical co-operation in statistics available from individual bilateral and multilateral agencies. Inputs for the Directory had been received from a number of countries and relevant agencies of the United Nations system. The Commission considered that the Directory was a very effective instrument and suggested that it be updated annually in a flexible way to ensure that the developing countries would have access, on an equal footing, to international technical assistance.

105. A number of participants provided the Commission with information on their countries' bilateral programmes of technical co-operation in statistics. Representatives of some regional commissions and several international organizations also provided additional information on their technical co-operation programmes in statistics.

106. The Commission, while it acknowledged with satisfaction the improvement in the scope and content of the report of the Secretary-General, urged that further efforts should be made to improve its content. In particular, some representatives commented that the report would be more useful if a description of technical co-operation activities by subject, such as population census and data processing, were provided. The Commission was informed that that might be possible, on the basis of broad groupings of subjects. It was also stated that information on the programmes of subregional groups should be included in the report.

107. The Commission emphasized the importance of the training component in the technical co-operation programme in statistics. It urged that the Statistical Office should make every effort to ensure that the highest attention would be given to the training component in allocating resources to technical co-operation programmes. The Commission also stressed the importance of the training of trainers and several desirable components of such training were outlined.

108. The Commission discussed the various aspects of statistical data processing and agreed that effective data processing remained a major problem area in statistics. It noted that microcomputers were becoming a very important element in statistical data processing and reaffirmed the importance of statistical software packages that were portable and easy to operate. Many representatives agreed that microcomputer-based software packages, which were being developed in several

countries and international organizations, could play a major role in data processing, particularly in the developing countries. It was also stated that plans to acquire computing equipment of all kinds should include plans to ensure that staff acquired the necessary skills for full utilization of the equipment.

109. The importance of an assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics was stressed, but the difficulty of carrying out an assessment was recognized. Representatives considered that, with the requested improvement in the detailed information analysing the volume and content of technical co-operation activity, it should however be possible to compare more effectively the achievements of specific projects with their objectives. Such objectives included, for example, the development of new series of statistics, training of staff and, most important, any improvement in economic and social conditions that might to some extent be credited to improvement in statistics. It was also stated that, in reviewing effectiveness, it should be kept in mind that the technical co-operation provided should be related to priorities and the needs of countries. The Commission was informed that assessment had been discussed at the meeting of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities in 1984 and would be taken up again at its next meeting in 1985 and also by the Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination.

110. The Commission also suggested that the Statistical Office should evaluate the role of the United Nations in providing technical co-operation in statistics to developing countries vis-à-vis other suppliers of technical co-operation and examine the desirability and possibility of discussions in another forum, comprising more developing countries and donors, which might assist the Commission with a supplementary detailed review of technical co-operation in statistics.

#### Action taken by the Commission

111. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session a report on technical co-operation in statistics, including contributions from the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries, taking into account the suggestions made during the twenty-third session;

(b) Requested that a report containing an assessment of the effectiveness of technical co-operation in statistics should be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to examine the desirability and possibility of discussions in another forum, comprising more developing countries and donors, which might assist the Commission with a supplementary detailed review of technical co-operation in statistics.

#### B. Development of country capabilities: the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)

112. For its consideration of item 9 (b), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the National Household Survey Capability Programme (E/CN.3/1985/14), the report of the World Bank on the Living Standards Measurement

Study (E/CN.3/1985/15), and a conference room paper containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office in that area.

1. National Household Survey Capability Programme

113. The Commission noted that the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) was being implemented by 22 developing countries and that several more were expected to join during 1985. The Commission noted with appreciation the progress of country survey programmes and the efforts made to develop the survey infrastructure and national skills. The Commission expressed satisfaction with the arrangements for management and co-ordination of the Programme at national and international levels.

114. The Commission reaffirmed its strong support for the Programme and requested donor agencies to provide greater assistance to participating countries and to take advantage of the NHSCP framework to generate integrated statistical data required for development planning and evaluation, and to expand its use in areas of current social concern, such as health and nutrition. It was suggested that donor agencies might earmark a small percentage of development aid for the promotion of data collection and the building up of necessary infrastructure and skills, and arrange, in consultation with national authorities, for funds to be effectively used in building up statistical capabilities.

115. The Commission emphasized the advantage of an integrated approach to data collection and use, and urged donor agencies to avoid, as far as possible, the funding of ad hoc surveys to meet special needs. The Commission stressed the importance of promoting appropriate standards and procedures in data collection, analysis and use, and expressed the view that work on technical standards and documentation should be continued and further developed.

116. The view was expressed that the scope of the Programme might be enlarged to enable countries with reasonable levels of survey capability to take advantage of it. Those countries would need external support only to a marginal extent. On the other hand, they could make a positive contribution to the Programme through technical co-operation among developing countries. It was further suggested that for small and least developed countries a subregional household survey capability programme would be more appropriate than individual national programmes.

Action taken by the Commission

117. The Commission:

(a) Emphasized the importance of mobilization of resources for the implementation of country projects;

(b) Urged donor agencies and participating developing countries to accord high priority to the National Household Survey Capability Programme in their technical co-operation activities in statistics;

(c) Recommended continued co-ordination within the United Nations system, and with other multilateral and bilateral agencies in the execution of the Programme;

(d) Emphasized the importance of technical studies and documentation and the need for further work in that area;

(e) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the Programme to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

## 2. Living Standards Measurement Study

118. A representative of the World Bank informed the Commission of the development, current activities, plans and objectives of the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS). The Commission noted that LSMS had been undertaken in 1980 in order to study methods of obtaining more adequate information on living standards, trends, and differences among countries. The objective was to develop a prototype system of data collection that could be recommended for use in all interested countries. The prototype system under development covered questionnaire content and format, overall survey design, and a microcomputer and software system for data entry, editing, tabulation and initial analysis. The system was being field-tested by national statistical services in the Ivory Coast and Peru. It was expected that the results, which had been positive to date, would have significant implications for technical co-operation in data processing and for population census methods. Special attention was being given to concepts and methods for measuring the economically active population and to organization and training to minimize non-sampling error.

119. Representatives raised a number of questions concerning technical aspects of LSMS and co-ordination. In response, the representative of the World Bank advised the Commission that the Bank would be pleased to provide interested Commission members with detailed technical documentation on the survey work that had been undertaken. The Commission noted that the survey in Peru was being undertaken by the national statistical office within the framework of NHSCP. In the Ivory Coast, the survey was also being done by the national statistical office. In both countries it was hoped to continue the survey on a regular basis after the research phase was completed. Overall, the Bank viewed LSMS as a research activity whose results would be a useful input to the technical issues being dealt with by NHSCP. In response to concerns expressed by several representatives with regard to the small sample size of the prototype surveys, the representative of the Bank stated that, in the Bank's view, the reduction in non-sampling error that could be achieved with a smaller sample size more than offset the reduced possibilities for disaggregation that would result.

## Action taken by the Commission

120. The Commission:

(a) Noted with great interest the progress on the Living Standards Measurement Study and the technical and methodological innovations that were a part of the project;

(b) Requested that every effort should be made to ensure co-ordination among LSMS, NHSCP and concerned national statistical services on technical and operational matters;



(c) Requested that a report on the results of the prototype surveys and on plans for further work should be submitted to it at its twenty-fourth session.

C. Special problems of the statistically least developed countries

121. For its consideration of item 9 (c), the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the special problems of the statistically least developed countries (E/CN.3/1985/16). The Commission was informed that the question would be taken up in 1985 by the Working Group of the Commission and that it was included in the draft provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth session of the Commission, to be held in 1987.

122. The Commission considered that the subject was a very important one and agreed that the report of the Secretary-General provided a general overview of special problems facing the statistically least developed countries. It was, however, pointed out that those problems were faced by most countries in Africa and differed only in degree. The view was expressed that the report would have been more interesting had some attempt been made to identify or define the statistically least developed countries or to group them according to size of population in examining their special problems. Another approach suggested was to consider two groups of countries, small island States and larger developing countries.

123. Representatives expressed a range of views concerning the identification or definition of the statistically least developed countries. It was suggested that future work could focus on the least developed countries identified by the General Assembly and included in the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. <sup>15/</sup> It was, however, also suggested by others that the least developed countries were not the same subgroup of the developing countries as the statistically least developed countries. The further comment was made that the priority statistical needs of the least developed countries should be identified.

124. The Commission agreed that the subject was a very complex one with many ramifications; it considered that an expert group should be organized, including representation from subregional groups, to review the matter in depth. In that context, the Commission noted with interest that extrabudgetary resources might be available to support the work of an expert group.

Action taken by the Commission

125. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its strong support for continuing work on the identification of the special statistical problems of the statistically least developed countries;

(b) Endorsed the convening of an expert group to study further, in detail, the special statistical problems of the statistically least developed countries and the solution, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

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<sup>15/</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 1-14 September 1981 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.I.8), part one, sect. A.

## Chapter IX

### CO-ORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

126. The Commission considered item 10 of its agenda at its 401st meeting, on 4 March 1985. The Commission had before it the report of its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination on its tenth session, which had been held at Geneva from 26 to 28 September 1983 (E/CN.3/1985/17). The Chairman of the Commission reported that the Working Group had made recommendations on special topics to be considered by the Commission at its twenty-fourth session (*ibid.*, para. 27). Those recommendations were taken up by the Commission under agenda item 13 (see chap. XII). The Chairman also pointed out that the Working Group had set out its views on the co-ordination of the statistical data collection activities of international organizations (E/CN.3/1985/17, paras. 28 and 29).

127. The Commission endorsed the views of the Working Group on the co-ordination of international statistical data collection, which was aimed at reducing the reporting burden on countries; it welcomed the inventory of statistical data collection activities (E/CN.3/AC.1/1983/R.5), which had been sent by the Statistical Office to all national statistical offices at the request of the Working Group. The need to minimize data collection while satisfying essential international needs for data was emphasized. That task would require additional attention to be given to the co-ordination of questionnaires and of definitions used by different organizations in collecting various statistical series from countries. The Commission noted that international organizations were undertaking further consultations aimed at reducing any unnecessary duplication of requests to countries for data.

128. The Commission heard a statement by its Chairman regarding the recommendations of the Bureau on the composition of the Working Group and on the dates for the eleventh session of the Group.

#### Action taken by the Commission

129. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation for the continuing efforts made to co-ordinate international statistical data collection and urged that additional reviews should be undertaken to investigate specific new possibilities for further reducing any unnecessary duplication of requests to countries for data;

(b) Agreed that the composition of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination at its eleventh session should be as follows:

(i) Officers of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-third session:

Chairman: Thomas P. Linehan (Ireland)

Vice-Chairmen: Jessé de Souza Montello (Brazil)  
Vladimir Micka (Czechoslovakia)  
Kiron Chandra Seal (India)

Rapporteur: E. Oti Boateng (Ghana)

(ii) Representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission:

Mikhail Antonovich Korolev (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

Dorothy M. Tella (United States of America);

(iii) Representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission who would act as alternates:

Luis Beccaria (Argentina), alternate to Jessé de Souza Montello (Brazil)

Syed Habeeb Husain (Pakistan), alternate to Kiron Chandra Seal (India)

P. P. Kallaa (Kenya), alternate to E. Oti Boateng (Ghana);

(c) Recommended that the eleventh session of the Working Group should be held at Geneva from 2 to 4 September 1985.

## Chapter X

### PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

130. The Commission considered item 11 of its agenda at its 401st meeting, on 4 March 1985. The Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on an overall review of the statistical work of the international organizations for the period 1982 to mid-1984 (E/CN.3/1985/18). Representatives of several international organizations gave clarifications concerning the work described in the report, and new information was provided concerning work done internationally in the field of tourism statistics.

131. The Commission expressed satisfaction with the progress made by the international organizations in their statistical work. A representative of the Statistical Office explained a number of changes that had been made in the work programme of the Statistical Office for 1983-1984. The point was made that outputs planned for the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme needed to be completed on schedule in order for countries to use them.

132. It was noted that national statistical offices needed to be informed of new statistical development projects undertaken in their countries with the participation of international organizations. That was expected to help in avoiding duplication in projects and statistical work. In order to ensure the required flow of information, international organizations should advise the national statistical office of final agreements reached with Government ministries. The ministries that were working with international organizations on statistical matters should also keep the national statistical office informed of developments.

133. The view was expressed that, in order to review the work done in a biennium, the Commission should have available to it the final approved work programme of the Statistical Office for the period under review, and the resource inputs finally allocated to each programme element. The Commission was informed that the approved work programme and information on the actual timing of outputs in relation to programmes could be provided but that information systems had not been developed to provide the level of resource accounting requested by the Commission. The Commission was further informed that separate intergovernmental machinery existed for programme performance reporting and review, namely the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, and that the information prepared for that Committee and the results of its deliberations could be made available to the Commission.

### Action taken by the Commission

134. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its satisfaction with the progress made by the international organizations in implementing their work programmes;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the statistical work of the international organizations to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session, including in that report as much as possible of the additional information specified by the Commission;

(c) Requested that the World Tourism Organization should be invited to provide information on its activities for that report.

## Chapter XI

### PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING

135. The Commission considered item 12 of its agenda at its 401st and 402nd meetings, on 4 March 1985. The Commission had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on the plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics (E/CN.3/1985/19) and on the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1986-1987 and revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 (E/CN.3/1985/20), and a note by the Secretary-General containing the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1986-1987 and related information (E/CN.3/1985/CRP.1).

#### A. Plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics

136. The Commission endorsed the general direction of the planned work of the international organizations in the area of statistics as set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (E/CN.3/1985/19).

#### Action taken by the Commission

137. The Commission:

(a) Agreed that the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1985/19) satisfied its needs for information on the future plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a similar report to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

#### B. Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1986-1987 and revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989

138. The Commission welcomed the documentation on the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1986-1987 as a considerable improvement over the documentation provided at previous sessions and expressed its appreciation for the provision of indicative figures on the number of Professional staff assigned to each programme element. The Commission understood why it was impossible to indicate the exact number of Professional staff to be assigned but only to carry forward the 1984-1985 figures. The Commission stressed that the information was essential for the proper review of the work programme and priorities of the Statistical Office. The Commission requested that, in future reports, resource information should be provided in terms of work-months per biennium rather than number of staff.

139. The Commission agreed that the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for 1986-1987 was well balanced and appropriate. Several representatives suggested additions and modifications to the content and timing of the work

programme, which mainly reflected the conclusions reached by the Commission in discussing other items of the agenda. Specific points included:

(a) The addition of an output entitled "Basic methodological provisions for the compilation of the System of Balances of the National Economy" under programme element 1.1 (Further development of the United Nations System of National Accounts and linkage with the System of Balances of the National Economy);

(b) The need to reformulate programme elements 1.9 (Development of concepts, methods and classifications for environment statistics) and 6.3 (Collection, compilation and dissemination of environment statistics) to reflect the new focus of the work on both methodology and data collection and compilation, and the need to update and translate the Survey of Environment Statistics: Frameworks, Approaches and Statistical Publications. 16/ Some clarification of programme element 1.4 (Development of concepts, classifications and methods for international trade, transport and related statistics) in relation to the medium-term plan was also requested. The Commission was assured that there was no duplication in the work programme concerning the collection of data on exchange rates, external debt and military expenditures under programme element 7.3 (Provision of statistical services to General Assembly organs and other bodies on request);

(c) The addition of reports to be prepared for the Statistical Commission at its twenty-fourth session on the state of basic economic information used in the System of National Accounts and on co-ordination of work on social statistics and social indicators.

140. The Commission entered into a discussion of priorities proposed by the Secretary-General for selected programme elements of the work programme, the criteria for setting priorities and the operational significance of assigning priorities. The Commission recalled its discussion of items 3 to 9 of the agenda and reached a basic agreement to the effect that the programme elements of the highest priority for the biennium 1986-1987 included the following:

- 1.1 Further development of the United Nations System of National Accounts and linkage with the System of Balances of the National Economy;
- 1.2 Development, updating and harmonization of standard international classifications;
- 1.6 Development of concepts, classifications and methods for demographic, housing and human settlements statistics;
- 1.9 Development of concepts, methods and classifications for environment statistics;
- 1.10 Development of concepts and methods for statistics and indicators on special population groups;
- 6.2 Collection, compilation and dissemination of social, housing and human settlements statistics;

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16/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.XVII.4.

- 8.1 Improvement of statistical capabilities of developing countries;
- 8.2 Improvement of statistical data-processing capabilities of developing countries.

141. Other programme elements were mentioned by some representatives as having highest priority, namely 6.3 (Collection, compilation and dissemination of environment statistics) and 1.5 (Development of concepts and methods for statistics of prices and purchasing power comparisons), especially with regard to the co-ordination function of the Statistical Office in the International Comparison Project. However, reservations were expressed by some delegations concerning the priority of those programme elements.

142. There were differences of opinion concerning the programme elements that could be assigned lowest priority. Several representatives considered that there were several issues of basic national and international concern that should not be assigned lowest priority, including work related to transport; prices; integration and linkage of social, demographic and related statistics and indicators; and income distribution, consumption and accumulation. Other representatives considered that the planned work in those fields in 1986-1987 would be unlikely to yield significant benefits and that consequently low priority ranking for them was appropriate. The programme elements discussed included the following:

- 1.4 Development of concepts, classifications and methods for international trade, transport and related statistics;
- 1.5 Development of concepts and methods for statistics of prices and purchasing power comparisons;
- 1.7 Development of concepts and methods for integration and linkage of social, demographic and related statistics and indicators;
- 3.2 Collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics on the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation;
- 5.2 Price statistics for internationally traded commodities;
- 5.3 Collection, compilation and dissemination of price and related statistics.

143. Various representatives made specific suggestions concerning reallocation of staff resources, in particular reallocation of resources away from the programme elements listed in paragraph 142 above and programme element 1.3 (Development of concepts, classifications and methods of industrial, construction, distributive trade and energy and related statistics). The Commission was informed that the Secretary-General, taking into account the Commission's advice concerning the overall work programme and the Commission's views on priorities, would address the issue of resource allocation in the context of the overall programme budgeting process of the United Nations. It was noted that mobility of existing staff among different programme elements would impose some limitations but that increased attention should be paid to promoting mobility.

Action taken by the Commission

144. The Commission:

(a) Approved the proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1986-1987 as contained in the note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1985/CRP.1), subject to the comments made and the priorities set by the Commission;

(b) Specified a number of programme elements as having highest priority within the work programme (see para. 140 above).



## Chapter XII

### PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

145. At its 402nd meeting, on 4 March 1985, the Commission considered the draft provisional agenda for its twenty-fourth session (E/CN.3/1985/L.2/Rev.1), which incorporated the recommendations of the Commission's Working Group on special issues for consideration at that session (see E/CN.3/1985/17, para. 27). The Commission also had before it information on recent decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the control and limitation of documentation (E/CN.3/1985/L.1).

146. During the discussion, amendments were made to the draft provisional agenda and planned documentation. They included the addition, under item 5 (a), of a report on links between SNA, balance-of-payments statistics, government finance statistics and financial institution statistics and, under item 8 (a), of a report on draft recommendations for a statistical programme for household and small-scale industries, together with the text of the draft recommendations.

147. In considering documentation, the Commission expressed its appreciation of the fact that all documents for the twenty-third session had been made available in all languages prior to the session. The Commission stressed that for the twenty-fourth session all documents, particularly those related to the future programme of work of the Statistical Office, should again be made available in advance of the session and should again contain an indication of the resource requirements for each programme element. In addition, the Commission requested that the documents should, as far as possible, include information on the timing of outputs in relation to plans and on actual resource use in relation to planned resource use. The Commission noted that the content of the documents for the twenty-third session was partly determined by the need to complete drafting by May 1984, so that translation and reproduction might be completed in time to make early distribution possible. In that connection, the Commission was of the opinion that the note by the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office (E/CN.3/1985/CRP.2) was most useful and requested that a similar note should be prepared for the twenty-fourth session.

148. The Commission decided that the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination should finalize the documentation for the twenty-fourth session of the Commission along the lines suggested at the current session. The Commission asked the Working Group to consider in particular:

(a) The possibility of merging sub-items 3 (a) and (c) of the provisional agenda;

(b) The appropriate number of special issues to be included in the agenda for each session;

(c) The best way to include information on the role of microcomputers and minicomputers in overall data-processing activities in developing countries within the agreed documentation for item 10.

149. The Commission requested the Secretariat to write to members of the Commission inviting their suggestions on (a) the content of documents for the twenty-fourth session; (b) topics to be considered as special issues for future sessions; (c) the number of special issues to be considered at future sessions; and (d) any specific co-ordination or other matters that Commission members considered should be taken up by the Working Group.

150. The Commission decided that its twenty-fourth session would be held at United Nations Headquarters from 23 February to 4 March 1987.

151. At its 403rd and 404th meetings, on 6 March 1985, the Commission decided to recommend the Economic and Social Council to approve the provisional agenda and documentation for its twenty-fourth session (see chap. I, sect. B, draft decision).

### Chapter XIII

#### ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

152. At its 403rd and 404th meetings, on 6 March 1985, the Commission adopted the report on its twenty-third session (E/CN.3/1985/L.4 and Add.1-17), as orally amended during the discussion.

## Chapter XIV

### ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

#### A. Opening and duration of the session

153. The Statistical Commission held its twenty-third session at United Nations Headquarters from 25 February to 6 March 1985. The Commission held 14 meetings (391st to 404th meetings).

154. The session was opened by E. Oti Boateng (Ghana), Vice-Chairman of the Commission at its twenty-second session.

155. The Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs and the Assistant Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development addressed the Commission.

#### B. Membership and attendance

156. All States members of the Commission were represented at the session. Observers for Member States, and representatives of the Secretariat, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations also attended the session. A complete list is given in annex I to the present report.

#### C. Election of officers

157. At its 391st meeting, on 25 February, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Thomas P. Linehan (Ireland)

Vice-Chairmen: Jessé de Souza Montello (Brazil)

Vladimir Micka (Czechoslovakia)

Kiron Chandra Seal (India)

Rapporteur: E. Oti Boateng (Ghana)

#### D. Agenda

158. At its 391st meeting, on 25 February, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in documents E/CN.3/1985/1 and 21. (See annex II to the present report)

159. The Commission also approved the organization of work contained in the note by the Secretariat (E/CN.3/1985/L.1).

Annex I

ATTENDANCE

Members

Argentina: Luis Beccaria, Lelia Boeri de Cervetto\*

Brazil: Jessé de Souza Montello

Bulgaria: Vesselin Nikiforov, Mihail Bushev,\* Krassimir Stoychev\*

China: Zhang Sai, Tie Dazhang\*

Cuba: Jorge Martínez Fernández, Even Fontaine Ortiz,\* Caridad Fernández García,\*  
Jo-ann Salas Merino\*

Czechoslovakia: Vladimír Micka, Jaroslav Ceska\*

Finland: Olavi E. Niitamo, Tapio Leppo,\* Aarno Laihonon\*

France: Edmond Malinvaud, Jean-Marie Nivlet\*

Ghana: E. Oti Boateng

India: Kiron Chandra Seal, Banbit A. Roy\*

Ireland: Thomas P. Linehan

Japan: Saburo Kawai, Shozo Kamisawa,\* Yuki Miura,\* Kiyoshi Kuroiwa,\*  
Yoshiro Tokunaga,\* Giichi Okamura,\* Kanichi Murata,\* Mikio Hayashi,\*  
Futao Motai\*

Kenya: P. P. Kallaa

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya: Fadel Ashur

Mexico: Pedro Aspe Armella, Jorge Efrén Domínguez,\* Luis Alfonso de Alba\*

New Zealand: Stephen Kuzmicich, R. F. Welply\*

Nigeria: E. O. Ambah

Pakistan: Syed Habeeb Husain, Nasim M. Sadiq\*

Spain: Luis Ruiz-Maya, Carmen Arribas\*

Togo: Bouaka Dzigbodi

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\* Alternate.

Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic: Aleksandr Afanasyevich Zhuk, Igor Mefodievich Turyanskiy,\* Boris Nikolayevich Goudima\*

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Mikhail Antonovich Korolev, Anatoly Aleksandrovich Konevsky,\* Andrey Eugenievich Bugrov,\* Sergey Aleksandrovich Sukharev\*

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: John Boreham, D. Ramprakash,\* R. M. Allen\*

United States of America: Dorothy M. Tella, Suzann K. Evinger,\* Kyle Scott\*

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Canada, Colombia, Egypt, Federal Republic of Germany

United Nations Secretariat

Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

United Nations bodies

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Specialized agencies and GATT

International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

Other intergovernmental organizations represented by observers

African Development Bank, Caribbean Community Secretariat, Commonwealth Secretariat, Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, Customs Co-operation Council, European Economic Community, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Organization of American States, World Tourism Organization

Non-governmental organizations

Category I: International Chamber of Commerce

Category II: International Statistical Institute, Rehabilitation International

Roster: Data for Development (DFD)

Annex II

AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Special issues:
  - (a) Meeting user needs for, and improving the dissemination of, international statistics;
  - (b) Future direction of work on social indicators;
  - (c) Publication policy for statistics.
4. National accounts and balances:
  - (a) System of National Accounts (SNA);
  - (b) Links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS);
  - (c) System of Balances of the National Economy.
5. International economic classifications.
6. Price statistics.
7. Industry, energy and environment statistics:
  - (a) Statistics of mineral resources;
  - (b) Energy and environment statistics.
8. Demographic and social statistics:
  - (a) Social indicators and the integration of social, demographic and related statistics;
  - (b) Population and housing censuses.
9. Technical co-operation:
  - (a) Technical co-operation in statistics;
  - (b) Development of country capabilities: the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS);
  - (c) Special problems of the statistically least developed countries.



10. Co-ordination and integration of international statistical programmes.
11. Programme implementation.
12. Programme objectives and planning.
13. Provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth session of the Commission.
14. Report of the Commission on its twenty-third session.

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE COMMISSION AT ITS  
TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1985/1	2	Annotated provisional agenda
E/CN.3/1985/2	3 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/3	3 (b)	Report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/4	3 (c)	Broad aspects of the publication policies of statistical agencies: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/5	4 (a)	Progress in the review of the System of National Accounts (SNA): report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/6	4 (b)	Progress in SNA/MPS links: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/7	5	Harmonization of international economic classifications: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/8 and Corr.1	6	International Comparison Project and International Price Statistics Programme: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/9 and Corr.1	7 (a)	Progress in the development of statistics of mineral resources: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/10	7 (b)	Standards, methods and classifications of energy statistics and the environment statistics programme: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/11	8 (a)	Progress in the development of social indicators and the integration of social, demographic and related statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/12	8 (b)	World Population and Housing Census Programme, 1985-1994: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/13	9 (a)	Technical co-operation in statistics rendered by the organs and organizations of the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/14	9 (b)	National Household Survey Capability Programme: report of the Secretary-General

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1985/15	9 (b)	Living Standards Measurement Study: report of the World Bank
E/CN.3/1985/16	9 (c)	Report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/17	10	Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination on its tenth session
E/CN.3/1985/18	11	Overall review of the statistical work of the international organizations for the period 1982 to mid-1984: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/19	12	Plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/20	12	Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1986-1987 and revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/21	2	Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/22	4 (c)	Basic methodological provisions for the compilation of the System of Statistical Balances of the National Economy - A summary of main points: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/CRP.1	12	Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1986-1987 and related information: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/ CRP.2	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9	Updated information on the work of the Statistical Office: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1985/L.1	2	Organization of the work of the session: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1985/L.2	13	Draft provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth session of the Commission: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1985/L.2/ Rev.1	13	Ditto
E/CN.3/1985/L.3	2	State of preparedness of documentation for the session: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1985/L.4 and Add.1-17	14	Draft report of the Commission

<u>Document number</u>	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Title or description</u>
E/CN.3/1985/L.5	5	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution
E/CN.3/1985/L.6	8 (b)	India: draft resolution
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/ 4/Rev.3 (PART I) <u>a/</u>	5	Draft revision of the part of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) covering activities producing transportable goods
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/ 34/Rev.3 (second draft) and Corr.1 <u>a/</u>	5	Second draft of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Revision 3
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/ 77 <u>a/</u>	5	Draft of the Combined Trade/Production Goods Classification (Central Product Classification)

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a/ Final text to be issued as a United Nations publication