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AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

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STATISTICAL COMMISSION

THIRD SESSION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Hold at Lake Success, New York
Thursday 29 April 1948 at 10.30 a.m.

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. H. MARSHALL	Canada
<u>Vice-Chairman:</u>	Mr. P. C. MAHALANOBIS	India
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. S. A. RICE	United States of America
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. G. DARMOIS	France
	*Mr. A. CASTRO VALLE	Mexico
	Mr. P. J. IDENBURG	Netherlands
	Mr. E. PETERSEN	Norway
	Mr. S. BILKUR	Turkey
	Mr. V. A. RABICHEKO	Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
	Mr. T. RIABUSHKIN	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mr. H. CAMPION	United Kingdom

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mr. R. M. WOODBURY	International Labour Organization
Mr. C. TAEUBER	Food and Agriculture Organization
Mr. R. HOFMAN	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
Mr. A. M. LESTER	International Civil Avia- tion Organization
Mr. J. J. POLAK	International Monetary Fund
Mr. K. STOWMAN	World Health Organization

* Observer

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Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations:

Mr. L. TEPER	American Federation of Labour
Mr. G. RIDGEWAY	International Chamber of Commerce

Secretariat:

Mr. W. R. LEONARD	Representing the Assistant Secretary-General in Charge of Economic Affairs
Mr. W. J. BRUCE	Commission Secretary

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF PROVISIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE PREPARED BY THE
TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

The CHAIRMAN asked the Committee Secretary to explain the situation in regard to the Provisional Questionnaire prepared by the Trusteeship Council.

Mr. BRUCE (Committee Secretary) recalled that at its previous session the Commission had requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations to prepare for its present session recommendations on the Trusteeship Council's Questionnaire, in the light of the answers to the Questionnaire to be received from the Administering Authorities. The Statistical Office had not, however, been able to carry out that request, as so far only one report on the Questionnaire had been submitted.

After briefly reviewing the action taken by other Commissions of the Economic and Social Council in connection with the Questionnaire, Mr. Bruce declared that there were two distinct tendencies in the recommendations on the subject. Firstly, there was a tendency to ask for greater detail to be supplied by the Administering Authorities of the Trust Territories on the basis of their specific responsibilities under the United Nations Charter. On the other hand, there was the tendency to minimize details, particularly concerning statistics, since the Trust Territories had in

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general a minimum of competence in the statistical field and since the statistical data obtained from them was of relatively less significance. What was important was to obtain from the Trust Territories data comparable with that received from the rest of the world.

The Statistical Office thought that there had not been sufficient experience with Trust Territories to make it possible at present to recommend types of data needed by the Trusteeship Council and by the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Bruce reminded the Commission that under the Charter data on the Non-Self-Governing Territories had to be supplied also. Such data would be based on a minimum list of subjects rather than on detailed items. It seemed wise that both the Trust Territories and the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be requested to supply similar data.

As there was no discussion, the CHAIRMAN stated that the Rapporteur's report would include a reference to the statement made by the Committee Secretary.

STATUS OF WORK OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE IN THE FIELD OF COSTS OF LIVING AND FAMILY BUDGETS (E/CN.3/43)

Mr. WOODBURY (International Labour Office) stated that the Governing Body of the ILO had placed the subject of family living studies on the agenda of the next conference of Labour Statisticians. Prior to that conference the ILO would prepare a paper summarizing and analysing data received from Governments in reply to a questionnaire asking for information on family living studies officially conducted during the last ten years. The paper would also include information on the extent to which sampling methods had been used.

The question of cost of living statistics had been studied by the

Sixth International Conference of Labour Statisticians held at Montreal in August 1947 and copies of the resolution adopted by that body had been distributed to members of the Commission. Cost of living indices were published regularly in the United Nations Statistical Bulletin, the International Labour Review and the ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics.

The ILO was preparing for the next session of the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling a special statement on sampling methods used in making family living studies and in arriving at cost of living statistics. The statement would also give details concerning cost of living index number methods.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) noted that the ILO statement (document E/CN.3/44) had twice mentioned the "special interest" of the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling in the field of sampling and had implied that the Sub-Commission was seeking information from the ILO. The fact was that the Sub-Commission's request to ILO had arisen out of an earlier request for advice made to it by the ILO. The point was of importance as the Sub-Commission had not only once and its functions were not entirely clear. Was the Sub-Commission a purely technical body established to help the Statistical Commission, or did it have the responsibility of supervising the entire field of sampling? In the latter case, the Sub-Commission would need a more elaborate machinery, such as the specialized agencies had.

The CHAIRMAN recalled the suggestion made previously by the representative of India that there should be a member of the United Nations Secretariat who would deal specifically with the question of sampling. If that suggestion were adopted, a specialized agency desiring information on the subject would apply first to the Secretariat official, who
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would, if necessary, refer the request to the Sub-Commission. The procedure in connection with the relationship of the specialized agencies and the Sub-Commission might thus be gradually worked out.

Mr. RABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) drew attention to the distinction that should be made between methods of study used in countries that were statistically highly developed and those used in statistically under-developed countries. Methods of estimating family budgets used in advanced countries should be studied in order to give practical assistance to the under-developed countries. Such assistance was an essential function of the Statistical Commission.

Mr. WOODBURY (International Labour Organization) said that the Sixth International Conference of Labour Statisticians had discussed the need for special methods of studying living standards in under-developed areas and plans were being made for the establishment of a technical committee of experts to help meet that need.

Mr. RABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) expressed his satisfaction with the ILO's work on the subject, but he hoped that the Commission itself would also keep the point in mind.

Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom) urged the importance of using family budget statistics not only as a basis for computing a post-war base for compiling cost of living indices but also for estimating total consumer expenditures in the various countries.

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Commission that the Committee on Future Work had suggested studies that would cover the point.

Mr. MAHALANCBIS (India) agreed with the representative of the United Kingdom that the study of family budgets should be treated in its
/broader aspects.

broader aspects.

PROGRAMME OF STATISTICAL EDUCATION (Document E/CN.3/43)

Mr. RICE (United States of America) recalled that the report of the Nuclear Statistical Commission as well as the Council's action on that report demonstrated that there had long been recognition of the great need for more competently trained statisticians and of the desirability of a programme sponsored by the United Nations designed to meet that need.

Mr. Rice made a distinction between statistical education and statistical training. Specialized agencies sometimes set up training centres to give short courses to prepare personnel for specific tasks. There was, however, need for a basic and more general education to prepare statisticians who would be available to any inter-governmental or any international organization.

There was no doubt as regards the need for an educational programme and the United Nations was certainly the proper organization for initiating such a programme. The body pre-eminently equipped for implementing it on behalf of the United Nations was the International Statistical Institute which for sixty years had had experience in international statistical co-ordination and development and was purely scientific organization that sought to include in its membership the world's leading statisticians.

The United States delegation proposed that the Commission should recommend that the Economic and Social Council should request UNESCO, as the specialized agency peculiarly fitted for dealing with educational programmes, to make arrangements with the International Statistical Institute and other interested organizations to set up a programme such as was outlined in document E/CN.3/43.

/Mr. MAHALANOBIS

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) referred to the report of the Sub-Commission on Sampling which drew attention to the acute shortage of trained statisticians in the sampling field, and said that this shortage was felt in many other fields as well. He felt it was the responsibility of the Statistical Commission to see that this gap was filled.

Mr. Mahalanobis supported in general the proposal of the United States representative, but he thought that the United Nations itself, rather than UNESCO, should be responsible for the programme in order to ensure emphasis on the international operational aspect of statistical education.

Mr. RABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) considered the United States proposal of an international programme for education in statistics excellent, but he failed to understand why the elaboration of the programme could not be undertaken by the United Nations. The creation of a temporary Sub-Commission, if necessary, would solve any technical difficulties, but the actual implementation of the programme was, in Mr. Rabichko's opinion, strictly a matter for the United Nations.

Mr. DARMOIS (France) urged that the project should be undertaken by the United Nations, and not by UNESCO. He added that he would like to know the existing needs for statisticians in the different categories.

Mr. IDENBURG (Netherlands) expressed his appreciation of the United States document. While he was in full agreement in principle with the need for trained statisticians, he would point out that statistical education in many States was more extensive than the paper indicated. Secondly, if the International Statistical Institute took

/up the work

up the work, as suggested, it should begin by pooling the experience of the various countries in that field. There should also be an exchange of views with regard to the statistical examinations held in different States, with the aim of eventual international standardization of the requirements for diplomas in statistics.

He saw nothing against the United States amendment in which the arrangements would be undertaken by UNESCO. Since, in fact, the terms of reference of UNESCO included the dissemination of knowledge with regard to the way of life of the different nations, the education of statisticians would appear to come within the purview of that body.

Mr. RYABUSHKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that the proposal to transfer the elaboration of the programme to UNESCO and the International Statistical Institute detracted from the authority of the Statistical Commission. The Commission could appoint a special committee to prepare the work, and could draw upon the knowledge and experience of the specialized agencies and the Institute, but the actual elaboration of the programme together with its financing and administration, remained the responsibility of the Statistical Commission if it was to carry weight in the eyes of the different governments.

Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom) supported the general idea of the United States proposal.

Distinction had been made in the paper between training -- which meant the training of special groups for particular projects -- and education. The latter should not be confined to the study of statistical methods, but should include experience in the use of the methods in actual practice. That, in his opinion, was the missing link in the outline of the programme. The Statistical Commission had tried to pool the experience of the different countries, but that was not enough; the

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statistical student should be able to learn at first hand how the different methods were carried out. That could be arranged to a certain extent among governments, but there should be some means whereby international organizations could help.

He felt some difficulty in giving the proposal his practical support at present, for he did not understand from the paper exactly what the programme was to be. He thought the whole question should be thought out more clearly before a decision could be taken.

Mr. RABICHKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) asked the United States representative whether it was proposed that the role of UNESCO in the matter was to be that of methodological guidance, whether it was to finance the scheme, or whether it was to be the administrative centre.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of Canada, pointed out that the effectiveness of education at the operational level would depend upon the education in statistics given at the different universities. There was at present great disparity in the level of that education in different countries, and he wondered whether the United States representative thought that one of the functions of the organization which was to elaborate the programme would be the establishment of a standard of education in statistics, to be submitted to the different States.

Mr. RICE (United States of America), in reply to the United Kingdom representative, stated that the United States proposal was to call upon the most competent international institute in the field of statistics to formulate a programme. He could not be more explicit than that. The need for statistical education was clear, but the means whereby

/that need

that need could be fulfilled could not be specified in detail at that juncture.

His own conception was that if the International Statistical Institute received the assignment, it would begin by producing a balance sheet of statistical needs as against resources. On the basis of that document, it would then formulate a programme which would presumably involve subsidies to institutions, provision for fellowships and scholarships, and the establishment of travelling teams of teachers.

In reply to the objections of the Ukrainian and USSR representative, who thought that the United Nations should develop the programme through the Statistical Commission and the Statistical Office, Mr. Rice pointed out that it was a scientific and professional task, which called for the assistance of a scientific organization.

Moreover, there was a growing feeling that the United Nations had over-elaborated its organization, and that wherever possible external machinery of an international character should be utilized. The present case was a particular example where such machinery was available, and he saw no reason not to use it. He did not say the task could not be accomplished by a Sub-Commission, or a group of experts appointed by the Secretary-General, but since a competent organization existed, it was simplest to make use of its experience.

The Ukrainian representative had asked what was to be the role of UNESCO. It would be partly a matter of finance, and partly administration. UNESCO would prepare a contract with the International Statistical Institute and would make the necessary financial arrangements for the transfer of funds to the Institute. The terms of the contract might vary: if UNESCO were to be the contracting agency, the contract might provide for the supervision of the project by the Statistical Commission.

/He did not

He did not think UNESCO would be the administrative centre, and it would certainly not be responsible for the establishment of standards or methodological guidance.

Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India) was in general agreement with the proposal to arrange a programme of education in statistics. There were two issues before the Commission: the first was operative, and concerned the actual details of the programme. The second concerned the machinery for elaborating the programme; one view was that the Statistical Commission should undertake the work, the other was that the Economic and Social Council should request UNESCO to undertake it. He himself favoured some such middle course as leaving the responsibility to the Statistical Commission, to work out a programme with the help of the International Statistical Institute and possibly some of the specialized agencies. He doubted, indeed, whether UNESCO was equipped to undertake such a task.

Mr. IDENBURG (Netherlands) favoured the United States proposal to entrust the work to the International Statistical Institute. There was no question of UNESCO undertaking the work; its role would be purely financial.

He suggested, however, that a decision should be postponed, in order to allow the time for consultations with competent persons, such as the Director-General of UNESCO.

Mr. HOFMAN (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) stated that UNESCO was interested in all aspects of international education and would be ready to collaborate with the International Statistical Institute in the project in question.

He would like to inform the United Kingdom representative that there

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was a UNESCO office for the exchange of mature persons: in the case under discussion, that would mean graduates of statistical institutions. UNESCO sponsored and encouraged fellowships and scholarships.

UNESCO was not equipped to deal with the methodological aspect of the question, but could be entrusted with the administration. With regard to the financing of the programme, Mr. Hofman could not commit his organization, as funds were limited. The question could, however, be placed upon the agenda of the next general conference.

He was not sure that the collaboration of UNESCO in this project would be necessarily related to that of the International Statistical Institute. The latter could be put in charge of the formulation of the programme, and supervision could be provided by some other organization than UNESCO.

In reply to a question by Mr. MAHALANOBIS (India), who wished to know whether the International Statistical Institute could be affiliated to UNESCO, since it was composed of individual members and not national societies, Mr. Hofman said that he had had no experience of that matter. He thought that the Institute had been placed on a special basis and had been recognized by the United Nations.

Mr. DARMOIS (France) recalled that he was present at a meeting of UNESCO in Paris, when the question of affiliation of the International Statistical Institute was proposed and when difficulties were raised in connection with the question.

Mr. CAMPION (United Kingdom) asked the United States representative whether the original paper he had submitted had been a proposal on his own behalf, or whether it was a recommendation of the International Statistical Institute.

In the original paper, the United Nations were only asked to sponsor
/the elaboration

the elaboration of a programme; the assumption was that the Institute would carry the programme through on a long-term basis. In the modified proposal, it was suggested that in view of the difficulty of getting the preliminary funds from the United Nations, UNESCO should be asked to finance the initial work; he had not understood that UNESCO was to finance the long-term programme.

Mr. RICE (United States of America) answered that the original paper was submitted by himself, as President of the International Statistical Institute, on behalf of that body, but without formal approval by the General Assembly or the Bureau of the Institute. He was, however, sure that it had the support at least of the Executive Committee.

The proposal was for some United Nations source to supply funds in agreement with the Institute, for the latter to develop a programme over a period of two years for submission to the United Nations. The Institute would naturally maintain its interest in the project after the two years had passed, but it could not continue to work on a long-term basis unless funds were provided beyond the initial period.

Mr. Rice wished to emphasize two further points: first, he recalled that during the period of the Nuclear Statistical Commission and of the other Nuclear Commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the problem of relationships with non-governmental agencies had been discussed, and it had been agreed, among other matters, that the International Statistical Institute should have direct relationship with the Statistical Commission. Secondly, he would point out that whereas the majority of the educational projects that were supported by UNESCO were for purely educational and cultural purposes, the programme under discussion had a further reason for support, in that trained statisticians were urgently needed in order to operate the United Nations statistical system.

/Mr. CASTRO VALLE

Mr. CASTRO VALLE (Mexico) stated that, as he was only an observer, he hoped no decision would be taken before he could consult his delegation, since the question of finance was involved.

He suggested that the Commission might ask the International Statistical Institute^{to} formulate a draft programme, to be submitted to the Commission before the end of the present session.

It was agreed that the matter would be deferred at a later date.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.