

United Nations
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

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ET SOCIAL

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2 February 1947
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

FIRST SESSION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TENTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Saturday,
1 February 1947 at 11:40 a.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr. H. Marshall	(Canada)
	Mr. D.K. Lieu	(China)
	Mr. G. Darbois	(France)
	Mr. P.C. Mahalanobis	(India)
	Mr. P.J. Idenburg	(Netherlands)
	Mr. R.G.D. Allen	(United Kingdom)
	Mr. I.S. Malyshev	(USSR)
	Mr. S.A. Rice	(United States)
	Mr. Erichsen*	(Norway)
	Mr. Ibarquen**	(Mexico)

Representatives of Specialized Agencies

	Mr. R.M. Woodbury	(ILO)
	Mr. S.V. Arnaldo	(UNESCO)

Observers for Specialized Agencies

	Mr. S. Hicks	(International Monetary Fund)
	Mr. W.R. Gardner	(International Monetary Fund)
	Mr. A.M. Lester	(PICAO)

Secretariat:	Mr. H. Campion	(Representing the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs)
	Mr. W.J. Bruce	(Secretary to Commission)

World Statistical Congress (Item 14 of the Agenda) F/CN.3/16, E/153/Rev.1

A resolution was placed before the Commission which had been drafted to embody the proposals made at yesterday's meeting. This resolution was moved by Mr. Rice and seconded by Mr. Idenburg.

* Mr. Erichsen was present as observer for Mr. G. Jahn of Norway.

** Mr. L. Ibarquen was present as observer for Mr. J. Saenz of Mexico.

The discussion emphasized the highly conservative request to the Secretary-General regarding the responsibilities to be assumed by the United Nations. An amendment was proposed which confined the responsibility of the United Nations to a few meetings of a general nature, such meetings to be arranged at times when the section meetings of the constituent organizations were not being held. It was agreed that this amendment should be incorporated in Point 1 of the Resolution by adding the following after the words "limited programme":

"of general meetings under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council".

Following a discussion regarding the part which the Specialized Agencies might play in a World Statistical Congress, it was agreed to amend Item 5 of the Resolution by adding after the word "activities":

"and to arrange such meetings of their statistical advisory bodies or members of their staffs as might be feasible".

In view of the need for arranging such World Congresses to further the work of the United Nations the Statistical Commission desires to draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council to the importance of providing financial assistance to enable professional and scientific people from abroad to attend these Congresses.

Two further points were raised to clarify the meaning of the resolution. It was noted that the resolution specifically omits the words "under the aegis of the Economic and Social Council". Moreover the Commission agreed that it was the intention of the resolution that the widest encouragement should be given to the leading statisticians of every country to attend the proposed World Congress.

The amended version was then put to the vote and carried, the member from the USSR having abstained from voting. He explained that he had not had sufficient information prior to attending this Session of the Statistical Commission to enable him to ascertain the views of the statisticians or officials of his country.

THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION, Taking note:

1. That the Secretary-General has asked it to consult with him in accordance with the Resolution of the Economic and Social Council adopted 2 October 1946 (E/133/Rev.2) wherein the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Commission, was requested to explore the "practicability and desirability of co-ordinating the arrangements" being made for the Twenty-Fifth Session of the International Statistical Institute, the First General Assembly of the Inter-American Statistical Institute, and other statistical meetings scheduled for the latter part of 1947 in such a manner as to constitute a World Statistical Congress in September 1947 under the aegis of the Economic and Social Council and to make a report and recommendation to the Council; and
2. That a World Statistical Congress under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council would greatly benefit the United Nations by the opportunity afforded the members of the Statistical Commission as well as the statistical staff of the Secretariat and the Specialized Agencies:
 - (a) to ascertain at first hand the statistical problems - both general and specific - which a world-wide representative assembly of statisticians would wish the Statistical Commission and the Statistical Office of the United Nations to consider during the next few years;
 - (b) to explain to the statisticians of the various countries, including countries not now represented on the Commission, the programme of work on which the Statistical Commission, the Statistical Office of the United Nations, and the Specialized Agencies are at present engaged or are contemplating; and
 - (c) to explain and develop the means by which the statistical activities of the Specialized Agencies, quasi-governmental, and non-governmental organizations might be related to each other and to those of the United Nations in fostering international co-operation in the improvement of statistics.

/DESIRES

DESIRES to bring to the attention of the Economic and Social Council the points of view it has expressed to the Secretary-General:

1. that in view of the meetings of the International Statistical Institute, the Inter-American Statistical Institute, the Econometric Society, and a group interested in organizing an International Income Conference, scheduled to be held in Washington, D.C., during the period 6 - 18 September 1947, it would be desirable to make arrangements co-ordinated with this series of meetings for a limited programme of general meetings under the auspices of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies focusing attention upon the statistical activities of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies;
2. that the Economic and Social Council should request the Secretary-General to designate a representative to serve on an International Arrangements Committee, consisting of representatives of the organizations involved, which will be responsible for the conduct of the general meetings described in the preceding paragraph and for the co-ordination of all programmes and arrangements for the sessions;
3. that the aggregate of the inter-related sessions be known as the World Statistical Congress;
4. that the Economic and Social Council should invite the attention of Members of the United Nations to the Congress and should express the hope that they will encourage participation therein of the leading statisticians in their respective countries;
5. that the Economic and Social Council should also invite the attention of the Specialized Agencies to the Congress and should express the hope that they will participate therein by sending one or more of their important officials responsible for their statistical activities, and to arrange such meetings of their statistical advisory bodies or members of their staffs as might be feasible;

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6. that the Economic and Social Council should request the Secretary-General to arrange for the participation of appropriate officials of the United Nations in the general meetings of the Congress and to take such other action as he may consider necessary, feasible, and appropriate in connection with the arrangements for these general meetings; and
7. that, therefore, the holding of a World Statistical Congress, in Washington, D.C., during the period 6 - 18 September 1947, with participation and responsibility of the United Nations to the degree outlined above is both desirable and practicable.

Future Work of the Commission (Item 15 of the Agenda)

Referring to the action which the Commission had taken regarding the unpublished papers of the Committee of Statistical Experts of the League of Nations, it was the view of the Commission that Balance of Payments statistics should have priority in the future work of the Commission. The interests of the United Nations as indicated by the work of the various Commissions of the Economic and Social Council and the need for continuing the publication programme of the League of Nations in this field, as well as the specific interests of the Specialized Agencies including that of the proposed International Trade Organization, require that the Statistical Commission exercise its general responsibility for advising with regard to co-ordination of the work in this field.

In response to specific questions Mr. Gardner, observer for the International Monetary Fund, stated that the membership of the Fund was not identical with that of the United Nations, the Fund having some forty members. He pointed to the provision in the Articles of Agreement of the Fund which enabled it to require a minimum list of data needed for operating purposes to be submitted by the members. It was recognized that there was immediate need for developing standards in the field of reporting Balance of Payments data and that this matter was of concern not only to the Fund but to many of the organs of the United Nations and to

/the governments

the governments which would be asked to supply the data.

It was agreed that the International Monetary Fund, the Statistical Office of the United Nations and other interested agencies concerned should work in close collaboration in developing standards in this field. The Statistical Commission wished to record its request that the Secretary-General should include in his report at the next session of the Commission a special section dealing with this topic.

Transfer of Statistical Activities of the League of Nations to the United Nations. (E/CN.3/17, Section III paragraph 8)

The Statistical Commission wished to express its wholehearted approval of the proposal to issue a Supplement to the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, but wished also to recommend that such a Supplement be issued periodically. The view was expressed that publication of such a Supplement would be a very great step forward in developing international statistics.

A request was made that as a part of paragraph 2 in E/CN.3/W.4 the Secretary-General report specifically upon the negotiations with the International Statistical Institute regarding the continued collection and publication of demographic statistics.

The request was made that before final action be taken upon the report, of the Commission the members be permitted an opportunity to study the resolutions in any of the official languages.

The meeting rose at 1:00 p.m.
