

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

FOURTH SESSION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTIETH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 5 May 1949, at 10.30 a.m.

Contents:

1. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPORT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL - FINANCIAL ESTIMATES OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK (Item 11 of the Agenda) (Continued).

N.B. Will delegates who wish to have corrections made to the Summary Record please submit such corrections in writing on the official notepaper of their delegation to the Secretariat, Room C.452, as soon as possible after distribution of the Summary Record.

MAY 25 1949

Present:

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| <u>Chairman:</u> | Mr. IDENBURG | Netherlands |
| <u>Rapporteur:</u> | Mr. CAMPION | United Kingdom |

Members:

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| Mr. MARSHALL | Canada |
| Mr. LIEU | China |
| Mr. DARMOIS | France |
| Mr. MAHALANOBIS | India |
| Mr. RYABICHKO (Vice-Chairman) | Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic |
| Mr. RYABUSHKIN | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |

Representative of
Specialized Agencies:

| | |
|----------|------------------------------|
| Mr. GRAB | World Health Organization |
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Secretariat:

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| Mr. LEONARD | Representing the Assistant Secretary- General for Economic Affairs |
| Mr. BRUCE | Secretary to the Commission |

CONTINUATION OF CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPORT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (Document E/CN.3/W.13 and Addenda 1, 2, 3 and 4 thereto) - FINANCIAL ESTIMATES OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK (Document E/CN.3/80) (Item 11 of the Agenda) - (Continued).

Chapter III: Co-ordination of Statistical Activities (continuation)

(Report of the Regional Meeting of European Statisticians)

The CHAIRMAN stated that the Drafting Committee, which had comprised, besides himself, the Rapporteur and the representatives of the Secretariat, the representatives of Canada, India and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, had reached unanimous agreement on the text of paragraphs 35 to 46 of the Draft Report, as they were set out in Document E/CN.3/W.13/Add.1.

On the proposal of Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), the Commission decided to amend the Chapter Sub-heading preceding paragraphs 35 to 46 to read "(Regional Meetings of Statisticians)".

Paragraph 35.

The Commission adopted paragraph 35 without comment.

Paragraph 36.

Mr. RYABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) felt that the quotation from the report of the Third Session of the Statistical Commission, taken out of its original context, gave the impression that the sole responsibility for co-ordination had to be borne by the Statistical Commission.

Paragraph 21 of the Report of the Third Session (Document E/795) contained the sentence: "The Statistical Commission has the firm conviction that the development of international statistical standards is an indivisible responsibility that must not be regionalised, and

that regional bodies would not wish to assume such functions on their own responsibility."

On his proposal, the Commission decided to amend paragraph 36 to read as follows:

"The Commission expressed the firm conviction that the development of international statistical standards is an indivisible responsibility that must not be regionalised and that regional bodies would not wish to assume such functions on their own responsibility and emphasized that the Statistical Commission must continue to bear the ultimate responsibility for formulating statistical standards and for recommending methods for achieving co-ordination". (E/795)."

The Commission adopted paragraph 36 as amended.

Paragraphs 37 to 42.

The Commission adopted paragraphs 37 to 42 without comment.

Paragraph 43

Mr. RY. BUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) felt that as it stood the wording of paragraph 43 was not entirely clear, and proposed an alternative rendering.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Soviet Union representative's proposal differed in substance from the text submitted by the Rapporteur in that it no longer differentiated between the various statistical needs of the Regional Commissions, but only between the various means of satisfying a single need.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) felt that all the special statistical needs of the regional commissions were the exclusive concern of those commissions.

Mr. MARSHALL (Canada) agreed with the Soviet Union representative that if the two different means of satisfying the statistical needs of the regional commissions were to be spelt out in paragraphs 44 and 45, paragraph 43, which was merely prefatory, should refer to the existence of different means by which such needs could be satisfied.

On his proposal, the Commission decided, after further discussion, to amend paragraph 43 to read as follows:

"The Statistical Commission recognises that the statistical needs of the regional commissions may have to be met by different means."

The Commission adopted paragraph 43 as amended.

Paragraph 44

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the opening words of paragraph 44 be amended to read as follows:

"As regards the specific statistical needs of the regional commissions in the various economic branches, the Statistical Commission agrees that they may be appropriately met, from the operational point of view, as they are at present"

Replying to the United Kingdom and French representatives, he explained that the phrase "from the operational point of view" was intended to convey that the statistical needs of the regional commissions might be met in the most expeditious and practical way, without entering into theoretical aspects of the matter, by convening working parties of statistical experts.

After further discussion, during which no satisfactory English equivalent could be found for the Russian "from the operational point of view", Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that he was willing to omit those words from his amendment, and accepted the Rapporteur's suggestion that the words "on the various economic problems" should be added after the words "regional commissions".

The Commission adopted the Soviet Union representative's proposals, thus amended, in respect of paragraph 44. The Commission adopted paragraph 44 as amended.

Paragraphs 45 and 46.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed the following amendments to paragraph 45:

- 1) the words "to be convened on the initiative of the Regional Commissions" to be added after the words "meetings of statisticians" in the first line;
- 2) the words "has the task" to be replaced by the words "may have the task" in the third line; and
- 3) the words "should be concerned" to be replaced by the words "may appropriately be concerned" in the penultimate line.

Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom), Rapporteur, suggested that it was recognized that the regional economic commissions already possessed, as was stated in paragraph 44, all necessary powers to meet their specific statistical requirements on economic questions. The first amendment proposed by the Soviet Union representative would be pointless and out of place in paragraph 45, the provisions of which were intended to meet entirely different requirements.

Paragraph 45 might however be improved by the addition, which he proposed, of the words "which are closely related to the present and future work programme of the Statistical Commission" after the words "more general statistical questions".

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) suggested that unless the meetings referred to in paragraph 45 were to be convened by some other body than the Statistical Commission, it was pointless to state that the Statistical Commission considered that it had the task of reviewing recommendations reached at such meetings.

Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom), Rapporteur, suggested that any disagreement of substance which existed between himself and the Soviet Union representative in that connection might not emerge clearly from paragraph-by-paragraph examination. He proposed therefore that the Commission examine paragraph 46 in conjunction with paragraph 45, and asked whether the Soviet Union representative had any amendments to submit to paragraph 46.

The Commission agreed to adopt the procedure proposed by the Rapporteur.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that he had indeed two amendments to submit to paragraph 46. In the first place, he proposed that the beginning of the operative paragraph of the Recommendation be amended to read "RECOMMENDS that the Secretary-General should consult the regional commissions and member governments on the convening of other meetings of regional statisticians.....". Secondly, he proposed that the final clause of that paragraph be amended to read: "such regional meetings should be arranged for by the Secretariat of the regional commissions in collaboration with the Statistical Office".

The CHAIRMAN noted that there was indeed a difference of substance between the Soviet Union representative, who wished to lay the initiative for convening, and the Secretariat work arising out of, meetings of regional statisticians firmly upon the shoulders of the regional commissions, and other members of the Commission, who appeared to share the views which the Commission had apparently held at its Third Session when it had; in that connection, addressed to the Secretary-General its request to encourage and facilitate European consultation upon statistical questions.

Mr. LIEU (China) pointed out that the Chapter of the Draft Report under consideration was entitled "Co-ordination of Statistical Activities". Co-ordination required that the initiative for convening regional meetings of statisticians should be left largely to the Statistical Office, and not delegated to Regional Commissions.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) felt that the Recommendation submitted in the Draft Report provided sufficient scope for regional work, the need for which was recognised by all members of the Commission, but at the same time did not impair the Statistical Commission's responsibility for overall co-ordination, and was therefore in full accordance with the principle of the integral and indivisible nature of co-ordinating activities.

Mr. DARMOIS (France) proposed that, in an effort to achieve agreement, the final clause of the Recommendation should be amended to read: "such regional meetings should be arranged for and conducted, in collaboration, by the Statistical Office and the secretariats of the regional commissions".

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that he could accept the French representative's proposal provided that the words, the inclusion of which he had already proposed in connection with paragraph 45, were added after the words "such regional meetings"; the clause would in that case read: "such regional meetings should be convened on the initiative of the regional commissions and should be arranged for and conducted, in collaboration, by the Statistical Office and the secretariats of the regional commissions".

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) proposed as a compromise that the phrase "(which may be convened on the proposal either of regional economic commissions or of the Statistical Office)" be inserted in the text of the Recommendation contained in the Draft Report, before the words "should be arranged for and conducted".

Speaking as the Netherlands representative, the CHAIRMAN pointed out that the functions of the Economic Commission for Europe were purely economic. There would be some inconsistency in delegating to such a body the whole initiative for convening meetings intended to cover the much broader field of statistics. For example, statisticians were largely concerned with population questions, which could not be regarded as of merely economic interest.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) considered that his proposal was in fact likely to ensure the most effective co-ordination between the regional economic commissions and the Statistical Commission. Co-ordination implies not subordination, but fruitful co-operation. He repeated his view that the convening of regional meetings of statisticians was entirely a matter for the regional commissions, not one for the Statistical Office, although the preparatory work for the meetings themselves should certainly be carried out under conditions of very close co-operation.

Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom), Rapporteur, observed that paragraphs 44, 45 and 46 were in entire agreement with the decisions relating to regional meetings taken by the Economic and Social Council. He feared that the Soviet Union representative was labouring under a misapprehension if he thought that any encroachment on the powers of regional economic commissions was involved. Their special needs were recognised in paragraph 44.

Mr. RYABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) stated that the Soviet Union proposals in no way conflicted with the decisions of the Economic and Social Council. The question at issue was where the initiative lay for convening the meetings. Logically, it surely belonged to the regional economic commissions, since the matters which would need consideration would clearly relate to local needs. He did not think that the objections raised by the Chairman, on the grounds that the terms of reference of economic regional commissions might prove too restricted to enable them to initiate action over the wide range of subjects relating to statistics, could be seriously entertained, since precedents already existed in respect of Specialized Agencies dealing with subjects not strictly within their province. For example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization had convened a meeting of population statisticians, and no objection had been raised to that procedure. The Soviet Union proposals would in no way derogate from the coordinating functions of the Statistical Commission.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that as difficulty was being encountered in reaching agreement as to who was to convene meetings, that issue might be omitted from the recommendation. He would insist, however, on his amendment to the first sentence of the Recommendation in paragraph 46.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) was doubtful of the value of the Soviet Union amendment, and felt that it was necessary to make definite provision for the procedure to be followed. It was with that end in view that he had proposed his amendment to line 12 of paragraph 46, in the hope that it would meet both points of view by placing the responsibility for calling meetings equally on the regional economic commissions and the Statistical Commission.

Mr. LIEU (China) emphasised that the reason why the initiative should not be left to regional economic commissions was that the co-ordinating functions of the Statistical Commission would thereby be weakened.

Replying to an enquiry by the CHAIRMAN as to whether his objection had been met by the Indian amendment to the last sentence of paragraph 46, Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated with regret that he found it unacceptable.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) said that he had proposed his amendment in the hope of finding a compromise. As he had failed to satisfy the Soviet Union representative, he would withdraw it, since he (Mr. Mahalanobis) preferred the original text.

The Soviet Union proposal that the words "to be convened on the initiative of the regional economic commissions" be inserted after the words "meetings of statisticians" in paragraph 45 was then put to the Commission and rejected.

The United Kingdom proposal that the words "which are closely related to the present or future work of the Statistical Commission" be inserted after the words "more general statistical questions" in paragraph 45 was adopted.

Referring to the Soviet Union proposal that the words "it may have the task of reviewing," be substituted for the words "it has the task of reviewing," Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) suggested that a language difficulty was perhaps involved. He agreed with the Soviet Union representative that certain recommendations would not require review, but pointed out that in the English text that was clearly recognized.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that in the light of remarks of the representative of India, he would withdraw that amendment.

Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom), Rapporteur, asked what was the precise purpose of the Soviet Union proposal that the words "may appropriately be concerned" should be substituted for the words "should be concerned" in the penultimate line of paragraph 45.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the new text would be less categorical.

At the Rapporteur's suggestion, the Commission agreed to substitute the words "should appropriately be concerned" for the words "should be concerned".

Referring to the Soviet Union proposal that the words "regional economic commissions" should be inserted after the words "the Secretary-General should consult" in paragraph 46, Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom), Rapporteur, asked precisely what procedure was envisaged. Did it mean that regional economic commissions were to be consulted by referring questions for consideration at their Plenary Sessions, or to be approached at secretariat level? He felt that the former procedure might involve delay.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that he had the first of the two alternatives in mind.

Mr. MARSHALL (Canada) said that if consultation were made obligatory, it might prove a handicap.

Mr. LIEU (China) and Mr. RYABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) then seconded the Soviet Union amendment.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the amendment did not appear to command the support of other members of the Commission, and he therefore presumed it to be unacceptable.

Mr. RYABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), pointing out that no definite objections had been raised to the Soviet Union proposal, requested that a vote be taken.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) stated that he would first propose an amendment to the Soviet amendment, namely, the insertion of the words "when possible" after the words "regional economic commissions" with the object of obviating delay when such Commissions were not in session. That might meet the difficulty referred to by the representatives of Canada and the United Kingdom.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) accepted the amendment proposed by the representative of India.

The Soviet Union proposal, as amended by the representative of India, was then put to the Commission. Four representatives voted in favour and four against.

The CHAIRMAN ruled that the proposal was thereby rejected.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) challenged the Chairman's ruling.

The CHAIRMAN replied that in accordance with Rule 33 of the

Commission's rules of procedure, decisions must be taken by majority vote.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) invoked Rule 46 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council, which laid down that in cases of a tied vote a second vote should be taken at the next meeting. He did so because no specific regulation existed for such a contingency in the rules of procedure of the functional commissions.

The CHAIRMAN accepted the Soviet Union representative's contention and announced that a second vote on his amendment to the opening sentence of paragraph 46 would be taken at the next meeting.

The Commission then passed to consideration of the French amendment to the last sentence of paragraph 46.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that if that amendment were adopted, it would give rise to practical difficulties, since it placed equal responsibility for the arrangement and conduct of meetings on the Statistical Office and the secretariats of regional economic commissions.

Mr. DARMOIS (France) withdrew his amendment in the light of the Chairman's remarks, but proposed a new amendment to line 7 of paragraph 46, namely, the insertion of the words "which, although primarily of regional importance, and sometimes first arise regionally" after the words "give opportunity for the study of special technical problems", the words "arising regionally" being accordingly deleted. He felt that wording would introduce greater precision.

The Commission adopted the amendment proposed by the French representative.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.