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**EMERGING ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL:  
STATISTICS**

(Item 6 (e) of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS  
ON ITS TENTH SESSION**

## SUMMARY

At its tenth session, held in November 1996, the Committee made one major recommendation to the Commission, concerning the Committee's terms of reference. The text recommended for adoption by the Commission is, with an editorial amendment, that which was agreed on at the ninth session of the Committee.

The Committee strengthened its institutional structure by agreeing on the terms of reference for its bureau. It decided that the bureau should comprise six members, and it set the term of office at four years, with three members retiring every two years. It took other decisions on necessary transitional measures, the nature and geographical distribution of representation on the bureau, and financial arrangements for bureau meetings. The bureau will decide on the agenda for a Working Group of Statistical Experts to be convened around November 1997, and along with the secretariat was instructed to monitor developments in the reform of the conference structure of ESCAP. The Committee also sought to strengthen its interaction with the United Nations Statistical Commission and increase its knowledge of and involvement in international statistical standards and methods.

The Committee reviewed the statistical activities carried out by the countries, international organizations and the secretariat over the last two years. It reaffirmed its support for the ESCAP Statistical Information System (ESIS) and urged that the system be operationalized as soon as possible. It strongly urged the secretariat to start disseminating its documents, data and services through the Internet.

In discussing issues relating to the development of statistics, including those in support of the themes of the Commission, the Committee endorsed the practice of inviting papers from national statistical offices and commended the quality of those produced on gender statistics, poverty estimation, critical problems in economic statistics, and environment statistics. The Committee recommended that the secretariat should disseminate information on gender issues and continue to give priority to improving gender statistics in the region. It also noted that the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) initiated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had significant resource requirements for national statistical offices. In studying the statistical implications of recent major United Nations conferences, the Committee agreed that it should focus on how to proceed in developing national social statistical infrastructure and the Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS).

While welcoming the increase in contributions to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific from several countries, the Committee called for similar action from others and considered assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to be crucial.

The Committee noted the importance of sharply focusing the secretariat's work in the field of public sector computerization on areas where the available resources could have a meaningful impact. It considered that greater attention should be paid to applications in statistics rather than to the public sector in general, and stressed the fundamental importance of information technology in the work of national statistical offices.

The Committee identified a number of high priority areas in the 1998-1999 work programme, including implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts, pilot studies and other work on the statistical implications of the global summit conferences, and services statistics. It strongly urged ESCAP to pursue means of providing advisory services in the top priority field of national accounts. Other priority areas that were identified included the informal sector, price statistics, and environment statistics. The Committee also asked the secretariat to continue to collect and collate information from agencies for the integrated presentation of statistical work programmes.

## CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION .....	1
A. Recommendations to the Commission for its consideration and adoption .....	1
B. Major conclusions and decisions of which the Commission should take note .....	2
II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE .....	5
A. Report of the bureau .....	5
B. Report of the Working Group of Statistical Experts .....	6
C. Review of statistical activities in the region .....	6
D. Functioning of the Committee and its bureau .....	8
E. Issues relating to the development of statistics, including those in support of the themes of the Commission .....	10
F. Statistical implications of the outcome of the Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing global conferences .....	14
G. Issues relating to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, including the report of the Governing Board .....	15
H. Issues relating to information technology applications and information resource management, and review of public sector computerization activities in the region .....	16
I. Programmes of work in statistics, 1996-1997 and 1998-1999, including the development of an integrated presentation of work programmes, and review of the medium-term plan, 1998-2001 .....	17
J. Other matters .....	19
K. Election of the bureau .....	20
III. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION .....	20
A. Opening and duration of the session .....	20
B. Attendance .....	21
C. Officers .....	21
D. Agenda and organization of work .....	22
E. Documentation .....	23
F. Adoption of the report .....	23

## ANNEXES

I. List of documents .....	24
II. Proposed revised description of the statistics subprogramme (adapted from the report of the Working Group on ESCAP Reform, July 1996) .....	26



**I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC  
OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION**

**A. Recommendations to the Commission for its consideration and adoption**

1. The Committee on Statistics recommends to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific the adoption of the following terms of reference of the Committee:

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS**

The Committee on Statistics, in acting as the focus of regional statistical development, shall perform the following functions:

1. Review and analyse progress in the development of statistics in the region.
2. Assist in the strengthening of the statistical infrastructure in the countries of the region, promote the improvement of the quality of statistics, the international comparability of data and the appropriate application of new techniques, and arrange for the exchange of information on and experiences in statistical work and methods among the countries.
3. Promote observance of the fundamental principles of official statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its special session in 1994.
4. Participate actively in the initiation, development, revision, testing and implementation of international statistical standards, promote and monitor their application, and promote their adaptation, as appropriate, to the conditions and needs of the countries of the region.
5. Play the focal role in promoting close coordination of all aspects of the statistical activities of specialized agencies, relevant United Nations bodies and other international organizations with regard to their work in the Asian and Pacific region, *inter alia* so as to achieve greater uniformity in concepts and definitions, reduce to a minimum the response burden on national statistical offices, and maximize the effectiveness of technical cooperation activities.
6. Promote the generation and analysis of statistical data and encourage, with due regard to relevant international work, efforts to develop a set of standardized statistical indicators for the region relevant to the themes of the Commission, namely regional economic cooperation, environment and sustainable development, and poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development.
7. Recommend programmes of technical assistance, training, education and research in the various fields of statistics and their application.
8. Review and analyse progress in the development of information technology applications and information resource management in the region, especially in the public sector, and

make recommendations on issues concerning policies and strategies, as well as on programmes of technical assistance, training and research in this field.

9. Review and evaluate the activities of the secretariat in the areas of statistics and computerized information processing, and provide guidance on the work of the secretariat, paying due regard to the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission and other relevant bodies.
10. Make recommendations to the Governing Board of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on the nature of and priorities in statistical training for the countries of the region.
11. Inform the United Nations Statistical Commission and, where appropriate, the statistical authorities of the specialized agencies and other relevant bodies, of its work, so that due attention may be given to the wider aspects of the issues considered by the Committee.
12. Work closely with other subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and coordinate activities with them.
13. Carry out such other activities as the Commission may direct from time to time.

The Committee shall meet once every two years and report to the Commission.

#### **B. Major conclusions and decisions of which the Commission should take note**

2. The Committee adopted the following terms of reference for its bureau:
  1. To assist the Committee in overseeing the activities of the secretariat during the inter-sessional period in implementing the objectives and decisions of the Committee.
  2. To review presentations from the secretariat of the decisions and resolutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and of the Statistical Commission, and to highlight issues of particular importance to the ESCAP region for the consideration of the Committee together with appropriate recommendations.
  3. To review the provisional agenda for the meetings of the Committee as prepared by the secretariat and provide guidance to the secretariat regarding the scope of the documentation for the meetings of the Committee.
  4. To guide the secretariat as necessary in the coordination of statistical activities in the region through such means as the integrated presentation of programmes of work to the Committee.
  5. To represent the Committee, through its chairperson or such other bureau member as may be designated in the event of the chairperson's inability to attend, at meetings for which invitations might be received and which the bureau considers of relevance and importance

to the Committee, in particular the United Nations Statistical Commission and its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination.

6. To take up any other matter as may be assigned by the Committee.
3. The Committee decided that the bureau should comprise six members, and it set the term of office at four years, with three members retiring every two years. It took other decisions on necessary transitional measures, the nature and geographical distribution of representation on the bureau, and financial arrangements for bureau meetings.
4. The Committee asked the secretariat to improve its reporting on emerging trends and topics in international statistical standardization and methodological work.
5. The Committee asked its bureau to examine how the Committee could increase its involvement in the development of statistical methods and standards.
6. The Committee felt that it should pay greater attention to providing inputs for and views on future agendas of the United Nations Statistical Commission.
7. The Committee decided that a Working Group of Statistical Experts should be convened, preferably in November 1997, to discuss specific substantive topics, with content of an administrative nature pruned to the minimum. The bureau would decide on and inform members about the agenda three to four months prior to the meeting.
8. The Committee recommended that the Committee on Statistics should be retained in any future revision of the conference structure of ESCAP.
9. The Committee instructed its bureau and the secretariat to continue to monitor developments in the reform of the conference structure of ESCAP.
10. The Committee recommended that the approach of inviting papers from national statistical offices should be continued for future sessions.
11. The Committee recommended that, based on the outputs of the project on improving statistics on gender issues, the secretariat should disseminate information on gender issues and continue to give priority to improving gender statistics in the region. It should also compile a list of bibliographic references on research and analysis based on gender statistics.
12. The Committee noted that the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) initiated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had significant resource implications for national statistical offices. It regretted that adequate consultations with producers of the relevant statistics in the ESCAP region had not been held, but welcomed the fact that the International Monetary Fund had devoted resources to assist some countries to meet the standards.
13. The Committee agreed that it should focus on how to proceed in developing national social statistical infrastructure and the Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS), and endorsed the idea

that some countries in the region should be selected in which to conduct pilot studies.

14. The Committee welcomed the increase in contributions to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) from China, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand as well as the resumption of financial support from Australia. It called for increased contributions in cash and in kind from other members and associate members as well as new contributions from those countries which had not been contributing to SIAP. The Committee also considered assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to be crucial.

15. The Committee noted that any expanded programmes of SIAP should be additional and complementary to, and not in replacement of, any activities undertaken by ESCAP.

16. The Committee asked the secretariat to examine modalities, other than the planned seminar on information technology management for senior-level decision makers in the public sector, that could be used in sensitizing government officials to the importance of adopting information technology.

17. The Committee strongly urged the secretariat to start disseminating its documents, data and services through the World Wide Web of the Internet.

18. The Committee noted the importance of providing a sharp focus for the secretariat's work in the field of public sector computerization, and asked the secretariat to concentrate on those recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting to Review Computerization Development in the Public Sector where the available resources could have a meaningful impact. The Committee considered that greater attention should be paid to applications in statistics rather than to the public sector in general.

19. The Committee identified a number of high priority areas in the work programme of the secretariat for 1998-1999, including implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts, pilot studies and other work on the statistical implications of the global summit conferences held at Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing, and services statistics. Other priority areas that were identified included the informal sector, price statistics and environment statistics.

20. The Committee strongly urged ESCAP to pursue means of providing advisory services in the top priority area of national accounts, for example, through redeployment of resources within the secretariat.

21. The Committee stressed the fundamental importance of information technology in the work of national statistical offices, not least in the dissemination aspects. The secretariat was encouraged to help countries exchange information on the latest techniques for data processing, presentation and dissemination, including through the Internet.

22. The Committee felt that administrative aspects of the work of the secretariat should be kept to the minimum required.

23. The Committee reaffirmed its support for the ESCAP Statistical Information System (ESIS) and



urged that the resources to put the system into operation as soon as possible should be found. It advised the secretariat to, if necessary, reduce substantially the planned data content, simplify and cut the available features of the System to the necessary minimum, and adopt the latest Internet technologies to make its data content available to members and associate members.

24. The Committee asked the secretariat to continue to collect and collate information from the agencies for the integrated presentation of work programmes, subject to some modifications in the format and content of the presentation. To increase the participation of relevant agencies, the Committee recommended that the secretariat distribute the presentation among agencies working in the region and seek their comments and cooperation. More vigorous follow-up including reminder letters, correspondence and, where possible, consultations, was proposed to further improve participation.

25. The Committee decided that the provisional agenda for its eleventh session should include as item 3 "Implementation of recommendations of the Committee at its ninth and tenth sessions" and that the reports of the bureau and the Working Group of Statistical Experts should become items 4 and 5, respectively. It noted the proposals that gender statistics, environment statistics and economic statistics should also feature on the agenda, considered that the provisional agenda could be finalized in due course, and encouraged countries to submit comments to the bureau of the Committee for its deliberation.

## **II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

### **A. Report of the bureau**

26. The Committee had before it document E/ESCAP/STAT.10/1. It noted that the bureau had met twice in Bangkok since the last Committee session: on 29 January 1996, prior to the ninth session of the Working Group of Statistical Experts, and on 22 November 1996, immediately preceding the tenth session of the Committee itself.

27. The Committee welcomed the report of the bureau and agreed that the new arrangements introduced at the ninth session were working reasonably well, taking into account the limited support the secretariat had been able to provide owing to resource constraints. Acknowledging the usefulness of the reports prepared by the secretariat for the bureau, the Committee supported the proposal made by the Working Group of Statistical Experts that such reports, prepared six-monthly, should be circulated to national statistical offices following review by the bureau.

28. The bureau reported that it had examined its terms of reference and had found them satisfactory. In discussing them, the Committee decided to insert an additional clause, as follows: "To represent the Committee, through its chairperson or such other bureau member as may be designated in the event of the chairperson's inability to attend, at meetings for which invitations might be received and which the bureau considers of relevance and importance to the Committee, in particular the United Nations Statistical Commission and its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination". The newly approved terms of reference of the bureau appear in Section I.B.2 of this

## **B. Report of the Working Group of Statistical Experts**

29. The Committee had before it the report of the Working Group of Statistical Experts on its ninth session (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/2). It noted that the meeting, which drew high attendance from the countries in the region, had touched upon topics of fundamental importance. It generally endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group, and placed emphasis on those concerning the production of handbooks for implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA), especially that on subnational accounts and the manual on statistics on trade in services. The view was expressed that data on the valuation of unpaid work of family members should not be used for operational purposes. The Committee noted the need for giving adequate attention to the application of information technology in statistics, particularly the human resources aspects, in order not to widen the gap between the developed and the developing countries in that sector, and suggested that the topic should be reviewed by an expert group. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the work being undertaken by ad hoc (Voorburg-type) informal groups and noted with satisfaction that the United Nations Statistics Division had made arrangements for the distribution of information received from the ad hoc groups on the schedules and results of their meetings. It heard that a Delhi group on statistics concerning the informal sector had been formed.

## **C. Review of statistical activities in the region**

30. The Committee had before it the secretariat document entitled "Secretariat activities since the ninth session of the Committee on Statistics" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/3). It also took note of the documents entitled "Recommendations and statement of regional priorities of the South Pacific Commission's Tenth Regional Conference of Statisticians" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/4), and "Report of the Director of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/5).

31. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the fact that, despite worsening budget constraints, the secretariat had so far been able to maintain a reasonable level of statistical services.

32. The Committee noted that the important task of setting priorities need not be unduly affected by financial considerations; setting priorities also simplified the task of the secretariat in formulating a work plan. It heard that the future resource position was difficult to predict and given clear priorities, possible extrabudgetary sources of funding could be explored, including experts on non-reimbursable loan or other contributions in kind as well as cash payments.

33. In reviewing the current status of the ESCAP Statistical Information System (ESIS), the Committee expressed concern that despite considerable technological progress, putting the System into operation had been slow. The Committee reaffirmed its support for ESIS and urged that the resources needed to put it into operation be found as soon as possible. It noted that the specialized statistical database administration skills required for further work on ESIS were unlikely to be available from in-

house redeployment.

34. The Committee voiced its appreciation of the *Statistical Newsletter* and encouraged member countries and partner organizations to contribute more articles. It felt that one way to assist potential contributors might be to provide broad guidelines on the format and length of articles.

35. The Committee heard with interest country and agency statements on the salient features of their statistical activities in the region over the last two years. Many of the statements were based on reports circulated to the Committee (see annex I), which would form part of the documentation archive being built up in the secretariat.

36. The Committee noted that national statistical agencies were making innovations and improvements to meet changing statistical needs in their countries. It noted further that SDDS, which had been initiated by IMF had significant resource implications for national statistical offices. Many countries which had agreed to subscribe to the standards saw in principle the benefits of SDDS in terms of improved statistics, but noted nevertheless the resource implications. They expressed regret that adequate consultations with the producers of the relevant statistics in the countries in the ESCAP region had not been held. While the recommendations in SDDS on the coverage of data were considered relevant and had been well received, that was not always the case with the requirements for periodicity of data release, especially on a monthly basis.

37. The Committee noted with interest that modern information technology was increasingly being used for statistical purposes. That included the use of satellite imagery for creating sampling frames, computer-assisted telephone interview methods for enumeration, and palm-top and microcomputers for paperless data collection. The Internet was being increasingly used for data dissemination and some national offices had launched their home pages on the World Wide Web.

38. The Committee welcomed the fact that technical cooperation among countries to enhance statistical capabilities was increasingly being pursued by countries in the region on a bilateral basis. The modalities included study tours for statisticians from one country to another, as well as provision of on-the-job training by host countries. The Committee noted with interest that some donor countries had provided financial support, on a bilateral basis, to countries in the region to assist in the development of statistical capacities. It welcomed the initiative of member countries in organizing technical meetings in the statistical field. It noted with interest the process of setting up a chamber of statistics for the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries.

39. The Committee noted with interest the efforts made by some countries to coordinate statistical standards among government agencies at the national level. It also noted that countries were increasingly faced with non-response problems. It held the view that promoting statistical literacy among the public could help ameliorate the situation. The Committee considered that promoting the public's right of access to statistical data and demonstrating transparency in data compilation would instil confidence among users of official statistics.

## **D. Functioning of the Committee and its bureau**

40. The Committee had before it document E/ESCAP/STAT.10/6. It noted the facilitative role of the bureau in the discharge of the functions of the Committee.

### **1. Terms of reference of the Committee**

41. The Committee recommended that the Commission adopt the Committee's terms of reference in the form in which they appear in section I.A of the present report, which, with an editorial amendment as agreed on by the Committee at its previous session. It authorized the secretariat, in consultation with the bureau, to make any necessary technical and editorial changes to the terms of reference as might be necessitated by the outcomes of the ongoing reviews of the conference structure and work programme of the Commission.

### **2. Size of the bureau and its term in office**

42. The Committee decided to increase the size of its bureau from the current four members to six and to set the term of office of bureau members at four years. To ensure continuity in the bureau's work, three members of the bureau would be retired every two years. The Committee recognized that in the above respects, some transitional measures would need to be adopted at the tenth session. The Committee reaffirmed that bureau members were representatives of members and associate members of ESCAP and were not serving in their personal capacity. It felt it desirable to have a representative in the bureau from all five ESCAP subregions, but saw it necessary to apply that principle flexibly. The bureau would decide the frequency of its own meetings.

### **3. Financial arrangements for bureau meetings**

43. The Committee endorsed the conclusions of the Working Group of Statistical Experts on the financial arrangements for bureau meetings, noting that there was in principle provision under the regular budget for the airfare and daily subsistence allowance of the persons (currently four) elected as the officers of the Committee to participate in the meeting of the Working Group of Statistical Experts (if one was held), with which a bureau meeting could be associated; in the event of financial constraints, priority should be given to funding the participation of bureau members from the Central Asian republics, and the least developed, landlocked countries and island developing countries. Otherwise, members would be expected to finance their participation in bureau meetings. The Committee encouraged the bureau to hold frequent consultations without physically convening, which had become easier as electronic and telephone connections had improved.

### **4. Promotion of statistical standards**

44. The Committee emphasized that the United Nations Statistical Commission was the appropriate forum to approve and recommend new international statistical standards. Standards developed by

sectoral agencies or informal groups should be discussed at the Statistical Commission before being recommended for global use. The Committee noted that national statistical offices had expressed concern that they had not been adequately consulted by IMF in the planning for the implementation of SDDS.

45. Citing other recent developments that were not known to all members and associate members, the Committee asked the secretariat to improve its reporting on emerging trends and topics in international statistical standardization and methodological work. It noted that the bureau also had a role to play in ensuring that members and associate members were kept up to date, and in maintaining the Committee as a forum where participants could learn about the latest developments in international statistics.

46. The Committee recalled the fundamental principles of official statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994 and noted that they were widely used to support the development of national statistical legislation and best practices. The Committee asked its bureau to examine how the Committee could increase its involvement in the development of statistical methods and standards.

## **5. Coordination function**

47. The Committee welcomed the practice whereby its chairperson received an invitation to participate in the United Nations Statistical Commission and its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination. As with all non-elected members, the chairperson's status as an observer at the Statistical Commission in no way precluded her/him from making statements or interventions. The Committee felt, however, that it should pay greater attention to providing inputs for and views on future agendas of the Statistical Commission.

48. The Committee heard the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division describe the existing mechanisms through which the Statistical Commission was taking regional concerns into consideration: First, the ESCAP region was represented in the Statistical Commission through members elected by the Economic and Social Council, who not only could speak for themselves but could also reflect the views of the region. Second, the secretariats of the regional commissions were usually represented at the Statistical Commission and spoke on behalf of their members and associate members. Third, a balanced geographic representation was sought in the expert groups formed to prepare technical issues and draft documentation for the Commission.

## **6. Participation**

49. The Committee noted that its tenth session had attracted senior-level representation, with half of the Commission's 60 members and associate members attending. While observing that the surest way of increasing participation at Committee sessions was to provide funding for the many members and associate members who were unable to attend owing to financial constraints, the Committee noted that a

relevant agenda and the early provision of documentation, preferably highlighted and summarized, was one way of attracting interest in participation.

## **7. Working Group of Statistical Experts**

50. Following the established practice, the Committee decided that a Working Group of Statistical Experts should be convened. The Committee recommended that the Working Group should concentrate on discussing substantive statistical matters in depth. It asked the bureau to decide on and inform members about the agenda 3-4 months prior to the meeting of the Working Group, with content of an administrative nature pruned to the minimum.

## **8. Future conference structure of the Commission**

51. The Committee unanimously endorsed the view of the Working Group of Statistical Experts that the Committee on Statistics should be retained in any future revision of the conference structure of ESCAP, and that if necessary, national statistical offices should make representations with the appropriate agencies in their respective Governments to that end. While welcoming the indications that the existing proposals would retain the Committee intact, it instructed its bureau and the secretariat to continue to monitor developments in the reform process, which would culminate at the fifty-third session of the Commission in April 1997. The Committee endorsed a text, reproduced in annex II to this report, which would enhance the description of the proposed statistics subprogramme as formulated by the Working Group on ESCAP Reform and contained in paragraph 22 of document E/ESCAP/STAT.10/6.

### **E. Issues relating to the development of statistics, including those in support of the themes of the Commission**

52. The Committee had before it two notes by the secretariat: "Statistical development: selected issues" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7) and "Emerging issues in the development and utilization of science and technology indicators in developing countries of the ESCAP region" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.4); and four papers contributed by countries at the invitation of the secretariat: "Gender statistics" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.1) prepared by the Central Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia, "Poverty estimation" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.2) prepared by the Federal Bureau of Statistics of Pakistan, "Critical problems in economic statistics" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.3) prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and "Developing and institutionalizing the Philippine system of environment and natural resources accounting" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.5) prepared by the National Statistical Coordination Board of the Philippines.

53. The Committee commended the quality of the invited papers and expressed its appreciation to the national statistical offices for contributing them. It recommended that the approach of inviting papers should be continued for the future sessions.

## 1. Gender statistics

54. The Committee felt that document E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.1 on gender statistics provided interesting and comprehensive information on the development of gender statistics in Indonesia, along with an assessment of the methods employed by the Central Bureau of Statistics in collecting, compiling, and disseminating statistical information disaggregated by gender at the national and subnational levels. The Committee heard that gender statistics were not a mere breakdown of data by sex; rather they provided a symptomatic description of the gap existing between women and men.

55. The Committee noted that improving the availability and quality of information disaggregated by gender was necessary but not sufficient; the national statistical offices should also consider how to promote the analysis and use of those data for deeper understanding of the issues and for assisting policy-making. Further, data should be disaggregated by sex only when applicable; statisticians should not neglect other factors in disaggregating data, such as by rural or urban place of residence or by education. Data collection and analysis should also take into consideration the cultural conditions of the country. The Committee acknowledged that there remained several areas for which direct measurement was difficult or where the information collected was not reliable, such as gender equity, violence against women and maternal mortality.

56. The Committee was informed of the successful experiences of six Asian countries participating in the secretariat project on improving statistics on gender issues, under which national statistical booklets on women and men had been published. Most of the participating countries intended to continue publishing the booklets in the future by improving and updating the data they contained. The Committee recommended that, based on the outputs of that project, the secretariat should disseminate information on gender issues and continue to give priority to improving gender statistics in the region. The secretariat should also compile a list of bibliographic references on research and analysis based on gender statistics. In that regard, the Committee welcomed the plan of the secretariat to work towards replicating the project in other countries of the region.

## 2. Poverty estimation

57. Document E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.2 concerning poverty estimation in Pakistan discussed some of the traditional approaches to estimation of the poverty line and the assumptions underlying them. The Committee noted that poverty analysis should go beyond just determining the number or proportion of poor households, or individuals, according to the established poverty line, and should attempt to measure the disparity of income even among the poor themselves. In recognizing the conceptual difficulties in poverty assessment, several countries shared their experience and the problems encountered in their attempts to estimate poverty lines and to measure poverty incidence. Income and expenditure surveys were invariably the major sources of data for poverty estimation. In that regard, it was noted that alternative methods of data collection such as nutrition surveys should be explored because the interview method of collecting information on household income and expenditure often yielded unreliable results. The Committee noted that minimum calorific needs as determined by

nutrition surveys and other instruments differed between and within countries.

58. Concern was raised about the normative criteria by which poverty status was often determined at the national level, resulting in the non-comparability of international estimates. The Committee heard that the United Nations Statistical Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination had agreed with the conclusion of the Task Force on the Measurement of Poverty that it was not the function of the Statistical Commission to develop international standards for the definition of poverty; rather, such work should be left to individual countries.

59. The Committee noted that most discussions of poverty estimation centred on the measurement problem. An aspect that was equally important but most often overlooked was the level of disaggregation at which measures of poverty levels were made. Urban-rural disparities, as well as smaller geographical level disaggregations provided examples that should be given due importance. The Indonesian experience of using the results of poverty studies to identify poor communities was noted. In that connection, it was stressed that there was a need for a continuous dialogue between users and producers of poverty statistics, a process that would lead to the production of statistics that were more relevant for poverty alleviation programmes.

60. The representative of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean shared some information about the initiatives that were being pursued in the area of poverty estimation. Those involved creation of an expert group on poverty measurement and the organization of a seminar in Santiago, with participation from all regions including ESCAP. The main objective was to produce a synthesis of world experience on the subject through state-of-the-art papers, with the aim of improving the methodology of poverty estimation.



### 3. Critical problems in economic statistics

61. The Committee had before it document E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.3. It noted that the appendix to that document contained a report by the Expert Group on Critical Problems in Economic Statistics on its meeting held in New York in October 1995, updated to reflect discussions at the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination in April 1996. The Expert Group had been constituted by the Statistical Commission to study issues and problems related to users' confidence in the economic statistics produced from official sources.

62. The Committee recognized that the Expert Group had correctly emphasized the need for greater user confidence in official statistics in which coverage, timeliness, periodicity and reliability played a critical part. In reviewing the issues raised by the Group, the Committee considered that the term "good behaviour" should relate to good practices. It agreed that there was room for improvement in the compilation systems and other methodologies employed in official statistics.

63. The Committee welcomed the establishment of various ad hoc groups to undertake in-depth studies on statistical issues. It cautioned, however, that such groups, being independently constituted, with distinct emphases and constituencies, might tend to be academic and research-oriented rather than representing broader subject or country interests of official statisticians. The Committee was advised that the Statistical Commission was now in the process of registering and approving the terms of reference of each of those ad hoc groups, which would also be required to circulate their findings widely.

64. The Committee noted that the International Comparison Programme (ICP) was under review to ascertain whether it could achieve its aim of producing estimates, comparable across countries in real terms, for the gross domestic product and its main aggregates. The review would also consider the feasibility of including ICP requirements in normal national price collection regimes. It noted that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had engaged a consultant to review its purchasing power parity programme. The results of that review would be available in 1997. The Committee noted that the usefulness for economic analysis of measures of comparative price levels both nationally and internationally was beyond question, and that ICP had a definite role in that regard.

65. The Committee noted that the issues listed in the Expert Group report were those considered important at that meeting. It felt that among other issues warranting attention were the measurement of productivity and compilation of data on output, wealth, inflation, and short-term indicators. The Committee also felt that consideration of the informal sector, which remained a largely unrecorded element of most economies, should be extended to include "shadow" and other underreported sectors of the economy. The Committee noted that SDDS, which had been initiated by IMF, might be difficult for some countries to meet and welcomed the fact that IMF had devoted resources to assist some countries to meet such standards.

### 4. Science and Technology Indicators

66. In considering document E/ESCAP/STAT/7/Add.4, the Committee commended the quality of the paper. It recognized that a number of recent developments had taken place in the design of science and technology indicators, in particular those of OECD. It noted that the original OECD indicators on science and technology had been supplemented by a number of manuals which took into account new approaches, particularly by the private sector. Those approaches emphasized the complex relationships between marketing and design and engineering, which could be utilized by developing countries of the region, if properly adjusted to local conditions.

## **5. Environment statistics**

67. The Committee agreed that document E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.5 had taken the right steps in the development of environment and resource accounting, in terms of starting with the practical approach of accounting for the natural resources rather than pollution and environmental degradation. The environmental accounts drew attention to the role of statisticians in planning and decision-making for sustainable development.

68. Concern was expressed, however, on the proper application of "environmentally adjusted net domestic product (EDP)" considering the incomplete nature of the estimates when other resources were not accounted for. The usefulness of monetarizing the physical resource account was also questioned. The Committee discussed issues concerning the methodology for estimating stocks and degradation. In that regard, the use of household surveys and the strategy of developing regional estimates were noted.

## **F. Statistical implications of the outcome of the Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing global conferences**

69. The Committee had before it the secretariat paper entitled "Statistical implications of the outcome of the Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing global conferences" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/8). It also heard of statistical work linked to various task forces charged with following up those conferences.

70. A number of countries raised questions on the appropriateness and definition of certain indicators included in the Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS) proposed by the Expert Group on the Statistical Implications of Major United Nations Conferences, set up by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The Committee noted, however, that the main concern of the Expert Group had been to strengthen social statistics infrastructure in national statistical offices, as a means of achieving the goals of the international forums; MNSDS thus represented a means rather than an end.

71. The Committee noted that MNSDS was designed primarily to guide policy development and decision-making in the countries themselves. Consultation with users was thus an essential part of the process of deciding on an appropriate set of national indicators. Several countries emphasized the importance of introducing MNSDS cautiously, as it should not be seen as being imposed on national statistical offices, the way SDDS had been perceived by some countries. It noted that resources for development of social indicators were not easy to obtain, despite increased political awareness. In some

instances it might be important to stress that MNSDS was only a minimum set and not sufficient to measure fully the achievement of the goals of the various social programmes of action. The Committee expressed concern, however, that the demand for statistics had not always been accompanied by a corresponding provision of resources needed to produce those statistics.

72. One positive effect of the summits and the resultant MNSDS had been to raise the status of social statistics and indicators. It was important to ensure that a manageable set of social indicators was compiled regularly and that such indicators were responsive to annual changes in the social situation. The Committee agreed that it should focus on how to proceed in developing national infrastructure and MNSDS. It endorsed the idea that some countries should be selected in which to conduct pilot studies, and welcomed the information that potential donors had been identified by the United Nations Statistics Division for that purpose.

73. Countries also emphasized the importance of population and housing censuses in providing essential social statistics, and noted the need for training workshops for the 2000 round of censuses.

#### **G. Issues relating to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, including the report of the Governing Board**

74. The Committee had before it two documents: E/ESCAP/STAT.10/9, the report of the Governing Board on its first session, held in Tokyo from 11 to 13 March 1996, and E/ESCAP/STAT.10/9/Add.1, the report on the second session, held in Bangkok on 20 and 21 November 1996. The Committee was informed of some of the emerging issues and subject areas requiring more focused attention and of the collaborative arrangements that the Institute had entered into with governments and international organizations in the conduct of country outreach programmes and country and regional workshops.

75. The Committee noted that pursuant to the adoption by the Commission of resolution 51/1 of 1 May 1995 on the Statute of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, the Institute had acquired the status of a subsidiary body of ESCAP and was operating under the guidance of the Governing Board.

76. It also noted that the Task Force established under the mandate of the Governing Board at its first session to chart a new direction for the Institute had met in Tokyo on 28 and 29 October 1996, and that its report had been submitted to the Governing Board at its second session. The Governing Board had endorsed the thrust of the report and accepted the recommendations of the Task Force. It requested the Director of SIAP to pursue the implementation of the recommendations, and to report to the Board in six months on the progress made on the new initiatives.

77. The Committee noted that the implementation of the above recommendations would depend very much on the availability of financial resources and the establishment of an efficient system of staffing arrangements, including short-term experts, staff on secondment from member countries and experts on a non-reimbursable loan basis.

78. The Committee welcomed the increase in contributions to the Institute from China, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand, as well as the resumption of financial support from Australia, and called for increased contributions in cash and in kind from other members and associate members, as well as new contributions from those countries which had not been contributing to SIAP.

79. The Committee noted that the programme support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on human development indicators would be phased out by the end of 1996 and that the evaluation report on that programme had recommended continuing collaboration between the host Government of Japan and UNDP in support of SIAP training programmes. In expressing its thanks to the Government of Japan for the generous support given to the Institute, the Committee also considered continued UNDP assistance to be crucial.

80. Many representatives expressed their gratitude to the Institute for the benefit that their staff had received from the training it provided. They welcomed the new direction and role that the Institute would embark on. The point was made, however, that any expanded programmes of SIAP should be additional and complementary to, and not in replacement of, any activities undertaken by ESCAP.

#### **H. Issues relating to information technology applications and information resource management, and review of public sector computerization activities in the region**

81. The Committee had before it the secretariat document "Issues in computerization in the public sector" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/10). It recalled clause eight of its terms of reference, in which the mandate to review computerization in the public sector was broadly defined and not restricted to statistics.

82. The Committee agreed that information technology reforms were often best started from a review of managerial issues and organizational structures. It appreciated the secretariat's action on its earlier recommendation to organize a seminar on information technology management for senior-level decision makers in the public sector, and hoped that the planned project would be funded. The Committee asked the secretariat to examine other modalities that could be used in sensitizing government officials to the importance of adopting information technology. Those might include task forces and informal expert groups to set up guidelines to assist statistical offices and other government departments to adopt strategies and best practices in the use of various information technologies; ministerial-level consultations to alert politicians to the widening gap between the potential and actual use of information technology; various arrangements to assist countries to exchange expertise bilaterally; identification and provision of consultants to assist governments in developing their information systems; and cooperation between international agencies and the private sector. In that regard, it welcomed the availability of experts in the United Nations Statistics Division for ad hoc consultancies. The Committee strongly urged the secretariat to start disseminating its documents, data and services through the World Wide Web of the Internet.

83. Welcoming the recent appointment of a programme officer in public sector computerization, the Committee recognized that the resource base of the secretariat was still dwarfed by the scope of public sector computerization and the speed of information technology evolution. It was therefore important to define a sharp focus to the secretariat's work in that field. The Committee noted that the ESCAP secretariat and the United Nations Statistics Division had long been providing assistance in computer applications in the field of statistics, particularly related to population censuses and surveys.

84. The Committee recorded the members' urgent need for technical advisory services in several fields of information technology, most notably in networking and telecommunications, but also noted that the secretariat staff had extremely limited possibilities of providing advice on those or other individual technologies. The short life cycle of software and hardware was of great concern. Keeping offices technologically up to date was therefore costly and required continuous training of staff at all levels.

85. The Committee took note of the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting to Review Computerization Development in the Public Sector, which had been held in December 1995. As it was obvious that the secretariat did not have sufficient means to act immediately on all recommendations, the Committee asked the secretariat to focus on areas where the available resources could have a meaningful impact.

**I. Programmes of work in statistics, 1996-1997 and 1998-1999, including the  
development of an integrated presentation of work programmes,  
and review of the medium-term plan, 1998-2001**

86. The Committee had before it two documents prepared by the secretariat: "Medium-term plan, 1998-2001 and programmes of work in statistics, 1996-1997 and 1998-1999" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/11); and "Experimental presentation of programmes in statistics in the region, 1996-1997" (E/ESCAP/STAT.10/11/Add.1).

87. It noted that the proposed medium-term plan, 1998-2001, and the indicative work programme, 1998-1999, were to be submitted to the Commission at its fifty-third session for review and endorsement.

88. The Committee generally held the view that the programmatic documentation was an improvement over previous presentations. It noted that the broad headings of the work programmes, although not satisfactory for a number of purposes, were determined by the overall format of the United Nations work programme. It also noted that the annotation provided by the secretariat allowed for the introduction of a considerable degree of flexibility.

89. In discussing the future orientation of the work programme of the secretariat for 1998-1999, the Committee identified a number of high priority areas, including implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts, pilot studies and other work on the statistical implications of the global summit conferences held at Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing, and services statistics. Among the other priority

areas that were identified were the informal sector, price statistics, and environment statistics. A range of views was expressed on the priority to be accorded to information technology, especially as it applied to statistical offices.

90. With regard to SNA, the Committee noted with great concern that the secretariat had been unable to provide advisory services in national accounts for some time in view of the adviser's indisposition, and that there was no early prospect of their resumption. It strongly urged ESCAP to pursue all alternative means of providing advisory services in that top priority area, for example, through redeployment of resources within the secretariat.

91. The Committee noted with interest that the World Bank had been using a team approach to assistance in national accounts where a number of experts drawn from various organizations provided assistance through short missions. The Committee also noted that smaller countries in particular often needed assistance in strengthening the basic data required for national accounts.

92. The Committee stressed the fundamental importance of information technology in the work of national statistical offices, not least in the dissemination aspects. The secretariat was encouraged to help countries exchange information on the latest techniques for data processing, presentation and dissemination, including through the Internet.

93. The Committee felt that administrative aspects of the work of the secretariat should be kept to the minimum required. In the area of computerization in the public sector, the Committee was of the opinion that greater attention should be paid to applications in statistics rather than to the public sector in general.

94. The Committee regretted that the vacant post intended for the ESIS database administrator had been frozen, preventing the system from being put into operation. Recognizing that it was difficult for the secretariat to operate its statistical information service without a proper database, the Committee advised the secretariat to focus on putting the already developed ESCAP Statistical Information System quickly into operation, if necessary by substantially reducing the planned data content, by simplifying and cutting the available features of the system to the necessary minimum, and by adopting the latest Internet technologies to make its data content available to members and associate members.

95. The Committee agreed that the integrated presentation of the work programmes of the agencies contained in document E/ESCAP/STAT.10/11/Add.1 was useful in providing a more complete view of activities in statistics in the region and that it enhanced the coordination of those activities. In discussing the costs and benefits of the exercise, the Committee noted that the presentation assisted in creating an awareness of what others were doing and identifying the areas in which little or nothing was being done, in the process facilitating the allocation or redeployment of resources. The Committee therefore asked the secretariat to continue to collect and collate information from the agencies, subject to some modifications in the format and content of the presentation. Members and associate members were invited to convey to the secretariat their views on the usefulness of the exercise.

96. To increase the participation of relevant agencies, the Committee recommended that the secretariat distribute the presentation among agencies working in the region and seek their comments and cooperation. More vigorous follow-up, including reminder letters, correspondence and, where possible, consultations, was proposed to improve participation.

#### **J. Other matters**

97. The Committee had before it document E/ESCAP/STAT.10/12, "Draft provisional agenda for the eleventh session of the Committee on Statistics". It decided that the provisional agenda should include as item 3 "Implementation of recommendations of the Committee at its ninth and tenth sessions" and that the report of the bureau and the report of the Working Group of Statistical Experts should become items 4 and 5, respectively. The Committee acknowledged the value of country papers prepared for the Committee session and encouraged the continuation of that practice. It was suggested, however, that oral presentation of country statements might be discontinued and that that question should be examined further by the bureau. It was proposed that gender statistics, environment statistics and economic statistics should also be included on the agenda, along with issues that would be taken up by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 1999 session. The Committee held the view that the provisional agenda could be finalized in due course, and it encouraged countries to submit comments to the bureau of the Committee for its deliberation.

98. The Committee requested members to provide the secretariat with their comments on the annotated provisional agenda of the twenty-ninth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, scheduled for February 1997, in order to facilitate presentations by the chairperson of issues of concern to the region.

99. The Committee decided that the Working Group of Statistical Experts should be convened, preferably around November 1997, and recalled that specific substantive topics for that meeting would be decided on later.

## **K. Election of the bureau**

100. The Committee considered the item on the basis of documents E/ESCAP/STAT.10/13 and STAT.10/CRP.1. It recalled its earlier decision that the bureau should comprise six members, that the term of office should be four years, and that as far as possible all the subregions should be represented on the bureau. The Committee had further decided that to maintain continuity in the functioning of the bureau, half the membership should retire every two years. To preserve continuity in the interim, it was decided that the four members of the current bureau should continue to serve until the end of the eleventh session, and that three new members should be elected, to serve until the end of the twelfth session. Accordingly, the Committee unanimously elected the following bureau:

Chairperson: Frederick W.H.Ho (Hong Kong)<sup>1</sup>

Vice-Chairpersons: Timoci Bainimarama (Fiji)<sup>1</sup>

(Bangladesh)<sup>1</sup> Matiur Rahman

S. Sathyam (India)<sup>2</sup>

Ch. Davaasuren (Mongolia)<sup>2</sup>

Paul Cheung (Singapore)<sup>2</sup>

Rapporteur: Romulo A. Virola (Philippines)<sup>1</sup>

## **III. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION**

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

101. The Committee on Statistics held its tenth session at Bangkok from 25 to 29 November 1996.

102. The session was opened by Mr Likit Therdsteerasukdi, Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister of the Government of Thailand.

103. The Permanent Secretary and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP addressed the Committee.

104. At the closure of the session, the participants expressed their gratitude to the Government of Thailand, especially the National Statistical Office, for the warm hospitality accorded to them.

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<sup>1</sup> Term of office to expire at the end of the eleventh session in 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Term of office to expire at the end of the twelfth session in 2000.



## **B. Attendance**

105. The session was attended by representatives of the following 30 members and associate members of ESCAP: Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, France, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam, French Polynesia, Guam, Hong Kong and Macau.

106. The following members of the United Nations attended in a consultative capacity under rule 3 of the rules of procedure of the Commission: Canada and Sweden.

107. The session was also attended by an official of the United Nations Secretariat, representing the Statistics Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, and a representative from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

108. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies attended: United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Population Fund.

109. Representatives from the following United Nations specialized agencies attended: International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, and the World Bank.

110. Representatives of the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Mekong River Commission, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the South Pacific Commission also attended.

111. Representatives from the International Council on Social Welfare also attended.

112. Representatives of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific also attended.

## **C. Officers**

113. The Committee was presided over by the following officers:

Chairperson: Frederick W.H. Ho (Hong Kong)

Vice-Chairpersons: Timoci Bainimarama (Fiji)

Matiur Rahman (Bangladesh)

Rapporteur: Romulo A. Virola (Philippines)

114. At its meeting on 28 November 1996, the Committee elected by acclamation the following officers to serve as its incoming bureau:

Chairperson:	Frederick W.H. Ho (Hong Kong) <sup>3</sup>
Vice-Chairpersons:	Timoci Bainimarama (Fiji) <sup>1</sup>
	Matiur Rahman (Bangladesh) <sup>1</sup>
	S. Sathyam (India) <sup>4</sup>
	Ch. Davaasuren (Mongolia) <sup>2</sup>
	Paul Cheung (Singapore) <sup>2</sup>
Rapporteur:	Romulo A. Virola (Philippines) <sup>1</sup>

#### **D. Agenda and organization of work**

115. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Report of the bureau.
4. Report of the Working Group of Statistical Experts.
5. Review of statistical activities in the region.
6. Functioning of the Committee and its bureau.
7. Issues relating to the development of statistics, including those in support of the themes of the Commission:
  - (a) Gender statistics;
  - (b) Poverty estimation;
  - (c) Critical problems in economic statistics;
  - (d) Science and technology indicators;
  - (e) Environment statistics.
8. Statistical implications of the outcome of the Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing global conferences.
9. Issues relating to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, including the report of the Governing Board.

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<sup>3</sup> Term of office to expire at the end of the eleventh session in 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Term of office to expire at the end of the twelfth session in 2000.

10. Issues relating to information technology applications and information resource management, and review of public sector computerization activities in the region.
11. Programmes of work in statistics, 1996-1997 and 1998-1999, including the development of an integrated presentation of work programmes, and review of the medium-term plan, 1998-2001.
12. Other matters.
13. Election of the bureau.
14. Adoption of the report.

#### **E. Documentation**

116. The documents that were before the Committee at its tenth session are listed in annex I to the present report.

#### **F. Adoption of the report**

117. The Committee adopted the report on its tenth session on 29 November 1996.

## LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/L.1	Provisional agenda
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/L.2, Corrs.1 and 2	Annotated provisional agenda
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/1	Report of the bureau
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/2	Report of the Working Group of Statistical Experts
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/3	Secretariat activities since the ninth session of the Committee on Statistics
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/4	Recommendations and statement of regional priorities of the South Pacific Commission's Tenth Regional Conference of Statisticians
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/5	Report of the Director of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/6 Committee and its bureau	Functioning of the
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7	Statistical development: selected issues
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.1	Gender statistics
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.2	Poverty est
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.3 statistics	Critical problems in economic
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.4	Emerging issues in the development and utilization of science and technology indicators in developing countries of the ESCAP region
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/7/Add.5	Developing and institutionalizing the Philippine system of environment and natural resources accounting
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/8	Statistical implications of the outcome of the Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing global conferences
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/9	Report of the first session of the Governing Board of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/9/Add.1 and Corr.1	Report of the second session of the Governing Board of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/10	Issues in computerization in the public sector
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/11	Medium-term plan, 1998-2001 and programmes of work in statistics, 1996-1997 and 1998-1999
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/11/Add.1	Experimental presentation of programmes in statistics in the region, 1996-1997
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/12	Draft provisional agenda for the eleventh session of the Committee on Statistics
E/ESCAP/STAT.10/13	Election of the bureau
STAT.10/CRP.1	Proposed incoming bureau of the Committee

### **Country/area papers**

- |                             |                 |                        |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. Australia                | 9. Japan        | 17. Republic of Korea  |
| 2. Bangladesh               | 10. Macau       | 18. Russian Federation |
| 3. Brunei Darussalam        | 11. Malaysia    | 19. Singapore          |
| 4. China                    | 12. Mongolia    | 20. Sri Lanka          |
| 5. Fiji                     | 13. Myanmar     | 21. Thailand           |
| 6. Hong Kong                | 14. Nepal       | 22. Viet Nam           |
| 7. Indonesia                | 15. New Zealand |                        |
| 8. Islamic Republic of Iran | 16. Philippines |                        |

### **Organization papers**

1. Asian Development Bank
2. Commonwealth of Independent States
3. Economic Commission for Europe
4. Statistical Office of the European Communities
5. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
6. International Labour Organization
7. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
8. United Nations Environment Programme
9. United Nations Industrial Development Organization
10. World Health Organization

**Proposed revised description of the statistics subprogramme  
(adapted from the report of the Working Group on ESCAP Reform, July 1996)**

"This subprogramme area will focus on the strengthening of national statistical capabilities for informed policy-making, planning, programme implementation and monitoring and evaluation. It would also promote active participation of member and associate member countries of the Commission in the development of international standards as well as promote the use of suitable methodology for data collection, processing and analysis. It will promote the application of information technology as well as information resource management in the region, particularly in the public sector.

"The subprogramme will widen the scope and improve the accessibility and international comparability of the statistical information compiled and disseminated by the secretariat, and provide support to the work undertaken under the other programmes of ESCAP. The subprogramme will advise member countries on and guide them in meeting emerging data requirements.

"The subprogramme will spotlight the concerns and views of the Asia-Pacific region and will be implemented in close cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division, and other United Nations organizations and specialized agencies in dealing with sector specific statistics. This programme is supported by supplementary training activities undertaken by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific."