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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME IV. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Programme 24. Statistics

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* The present document contains programme 24 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

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PROGRAMME 24. STATISTICS

A. Programme

1. General orientation

24.1 The mandate for this programme was established by the Economic and Social Council at its first and second sessions in 1946. In that year, the Council established a Statistical Commission to provide expert advice on statistical matters and to assist it: "(a) In promoting the development of national statistics and the improvement of their comparability; (b) In the co-ordination of the statistical work of specialized agencies; (c) In the development of the central statistical services of the Secretariat; (d) In advising the organs of the United Nations on general questions relating to the collection, interpretation and dissemination of statistical information; (e) In promoting the improvement of statistics and statistical methods generally". At the same time, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to take into account the following recommendations of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the organization and mandate of the statistical work of the Secretariat: "... (a) Organization of a central statistical unit in the Secretariat of the United Nations; (b) Collection, analysis and evaluation of statistics from Member Governments, specialized agencies, and other sources; (c) Publication of statistics; (d) Co-ordination of statistical activities of specialized agencies; (e) Promotion of development and improvement of statistics in general; (f) Maintenance of an international centre for statistics; and (g) Maintenance of close contact and co-ordination with national Governments on programmes of statistical research, submission of statistical data, analysis and publication...".

24.2 At its fiftieth session, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1566 (L) of 3 May 1971, on co-ordination of work in the field of statistics, reaffirmed, inter alia, its resolutions 8 (I) of 16 February 1946 and 8 (II) of 21 June 1946 on the establishment of the Statistical Commission and its terms of reference, and stated that the primary objective of the statistical programme was "the achievement of an integrated system in the collection, data processing and dissemination of international statistics by the organs and agencies of the United Nations system with special regard to the requirements of reviewing and appraising economic and social progress, particularly in the context of the policy measures and objectives of the United Nations Development Decade, taking into account the needs of the developing countries".

24.3 Further legislative mandates arising from the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, as well as from a variety of world conferences, have reaffirmed the overall scope of activity and addressed specific aspects of the programme. Those legislative mandates have also broadened the scope of activity to give specific mention to statistical work on such issues as environment, the situation of women, human settlements, special population groups - children, youth, the aging and disabled persons - and crime and criminal justice.

24.4 The overall goal of the programme is to increase the availability and use of relevant, timely and reliable statistics, for national and international planning and action. In pursuit of this continuing and evolving goal, the statistics programme contributes to the development, expansion, improvement and maintenance of cost-effective statistical capabilities through the formulation and the improvement of sound statistical methodologies for use by Member States, the application of new

technologies, the collection and dissemination of statistics in numerous fields, the provision of substantive technical co-operation support and the promotion of co-ordination of international statistical work.

24.5 A major feature of the statistics programme is its integrated nature. The methodological work, which includes the development of recommendations, guidelines, classifications, manuals and technical reports, contributes both to the improvement of statistics and statistical capabilities in Member States, particularly in developing countries, and to the international comparability of statistics. The technical co-operation activities in support of developing countries are integrated into the overall functioning of the Statistical Office. Those activities draw on the regular work of the Office, for example, by using and promoting the use in countries of the methodological work of the Office, and they contribute to the development of methodologies by providing feedback on the special statistical needs and problems of the developing countries. National statistics relevant to most sectors of economic and social activity are published for most countries and areas of the world and disseminated to Governments and to a wide range of other users. By putting its own data into an international context, each country can obtain perspectives that cannot be obtained in any other way.

24.6 The statistics programme has, from its inception, served a wide range of users and its outputs had many applications; a major aim will be to use available processing, communications and dissemination technologies to serve the diverse users and purposes effectively and efficiently. Better communication with users will be required to understand more fully their needs in terms of contents and in terms of the forms in which data can best be made available. The amount and detail of statistical data available at the international level have grown rapidly. Technology for storing, processing, communicating and disseminating data is continuing to change. An appropriate blending of these technologies is needed to ensure that the required statistics are made available to a wide range of users in ways that suit the varied uses made of the statistics. Comprehensive data on economic and social structure and change are still seriously lacking in many countries. Knowledge about the reliability of available data is lacking in many fields and for many countries. There are also serious time-lags in the availability of data. All these factors need to be addressed to improve the usability and availability of data for policy and decision-making purposes at the national and international levels.

2. Overall strategy

24.7 In order to meet the above objectives, the programme, whose implementation, with the exception of subprogramme 5 (see para. 24.8), is the responsibility of the Statistical Office and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, will aim to serve the needs of users and producers of statistics in such well-established fields as national accounts and balances, international trade, industrial, energy, price and demographic statistics with the growing needs for statistics and statistical methods in such emerging fields as environment, services, disarmament and the situation of women. In a number of cases, new issues can be addressed by adapting and extending well-established methodologies. To cite two examples: work will be pursued in adapting national accounting methodologies to take into account such environmental issues as resource depletion and the cost of pollution control and abatement; existing data and classifications, along with new frameworks and methods, will be used to generate a

broader range of statistics relating to disarmament. In both new and well-established fields, plans will have to be adjusted to respond to specific issues and topics identified in the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations Development Decade and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as well as other global initiatives and conferences arising during the plan period. Nevertheless, it is clear that in all subprogrammes special attention will be given to work relating to statistics and indicators needed to monitor progress in the implementation of the international development strategy as well as those needed to assess the achievement of social goals in the 1990s on the basis of nationally and internationally established quantitative targets.

24.8 In the area of technical co-operation activities, carried out by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the Secretariat, with substantive support from the Statistical Office and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, the goals of self-reliance and sustained capabilities will be fostered with special emphasis on economic statistics, including international trade and national accounts statistics, the strengthening of household survey and population and housing census capabilities, statistical data-processing capabilities, statistical training and the organization and management of national statistical services. With respect to the collection, processing and publication of statistics, particular attention will be given to building up extended time series and basic data essential for the analysis of long-term economic and social changes at the country, regional and global levels and also to providing indications of the reliability of statistical data. The technical co-operation activities in support of developing countries draw on the regular work of the Statistical Office by using and promoting the use in countries of the methodological work of the Office, and they contribute to the development of methodologies by providing feedback on the special statistical needs and problems of the developing countries.

24.9 In pursuit of its mandate, the Statistical Office provides a wide range of services and outputs to users and producers of statistics in other units of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, and other organs within the United Nations. A special relationship exists between the Statistical Office and the statistical divisions of the regional commissions. They work closely together on all aspects of their programmes in full recognition of the complementary and interdependent nature of their work. Furthermore, work on the situation of women involves close collaboration with, *inter alia*, the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

24.10 Co-ordination is of central importance to the statistics programme and is explicitly represented in the subprogramme structure. International statistical work is carried out by a large number of national and international organizations. Each organization has its own objectives, priorities and methods but also shares a number of common concerns. Besides routine contacts and communication, co-ordination is promoted through the Statistical Commission, the Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Co-ordination and the ACC Sub-committee on Statistical Activities. In addition, broader and more integrated approaches to development planning and policy formulation have been widely adopted

at both the national and international levels. This has increased the demand for greater integration of economic, social, demographic and environmental statistics to meet planning and policy needs. There has also been a consequent increased emphasis on co-ordinated and collaborative approaches. As a result, for example, work on national accounting methodology is carried out jointly with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Community and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). Non-governmental organizations such as the International Statistical Institute, the International Association of Official Statisticians, the International Association for the Study of Income and Wealth and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics will also be associated with various aspects of the programme.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

24.11 This programme consists of five subprogrammes, as follows:

Subprogramme 1: Developing statistical concepts and methods for use by Member States;

Subprogramme 2: Applying advanced technology in collecting, processing and disseminating integrated statistics;

Subprogramme 3: Collecting, compiling and disseminating international statistics;

Subprogramme 4: Co-ordinating international statistical programmes;

Subprogramme 5: Support for technical co-operation in statistics and statistical data processing (Department of Technical Co-operation for Development)

B. Subprogrammes

24.12 Subprogrammes 1, 4 and 5 are designated high priority.

SUBPROGRAMME 1. DEVELOPING STATISTICAL CONCEPTS AND METHODS FOR USE BY MEMBER STATES

(a) Objectives

24.13 The legislative authority for this subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 3362 (S-VII), 3409 (XXX), S-13/2, 44/76 and 44/234; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1307 (XLIV), 1564 (L), 1947 (LVIII), 2061 (LXII), 1979/5, 1987/6, 1989/3 and 1989/4; resolutions 6, 8, 22 and 39 of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women; resolutions 1 and 2 and decision 3 of the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; and decisions 48/IV and 7/3 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.

24.14 The objectives of this subprogramme are: to develop and disseminate sound concepts, definitions, classifications and methods of data collection, compilation

and dissemination for national and international statistics; to promote the improvement of national and international statistics, particularly their reliability, timeliness, scope, coverage and comparability; to promote the further harmonization and integration of national and international statistics, including the completion and dissemination of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA) and related handbooks, to review and, if necessary, revise the provisional Central Product Classification; and to develop new or revised recommendations and reports in industry, energy, trade, demographic, social and environment statistics.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

24.15 Work on national accounts will focus on the completion and follow-up of the SNA revision process, with the final draft and the revised SNA to be submitted to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session. The revised SNA will be published and widely disseminated. The emphasis will be on promoting, through the further development of the national accounts compilation methodology based on the use of microcomputers and on further elaboration of SNA handbooks to assist national accountants in areas not covered until now. Results of national and international efforts on environmental accounting will be reviewed to determine if revised and up-dated guidelines can be provided. Cost- and time-saving strategies, such as bench-mark versus current accounting or short-cut estimation methods, will be developed to help countries improve the timely availability of national accounts statistics. Adaptations of national accounts to a variety of uses will also be further developed. The reoriented approach to work on System of National Accounts/Material Product System (SNA/MPS) links will continue with the long-term aim to integrate the two systems. Emphasis will be placed on the parallel use of the two systems as alternative forms of analysis, based on both national accounting principles. Further work will be done on harmonizing the SNA and MPS concepts of national accounting and on the application of the SNA in countries with centrally planned economies as part of the process of integrating the two systems and improving international comparability of data. In fostering linkages between the SNA and the systems and frameworks in specialized fields of statistics, work will continue on conceptual issues and on the development of handbooks and guidelines for national work on linkage.

24.16 In the area of economic classifications, work will be completed on the provisional version of the Central Product Classification and the third revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, including the development of numeric indexes for those classifications. Further reviews of classifications will be carried out and, when warranted, revisions will be initiated, particularly to take into account changes arising from the adoption of the new SNA or important new statistical needs. A review of the adequacy of the provisional version of the Central Product Classification will be undertaken, and a revised draft will be prepared if the Statistical Commission considers it necessary. As required, special-purpose classifications in selected fields will be developed. Improved harmonization with classifications developed for use by regional intergovernmental bodies, such as CMEA and the European Communities, will be promoted. Under the guidance of the Statistical Commission, the Statistical Office will continue to promote the co-ordination of work on classifications and will be the focal point for the provision of information and guidance to Member States and international organizations in the implementation of these classifications and their further development for international and national use and adaptation. Software versions of classification indexes and conversion tables

will be disseminated, drawing on national and international work in this area supplemented, if necessary, by developmental work.

24.17 Work in energy statistics will focus on any necessary refinements and further development of methodologies for general energy statistics and new and renewable sources of energy. In the area of international trade, research will focus on country practices in merchandise trade statistics and any needed revisions to international recommendations in this field. Also the development of concepts, definitions and guidelines for international trade in services will be pursued with a view to promoting nationally useful and internationally comparable data. Experience gained in countries in work on various aspects of environment statistics and from regional seminars and technical co-operation in environment statistics will provide information for further modification and revision of technical reports on concepts and methods of environment statistics and the start of further in-depth methodological work in selected areas of high priority. Drawing on work in countries and regions, international guidelines and classifications pertaining to various fields of environmental statistics will be prepared for submission to the Statistical Commission and further technical reports will be issued on various aspects of environment statistics in co-operation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other interested organizations.

24.18 In the fields of social, demographic and human settlements statistics, priority will be given to (a) providing guidance to countries on census data base development and timely dissemination and use of data, (b) studying national experience and issues emerging from the 1990 round of population and housing censuses; and (c) initiating preparations for the next Population and Housing Census Programme, including review of existing recommendations and development of additional recommendations as needed, in co-operation with, in particular, UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the regional commissions. Priority will also be given to the development of methodologies for statistics, indicators and user-oriented data bases on women and special population groups, including youth, children, elderly and disabled. Technical reports will be prepared on specialized topics as specific needs are identified, such as migration and special population groups, in response to user requests.

24.19 Where possible, the concepts and definitions established for industrial statistics will be linked to the framework of the revised SNA/MPS. Work will continue on the statistical treatment of small-scale industrial activity for inclusion in the international recommendations for the 1993 World Programme of Industrial Statistics. Revised recommendations for construction statistics will focus on national and international needs and national practices, as well as on relationships to the national accounts. In service statistics, the main emphasis will be put on (a) further developing the methodology of the quantity and price indexes for services with a view to improving constant price estimates; (b) further elaborating the concepts, definitions, classifications and data collection methods in trade-in-services statistics; (c) developing commodity and activity classifications in services; (d) elaborating comprehensive guidelines for such areas as financial services, insurance and other business services; and (e) disseminating as widely as possible important methodological developments in this rapidly evolving field. The work on services statistics will be carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, IMF and other interested regional and international organizations.

24.20 As part of the National Household Survey Capability Programme, a number of studies will be undertaken to assist countries in planning and implementing integrated programmes of household surveys. This series of publications will review issues and procedures in specific areas of household survey methodology and operations and in selected subject areas. Guidelines on international comparisons will be prepared, incorporating experience gained to date through the International Comparison Programme, especially from the regionalization of the programme and from product (value-added) inter-country comparisons.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. APPLYING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN COLLECTING, PROCESSING AND DISSEMINATING INTEGRATED STATISTICS

(a) Objectives

24.21 The legislative authority for this subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions S-13/2, 44/116 (L), 44/169, and 44/171; and Economic and Social Council resolutions 8 (I), 8 (II), 23 (III), 1566 (L) and 1987/6.

24.22 The objectives of this subprogramme are: (a) to disseminate multisectorial statistics and indicators, periodically, at the international level, efficiently and effectively through recurrent publications containing general economic, demographic and social statistics; (b) to disseminate international statistics and indicators through media other than recurrent publications to meet a variety of users' needs and to respond to ad hoc requests for statistical information; and (c) to apply advanced technology in collecting, compiling, processing and disseminating international statistics, providing more efficient means of production and storage of statistics and access to statistical data bases.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

24.23 Improved data-processing techniques and advanced photo-composition technology will be used to improve the timeliness and contents of the regular general compendiums of statistics and other recurrent publications. It is anticipated that the Statistical Yearbook and the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics will be substantially revised to ensure their continued relevance to users.

24.24 New data bases will be developed to meet new needs for multi-sectorial and integrated statistics and indicators. For example, data bases will be established to monitor the implementation of the new international development strategy and assess the achievement of social goals in the 1990s using nationally and internationally established quantitative targets. In addition, work on a data base on disarmament statistics will be initiated drawing on existing statistics and the methodologies and frameworks developed under subprogramme 1.

24.25 To compile, organize and disseminate statistics to meet the needs of a wide variety of users, new and improved technologies will be explored. Application of laser-printing technology will be expanded to produce appropriate publications in a more cost-effective manner. The possibility of using advanced technology for recording a large volume of data, such as optical disk technology, will be explored to make an entire publication or one or more detailed data bases available on a single disk so that data can be efficiently retrieved on microcomputers. Taking advantage of the availability of the low-cost, easy-to-use software packages for data storage, retrieval and manipulation, a wide range of statistics will be

disseminated on diskettes. Technologies now being used (for example, microfiche) will be reviewed to determine their continuing applicability.

24.26 Using new technology, provision will be made for the introduction of an ad hoc series of statistical publications, permitting the publication of additional useful sets of statistical data assembled by the Statistical Office on a variety of subjects which do not readily fit into the structure of existing recurrent statistical yearbooks and compendia.

24.27 To improve data collection from countries, the use of magnetic tapes and the introduction of diskettes will be encouraged, where possible, as media for reporting data. Data exchange with other international and regional statistical agencies will be improved through the increased use of on-line access to data bases. Efforts will be made to standardize data exchange formats.

24.28 The processing and storage of collected data will be improved by applying advanced programming techniques, data-base management and data access methodology appropriate to the different types of statistics. The scope and techniques of on-line access to the statistical data bases will be improved. Manuals on statistical data processing for use in countries, taking special account of the processing problems of developing countries, will be updated, reflecting the latest developments, and disseminated.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. COLLECTING, COMPILING AND DISSEMINATING INTERNATIONAL STATISTICS

(a) Objectives

24.29 The legislative authority for this subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 3201 (S-VI), 3202 (S-VI), 3362 (S-VII), 33/148, 44/169 and 44/171; and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1954 B (LIX), 2014 (LXI) and 1979/72.

24.30 The objectives of this subprogramme are: to assist sound national and international policy formulation and decision-making by fostering the widespread availability and use by a wide range of national and international users of relevant, comprehensive, timely, reliable and comparable international statistics by collecting, compiling, evaluating and disseminating statistics and indicators on national accounts, industry, services, including international trade in services, energy, international trade, transport, prices, including comprehensive and comparable data on purchasing-power parities and real product, and demographic, social and environment statistics and indicators.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

24.31 The recurrent statistical publications and some non-recurrent statistical publications responding to current mandates will continue to be issued. Their structure and content will continue to be reviewed in the light of the increased capacity of certain types of users to make use of data disseminated in machine-readable form. In this connection, the general developments outlined in subprogramme 2 will be examined in the light of the particular needs in each subject-matter field. It is anticipated that the coverage, timeliness, reliability and comparability of official statistics provided by Member States will continue to improve in such fields as national accounts, international trade, industrial statistics, energy statistics and demographic and social statistics as a result of

the wider use of improved statistical methods promoted under subprogramme 1 and improved national capabilities of countries under subprogramme 5 on technical co-operation.

24.32 In national accounts the potential expansion of work will include additional data on institutional sector accounts, financial flows and balance sheets as a consequence of the reorientation of national accounts development, emphasizing integrated sectoral analysis instead of the traditional production accounts approach. Reoriented country data files, which include all official and estimated national accounts information for the national economy and for all institutional sectors, will be established for a large number of countries. Therefore, expanded series of integrated national accounts statistics covering government data, external transaction information and financial information will be available for international analysis. Attempts will also be made to promote co-ordination among international organizations regarding methods of estimation where national accounts statistics are not immediately available (see subprogramme 1). Country practices in compiling national accounts statistics will be analysed and evaluated to assess data reliability and conformity with international guidelines, in particular for the institutional sector accounts, and this information will be provided to users of national accounts data. The completion of the integrated national accounts framework data base will facilitate analysis of specific activities on the economy and therefore provide effective means to study the problems outlined under Programme 12, (Global development issues and policies). On the other hand, the analyses carried out under Programme 12 are helpful references for the Statistical Office in its design of the framework.

24.33 Countries will be offered assistance in their transition to the revised version of International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) in their reporting of all industrial data. Improvements in the coverage of inquiries and the quality and timeliness of data will be emphasized. The coverage of industrial commodity statistics will be modified, and expanded where feasible, to respond to structural changes in industry and to reflect new directions in industrial technology. Similarly, work on non-energy minerals will be expanded to take into account the global demand for raw materials and the need for information on a number of variables such as foreign trade, consumption, reserves and prices.

24.34 National and international developments and publications concerning industrial statistics and service statistics, including international trade in services and price and quantity indicators, will be monitored. With the expansion of national and international work in this area, the coverage of topics related to service statistics in existing publications will be expanded and new compilation and publication efforts in this important new field will be considered. Industrial statistics and related national accounts and trade statistics will continue to be provided to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in published and unpublished form.

24.35 Publications of international trade statistics, incorporating where possible international sea-borne trade, will continue to be issued annually. It is expected that developments in the collection and processing of international trade data will bring about greater international comparability and that national data will be available from a great majority of countries. In collaboration with the European Community and its member States, the special challenges posed by the single market for international trade statistics will be addressed. The international trade statistics computerized data base (COMTRADE) will be maintained as an essential

service to users including UNCTAD, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Bank, the European Community, OECD, and the regional commissions, as well as other units of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. Alternative forms of dissemination will be explored (see subprogramme 2).

24.36 The core data base on energy statistics will be further refined in response to a request by the user through seasonal and regional disaggregation of energy supply and demand, and will be complemented by information on special energy-related topics of immediate relevance to energy and development planners. Data collection will draw on a greater range of primary and secondary official sources and will be increasingly interconnected with activities of specialized agencies (for example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organization), and, where feasible, the regional commissions. Increased use will be made of existing mechanisms such as the decennial world programmes in industrial statistics and the National Household Survey Capability Programme. In addition, energy and energy-related data will be incorporated in software packages for data evaluation, review and analysis and general development planning.

24.37 Phase VI of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) will be carried out, using 1990 as a reference year, on a regional basis, and the Statistical Office will continue to be responsible for the co-ordination of the project and for any interregional (core) comparisons undertaken. An ICP handbook, containing both a theoretical description of the comparison method and practical instructions for the participating countries will be completed and published. Preparatory work for product-side (value added) comparisons will be initiated, and a first multilateral comparison is expected to be finalized by 1995.

24.38 The Demographic Yearbook and other printed products will continue to be issued. Other types of outputs responding to specific users requests will also be generated. The social statistics data bases will also be further developed using new technologies to incorporate the full range of social statistics available in the United Nations system and, where feasible, human settlements statistics. Small-scale automated data bases will be maintained, using microcomputer and related technologies and based on the primary data bases of the Statistical Office and other United Nations sources, in specialized fields of specific user interest, such as the homeless, the elderly and disabled persons and other special population groups, women, households and families, and crime and criminal justice. These will be used to generate special compilations of statistics and indicators in response to specific user demands and to meet a wide variety of ad hoc requests effectively and efficiently on a continuous basis. The statistical outputs in demographic and social statistics both contribute to and draw on the work of the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the specialized agencies and other parts of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs.

24.39 Based on the initiatives taken by the regional commissions and specialized agencies, a global programme of collection and dissemination of environment statistics will be co-ordinated by the Statistical Office. Once a sufficient number of countries have established environment statistics programmes, international data collection will be gradually extended in line with improved data availability in both national statistical offices and international organizations. Drawing on the regional work, dissemination of environmental statistics at the global level will also be initiated.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. CO-ORDINATING INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

(a) Objectives

24.40 The legislative authority for this subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 238 A (III) and 2626 (XXV), paragraph 84; and Economic and Social Council resolutions 8 (I), 8 (II), 23 (III), 1306 (XLIV) and 1566 (L).

24.41 The objectives of this subprogramme are: to make it easier for Member States to use the international statistical recommendations and classifications of different international organizations; to reduce the statistical reporting burden on Member States; and to achieve an integrated system in the collection, processing and dissemination of international statistics by promoting the co-ordination of the international statistical system, including technical co-operation activities, providing statistical services required by intergovernmental bodies, units within the Secretariat and other United Nations bodies; and by serving as the focal point for the international statistical system.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

24.42 In order to promote overall statistical co-ordination, close working relations will be maintained with the regional commissions, specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and national statistical services on such matters as questionnaires, data banks, data exchange and concepts, definitions and classifications. Co-ordination instruments such as the Directory of International Statistics and the inventory of data collection activities issued by international organizations will be prepared in a computerized format to permit continued updating and ease of access.

24.43 The provision of statistical services will continue to organs of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies on request, including the provision of data on national income, exchange rates, population, etc. to the Committee on Contributions. In carrying out this function, the Statistical Office draws on some of the outputs of Programme 12, (Global development issues and policies) and Programme 18 (Population). The Statistical Office will also continue to provide substantive services and statistical expertise to various other United Nations bodies and units of the Secretariat, such as the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In addition, substantive servicing of the Statistical Commission, its working group on International Statistics Programmes and Co-ordination and the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities will continue.

SUBPROGRAMME 5. SUPPORT FOR TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IN STATISTICS AND STATISTICAL DATA PROCESSING (DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT)

(a) Objectives

24.44 The legislative authority for this subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolution 3362 (S-VII); and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1566 (L), 1903 (LVII), 1947 (LVIII), 2036 (LXI), 1989/3 and 1989/4.

24.45 The capabilities and outputs of the statistical services of many developing countries have continued to improve. Yet a number of developing countries are still unable to provide the data required by national decision makers and other users in terms of scope, detail, reliability or timeliness.

24.46 The objectives of this subprogramme are: to develop the statistics and statistical capabilities that developing countries need to plan, monitor and direct their economic and social development through the provision of direct advisory services, fellowships, supplies, equipment, statistical training, methodological materials and guidelines and the substantive support and monitoring of technical co-operation programmes and projects in statistics and statistical data processing. Another aim will be to help improve the stature and capabilities of national statistical offices by directing the attention of planners and policy makers to useful applications of statistics in developing effective socio-economic programmes and reaching policy decisions.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

24.47 The strategy will draw on the various related elements of the statistics programme and on the total know-how and experience available in the Statistical Office and the regional commissions. To assist developing countries in improving their statistical capacity and capability, advisory services will be provided and international experts will be posted on a long-term basis, and consultants, on a short-term basis, to transfer knowledge and experience in specific fields to local professionals in particular countries. Other forms of training will also be stressed. Individual country projects will continue to be evaluated in order to determine their effectiveness and the extent to which their objectives have been achieved. The national statistical services of developing countries will be encouraged to play a greater role in co-ordinating technical co-operation received in statistics. International and regional organizations will be encouraged to continue their arrangements for co-ordination in the context of and in support of such national co-ordination efforts.

24.48 Projects will also provide such necessary equipment as computer hardware and appropriate software programmes to enable the countries to process their data as near as possible to the period to which they refer and to facilitate the use of the data.

24.49 An increase in the number of country projects in various fields is expected during the plan period, particularly projects related to statistical organization in general, social and demographic statistics, national accounts and economic statistics, including international trade, industrial, energy and related statistics. With the completion of the revised SNA, there will be an increasing number of technical co-operation projects to help develop an integrated national accounts framework with the use of micro-computers, which will enable developing countries to adopt the framework to their analytical and policy making needs. There will also be activities connected with the conclusion of the 1990 round of population censuses, primarily census data processing, data base construction, census evaluation and other post-enumeration activities.

24.50 Countries will be assisted in implementing national household survey programmes aimed at obtaining integrated statistics on a regular basis on a wide range of social and socio-economic topics and at developing national instruments and skills for survey-taking. A major thrust of this activity will be to assist

interested developing countries to plan and implement national survey and data collection activities that will permit them to collect and compile data on nationally and internationally agreed-on quantitative targets to assess social goals in the 1990s. The Central Co-ordinating Unit of the National Household Survey Capability Programme will be gradually integrated into the ongoing technical co-operation programme in statistics.

24.51 In connection with the transfer of technical expertise, statistical classifications adapted to the needs of individual developing countries will be developed along with related instructional materials. In this connection, transfer of knowledge from one developing country to another developing country (technical co-operation among developing countries) will be emphasized.
