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STATISTICAL COMMISSION

REPORT of the NINTH SESSION

(16 APRIL—2 MAY 1956)

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS: TWENTY-SECOND SESSION**

SUPPLEMENT No. 7

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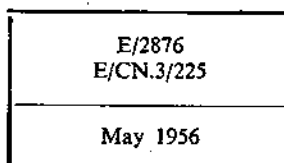
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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.
Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.





STATISTICAL COMMISSION

Report of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council on its
ninth session, held in New York from 16 April to 2 May 1956

I. Organization of the session

1. The Statistical Commission held its ninth session at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 16 April to 2 May 1956.

2. The following representatives and alternates attended the session :

Australia : Mr. S. R. Carver;
Canada : Mr. H. Marshall;
China : Mr. Choh-Ming Li;
Denmark : Mr. H. Larsen; *
Dominican Republic : Mr. K. L. Dipp Gómez; *
France : Mr. R. Dumas; *
India : Mr. P. C. Mahalanobis, Mr. B. Ramamurti (alternate);
Netherlands : Mr. Ph. J. Idenburg;
New Zealand : Mr. G. E. Wood;
Panama : Miss Luisa E. Quesada;
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic : Mr. L. M. Koretsky;
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics : Mr. T. V. Ryabushkin;
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland : Mr. H. Champion, Mr. J. Stafford (alternate);
United States of America : Mr. R. T. Bowman;
Yugoslavia : Mr. D. Vogel'nik, Mr. M. Macura (alternate);

3. Mr. Mircea Gherman, from the Romanian People's Republic, attended the ninth session of the Statistical Commission as an observer.

4. The following representatives of the specialized agencies attended the session :

International Labour Organisation : Mr. R. J. Myers;
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations : Mr. P. L. Sherman, Mr. L. P. D. Gertenbach;
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization : Mr. B. A. Liu;
International Civil Aviation Organization : Mr. A. M. Lester, Mr. F. X. Byrne;
International Monetary Fund : Mr. E. Hicks, Mr. W. Gardner, Mr. P. Høst-Madsen;
World Health Organization : Miss Ruth Puffer.

5. The following representatives of non-governmental organizations were present at the session :

CATEGORY A

International Chamber of Commerce : Mr. G. L. Ridgeway, Mrs. R. Lusardi;
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions : Mr. L. Teper;
World Federation of Trade Unions : Mr. Jan Dessau, Miss E. Kahn.

CATEGORY B AND REGISTER

Catholic International Union for Social Service : Mrs. C. Giroux;
Inter-American Statistical Institute : Mr. H. Marshall, Mr. T. Montenegro;
International Association of Penal Law : Mr. S. Manuila;
International Conference of Catholic Charities : Mr. L. Longarzo;
International Statistical Institute : Mr. S. A. Rice.

6. Mr. Ph. de Seynes, Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs, represented the Secretary-General. The following members of the Secretariat participated :
Statistical Office : Mr. W. R. Leonard, Mr. P. J. Loftus, Mr. F. E. Linder, Mr. W. W. Flexner, Mr. A. Aidenoff, Mr. W. J. Bruce; *Population Branch, Bureau of Social Affairs* : Mr. J. Durand; *Fiscal and Financial Branch, Bureau of Economic Affairs* : Mr. S. Rossen. Mr. B. N. Davies represented the Conference of European Statisticians. Mrs. F. M. Nowak acted as Secretary of the Commission.

Election of Officers of the ninth session

7. The Commission unanimously elected the following officers for the ninth session :

Chairman : Mr. P. C. Mahalanobis (India);
Vice-Chairman : Mr. Dolfe Vogel'nik (Yugoslavia);
Rapporteur : Mr. Ph. J. Idenburg (Netherlands).

8. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, speaking on a point of order, made a statement on the representation of China in the Commission. It was agreed that this statement, together with those made on this subject by the representatives of China, India, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the United

* Alternate, in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions, the member confirmed by the Economic and Social Council being unable to attend.

States of America and Yugoslavia would be recorded in the summary record of the meeting (E/CN.3/SR.125).

II. Agenda

9. The Commission adopted the following agenda for the ninth session :

1. Election of officers of the Commission.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. General survey of developments in international statistics :
 - (a) Development of standards;
 - (b) Statistical sampling;
 - (c) Technical assistance in statistics.
4. Distribution statistics.
5. External trade statistics.
6. Demographic statistics :
 - (a) World population census programme;
 - (b) Vital statistics.
7. Industrial statistics :
 - (a) Statistics of enterprises;
 - (b) Basic industrial statistics.
8. Wholesale price statistics.
9. National accounts.
10. Price and quantity indexes in national accounting.
11. Statistics of capital formation.
12. Statistics of the distribution of income.
13. Balance-of-payments statistics.
14. Statistics of tourism.
15. Classification of government financial accounts.
16. Social statistics :
 - (a) International definition and measurement of standards and levels of living;
 - (b) Family living studies;
 - (c) Housing statistics;
 - (d) Classification of occupations;
 - (e) Educational and cultural statistics;
 - (f) Status of social statistics programme.
17. Matters referred to the Statistical Commission by other international bodies :
 - (a) Regularization of production and employment at a high level in the metal trades;
 - (b) Statistical information for the work of the Commission on International Commodity Trade;
 - (c) Subjects referred by the Population Commission;
 - (d) Conference of Asian Statisticians.
18. Minimum programme of economic and social statistics.
19. Priorities of the Commission's work programme.
20. Report of the ninth session to the Economic and Social Council.

III. Review of international statistics

10. The Statistical Commission discussed the report prepared by the Secretary-General dealing with the development of statistical standards by the United Nations and the specialized agencies during the last two years (E/CN.3/196). The report also contained a summary

of recent developments in the application of statistical sampling to various economic and social studies. A further document (E/CN.3/196/Add.1) described the nature and scope of advisory assistance in statistics provided since 1948 to countries requesting assistance. The document also summarized the views of the Secretary-General and of officers of the specialized agencies on the effectiveness of existing practices and methods in the conduct of advisory services.

11. In reviewing the work of the international agencies in the development and application of statistical standards, the Commission considered that this periodic report¹ continued to serve a useful purpose in orienting the Commission's study of particular subjects. The Commission urged the desirability of emphasizing the importance of evolving integrated systems of national statistics, both for the Commission's own purposes and in the interest of countries which were establishing, strengthening or reorganizing their statistical machinery. Such integration has been thrown into special prominence by the increased use of statistics in discussions of national economic policy and in connexion with national plans for economic and social development. Those developments have made it all the more important that the limited statistical resources of countries should be so organized as to produce the required statistics quickly and economically.

12. The Commission considered that the attention of the international agencies and of countries should be drawn to the importance of improving the quality of statistics. The wider the application, the more necessary it was to make efforts to obtain data of high quality. The preparation of administrative reports and technical notes describing the methods of collection and compilation was considered to be very valuable. It was important to encourage a wide exchange of information by the circulation of such material and through working groups and conferences. Such an exchange was especially important for the discussion and early formulation of concepts and methods relating to new and improved types of statistics which were required by many countries in connexion with their economic programmes.

13. Several members considered that it would be useful if the general review of international statistical developments could in future include summaries of the regular work of the Statistical Office and other international offices in addition to summaries of the work on the development and application of standards. The summaries should include also descriptions of the statistical work of various sub-committees and working parties of the technical committees of regional economic commissions and other bodies. It was not intended that the request should result in lengthy documentation; the Commission thought that the secretariats of the international offices could find an appropriate method of presenting brief summaries so as to give the Commission at subsequent sessions a more comprehensive picture of statistical activity. That would help to ensure the necessary co-ordination of work programmes, although it was

¹ Previous reports submitted to the Statistical Commission on this subject are contained in documents E/CN.3/148 and E/CN.3/170.

recognized that most of the problems of co-ordination were ones that required continuous consultation among the interested offices. Such consultations were necessary to bring about an integrated approach to technical problems and to minimize demands upon national statistical offices.

14. The Commission also considered that it would be useful if the Secretary-General, in preparing the next report on statistical developments, could give summary descriptions of the series especially compiled by the international agencies—index numbers, regional and world totals, and the like. It would be useful for the Commission to have a synoptic view of the new series developed in recent years. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to examine the standard size intervals for the publication of statistical series adopted by the International Statistical Institute at its meeting in Prague in 1938 and to report on the subject at the tenth session.

15. There was some discussion about the extent to which international standards could be established for the guidance of countries in improving their national statistics. It was recognized that national requirements would take precedence. Nevertheless, it was possible to develop national and regional standards within the framework of international recommendations. Thus comparability would be attained without the danger of recommending to countries inappropriate standards and without requiring countries to make expensive adaptations and re-compilations of their national statistics for international comparisons only.

16. The Commission noted that much of the information included under social statistics was of basic importance in the formulation of economic policy in under-developed countries. While the development of population and economic statistics had made considerable progress from the international point of view in the past ten years, the Commission considered that developments in social statistics were not commensurate with the importance of the subject and the urgency with which many countries viewed the underlying problems. The Commission consequently expressed the opinion that in its future work high priority should be given to the development and improvement of social statistics.

17. The establishment of regional working groups and statistical meetings had proved to be a very valuable means of achieving general standards, of developing, within the framework of such standards, the specific adjustments and elaborations corresponding to the special needs of different regions and of promoting the interchange of statistical experience of the countries concerned. The Commission expressed the hope that regional statistical groups and meetings would continue to fulfil their valuable function in developing international statistics.

18. The Statistical Commission directed special attention to the documents mentioned in the Secretary-General's paper on the methods employed by the international agencies in providing advisory services to countries (E/CN.3/196/Add.1). The Commission noted the scope and extent of the work since 1948. It felt that in general the training and educational activities of the agencies and the preparation of technical manuals and handbooks were serving very useful purposes in assisting countries

to improve their national statistics. The Commission considered that the preparation of technical manuals and handbooks should be continued but believed that training and education arrangements might be improved by the creation of more national training centres where basic statistical training would be available for the intermediate levels of staff.

19. As regards direct assistance to countries provided by statistical experts, however, the Commission was of the opinion that some improvements in the administrative arrangements would result in greater efficiency and a more useful service. The Commission recalled that at its fourth session, in 1949, it had recommended, and the Economic and Social Council had adopted, a resolution requesting "the creation of a field service to provide technicians to visit and advise countries or groups of neighbouring countries which request assistance in the field of statistics" (Council resolution 231 D (IX)). For various reasons, connected with the administrative requirements of what had become the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, it had not been possible to give effect to that resolution in the way originally envisaged by the Commission and the Council.

20. The Commission therefore examined again the question of the creation of a field service referred to in Economic and Social Council resolution 231 D (IX) and in particular the question of appointing, to supplement existing arrangements, a small number of statistical field technicians, who would be specially trained and have long-term contracts. In the past, it had been necessary to appoint expert statisticians—three-fourths of them outside the existing statistical secretariat of the United Nations—for fixed terms of one or two years. That method presented very difficult conditions for recruitment; long delays were common, with the result that countries were dissatisfied, the anticipated work programme was not undertaken on schedule, and new budgetary authorizations and legislative changes were sometimes required. Perhaps more important, in the long run, was the fact that such *ad hoc* arrangements resulted in the loss of valuable operational experience.

21. The Commission attached great importance to those factors. If it were possible to establish an advisory service, composed of statistical officers with long-term contracts, the Commission would see great advantage in doing so. Such a system could obviously not replace the present system, since many countries required expert services for a period of a year or more. Other countries, however, might need only a few weeks' or a few months' advice at any given time. The field officers could provide that short-term *ad hoc* service and at the same time assist in the long-term development of statistical services in a group of countries by advising on the long-term programme, instituting and assisting in national statistical training activities and helping to select statisticians from the national services who would benefit most greatly from education or training abroad. The availability of the field officer to advise a country on the exact nature of the expert services requested, in the light of the long-term needs and capacities of the country, would be of great importance. It frequently happens that the original request for assistance is not

clearly formulated and that the necessary preparations for the expert's work are not undertaken. Sometimes, legislative and budgetary actions are required in advance of the expert's work and in other cases statistical officers of the national government must be available both to carry on the actual work and to train personnel. The lack of suitably trained staff at the national level has meant, in some cases, that no long-run objective has been attained. The Commission therefore felt that the expert's responsibility should not be limited to his assigned task in the national statistical offices but should also include the training of suitable personnel so that the work of the expert might be followed up in the country after his assignment was completed.

22. The Statistical Commission therefore decided to recommend that the Secretary-General should make the necessary arrangements to appoint or designate statistical field officers who would, under the direction of the Statistical Office of the United Nations, carry on the advisory functions outlined above. Initially, at least, the number might be limited to three or four officers. They might be stationed at the sites of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East and of the Economic Commission for Latin America and in the Middle East. While they would be attached to the United Nations and be concerned with the subjects of statistics which were the direct responsibility of the Statistical Office of the United Nations, they should be available to deal with statistical matters of direct concern to the specialized agencies if the latter should so request. The Statistical Commission hoped that that could be done to the maximum extent since such consultation might constitute a substantial influence towards the integration of national statistics, a subject of great interest and importance to the Commission.

23. The Commission also discussed the fellowship programme in statistics provided under the programmes of technical assistance. Several of the members had had direct experience in receiving fellows and in training them. It was clear that many fellows had benefited greatly by their training. In other cases, however, because of language difficulties or lack of sufficient previous statistical education, the results had been less favourable. The Commission wished to draw the attention of the Secretary-General to the need for greater efforts to select fellows who could benefit adequately from the opportunities offered and whose services were likely to be used in a suitable manner in their own countries after the completion of the fellowships. It would also be desirable, in the opinion of the Commission, to institute arrangements whereby properly qualified candidates could be given fellowships for one or two years or for whatever period might be required in the circumstances.

24. The representative of the Secretary-General drew attention to the fact that a statement of the financial implications involved, including those for the appointment or designation of field officers of the Statistical Office of the United Nations, would be submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-second session.

25. The Commission adopted the following resolution; however, the representatives of the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom and the United States of America

reserved their position until the statement of financial implications was submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-second session :

Resolution 1 (IX)

The Statistical Commission,

Recognizing the increasing importance of assisting the Governments of Member States in the development and improvement of their statistical services,

Aware of the need for more adequate and more systematic arrangements for providing advisory statistical services to countries requesting such services,

Recommends that statistical assistance to such countries be strengthened and systematized by the provision of technicians of the Statistical Office of the United Nations who shall be available, at the request of Member States :

(a) To help in formulating requests for the kind of assistance best suited to the needs of the countries;

(b) To provide short-term assistance in the most expeditious way;

(c) To consult with Governments on the preparatory arrangements necessary to ensure the success of advisory services provided by experts;

(d) To assist in the establishment and conduct of education and training activities in collaboration, where appropriate, with the specialized agencies concerned;

(e) At the request of specialized agencies concerned, to render advisory services to Governments on statistical matters of direct concern to such agencies;

2. *Recommends* also that the Secretary-General study the most suitable means by which effect can be given to this resolution in order that entitled Governments requiring assistance may begin to obtain improved advisory services in time to arrange their 1957 programmes in the field of statistics;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Economic and Social Council as soon as possible on the means by which the purposes of this resolution may be achieved.

IV. Economic statistics

A. DISTRIBUTION STATISTICS

26. At its eighth session, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to continue work on the subject of statistics of distribution in co-operation with the International Chamber of Commerce, giving particular attention to the development of basic concepts and definitions suitable for use internationally. Following the completion by the Secretary-General of a survey of national practices with draft proposals for a programme of distribution statistics, the Secretary-General convened an Expert Group on Distribution Statistics. The report of the Expert Group (E/CN.3/L.36) set out suggestions for a programme of statistics of the wholesale, retail and related service trades, including proposals as to the periodicity and coverage of those statistics, the items of data to be sought and definitions and classifications. Comments on the report were obtained from the Governments of many Member States, from the Working

Group on Distribution Statistics of the Conference of European Statisticians, from the International Chamber of Commerce and from other interested international bodies, and the suggestions of the Expert Group were revised in the light of those comments. In addition to the report of the Expert Group, the Commission had before it a summary of the comments on the report (E/CN.3/L.36/Add.2), the modified suggestions as to a programme of distribution statistics (E/CN.3/195) and a summary of country experience in that field of statistics (E/CN.3/L.36/Add.1).

27. The Commission made a number of suggestions concerning the recommendations of the Expert Group. The Commission considered that, with appropriate modifications, the report would provide a valuable guide for countries seeking to develop programmes of statistics with respect to the wholesale, retail and related service trades. The recommendations indicated the distribution statistics that countries were likely to find most useful and practicable to gather; and they constituted a basis for the improvement of national statistics and for international comparability in that field. It was recognized that complete statistical coverage of the distributive sector of the economy would require the collection of considerable and, in some cases, difficult data. Many Member States would therefore be able to carry out the suggested programme only gradually, as their resources permitted, although data on distribution were valuable for such purposes as assessing the role and activities of that sector of the economy and the flow of goods to consumers. It was also recognized that in some statistically less advanced countries, higher priority might have to be given to other types of statistics such as production data. Some governments may find it more practicable to collect data on retail and wholesale trade alone before attempting to collect data on the related service trades. The limited experience of many countries in that field and the diversity of institutional arrangements (e.g., as between countries and as between distributive enterprises within a country) made it desirable that, at the current stage, a number of the recommendations should be of a somewhat tentative nature. Flexibility was particularly needed as to the periodicity of the collection of comprehensive distributive statistics, the coverage of such inquiries, the priorities assigned to items of data in comprehensive and annual inquiries and the definition of the reporting unit.

28. In the course of the discussion, the following additional points were made concerning the suggestions set out in the Secretary-General's memorandum (E/CN.3/195) and the report of the Expert Group (E/CN.3/L.36):

(a) Though it is considered desirable to have comprehensive statistics of distribution once every five years, it may not be feasible for a number of countries to gather such statistics more often than once every ten years.

(b) It may be necessary for some countries to make distinctions in priority, periodicity and items of data between inquiries into wholesale and retail trade and those into related service trades. Data with respect to the service trades may for many countries have to be given a lower priority and be gathered less frequently and through different methods than data for the wholesale

and retail trades. Household enterprises, which are of importance in the less developed countries, may also require special consideration in the collection of distribution data.

(c) Some kinds of data may more appropriately be gathered for the enterprise rather than for the establishment.

(d) Though the suggestions regarding tabulations of items of data by establishment characteristics which were included in annex III of document E/CN.3/195 would provide useful guidance to countries, it is not intended that they should be promulgated as international recommendations at the current stage.

(e) In circumstances in which a complete count is not feasible or not likely to be accurate enough, probability sampling may be utilized to advantage in the collection of distribution statistics monthly or quarterly and annually and in the collection of those data once every five or ten years. Such circumstances will arise, for example, when a complete count is too time-consuming or costly, when distribution statistics are not required to be distributed by locational characteristics, or for items of data that require more careful collection than is possible in a large-scale operation.

(f) It would be valuable to have an analysis of country practices and experience with respect to distribution statistics, including a description of the use of statutory powers or voluntary co-operation, in the light of the Commission's suggestions for this field of statistics.

(g) Revisions in the definitions and classifications are needed with regard to the groups of the *International Standard Industrial Classification* for the distributive trades. These revisions will form part of the work on the *International Standard Industrial Classification* dealt with in paragraphs 48 and 49 below.

29. The Commission adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 2 (IX)

The Statistical Commission,

Recognizing the importance of the development of distribution statistics, since distribution activities account for a significant proportion of the aggregate of economic activity in all countries and a high proportion in some,

1. *Invites* the Secretary-General to inform the Governments of Member States of the Commission's discussion of this subject and to draw their attention to the following conclusions reached by the Commission:

(a) The programme for the collection of statistics of distribution set out in the annex to the Commission's report on its ninth session embodies the decisions of the Commission at its ninth session and has been approved by the Commission for the technical guidance of Member States undertaking work in this field. It is recognized that Member States may find it necessary to make modifications in this programme to meet national requirements;

(b) It is desirable that information be given from time to time on the reliability of the results of distribution inquiries by furnishing, for example,

(i) Descriptions of coverage, definitions and methods of collection,

(ii) Comparisons with related data from other sources, and

(iii) Measures of sampling errors;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General :

(a) To prepare a comparative study of national practices and of concepts and definitions in the field of distribution statistics;

(b) To continue work on statistics of distribution in co-operation with the International Chamber of Commerce, taking account of the views expressed by the Commission at its ninth session.

B. EXTERNAL TRADE STATISTICS

30. The Commission reviewed the progress made in the field of external trade statistics. It noted that as a result of the co-operation of Member States, data for about 80 per cent by value of world trade were currently available on the basis of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), the use of which was recommended by the Economic and Social Council at the suggestion of the Commission. The fact that machine methods now made it possible for countries to provide detailed data according to the SITC without substantially increasing the burden on the compiling offices had played an important role in this development, but equally important was the interest which Member States had shown in being able to compare their external trade with that of other countries, and in ascertaining their share in specific categories of world trade. The recommendation by the Commission and Council that exports be valued at the f.o.b. transaction value and imports at the c.i.f. transaction value had specified the method of valuation and had encouraged countries whose import statistics were based on the f.o.b. valuation to estimate c.i.f. data for their total imports. But application of the recommendations to the detailed import statistics of those countries would involve either changing customs procedures or putting added burdens on importers and had therefore met with difficulties.

31. A study made by the Secretary-General at the request of the Commission at its eighth session indicated that, for similar reasons, a number of countries would experience difficulty in classifying their imports by a single uniform system of countries of provenance. Progress in securing a more uniform statistical treatment of transit trade and re-exports was closely related to the problem of obtaining agreement as to the classification of imports by countries of provenance and that, it was felt, must await future developments in the methods used in many countries.

32. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 3 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Invites the Secretary-General to continue to explore the possibilities of improving the international comparability of trade-by-country statistics, in consultation with Member

States and the specialized agencies and, if necessary, with the assistance of an expert group.

33. At its seventh session the Commission expressed the view that the usefulness of the statistics of external trade of countries which maintained multiple exchange rate systems would be increased if they compiled two sets of value statistics, one for use in international comparisons, the other for use in comparisons with other national data expressed in monetary terms.² As some countries were experiencing difficulty in following this recommendation, the Commission wished further to clarify the methods that might be used.

34. The Commission recognized that there was no difference in kind between the effects of multiple exchange rate systems, under which heading exchange certificate systems and currencies subject to violent fluctuation on the exchange market might also be classed, and the effects of other forms of duties, taxes and subsidies affecting commodities imported and exported. It was felt, however, that multiple exchange rate systems provided the possibility of imposing, and had in fact been used to impose, taxes or subsidies of much greater size than other forms of trade tax or subsidy. The Commission considered that special treatment of multiple exchange rate systems was further justified by the fact that they constituted a tax or subsidy applied to the exchange transaction, in such a way as to make the unit of accounting ambiguous, whereas taxes and subsidies applied to the production, purchase, sale or movement of the goods were statistically more manageable.

35. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 4 (IX)

The Statistical Commission,

Aware of problems of interpreting trade statistics in countries having multiple exchange rate systems, and wishing to expand and clarify the recommendation made at its seventh session,²

Recommends that countries in which multiple exchange rate systems are in force compile two sets of figures for the value of their external trade :

(a) Data for use in international comparison expressed in dollars, sterling, or some other currency not complicated by multiple exchange rate systems, or in an artificial currency having a fixed relation to such a currency. These data should represent the transaction value in foreign exchange of the country's exports and imports. Hence, they should represent the sum of transaction values in foreign currencies converted, into the unit chosen for reporting, at the cross rates generally recognized throughout the world. Should some transactions be reported in national currency or in another multiple currency, these should be converted into the chosen unit of account at the rate of exchange that would represent their transaction value in foreign exchange. Since they represent transaction values these data are, in the case of exports, gross of export duties but net of export

² *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifteenth Session, Supplement No. 5, para. 36.*

subsidies and, in the case of imports, net of import duties but gross of import subsidies;

(b) Data expressed in national currency for use in comparisons with other national data expressed in monetary terms. These data should represent the amount in national currency received by exporters or paid by importers for the transaction.

36. Because of the similarity of the effects of multiple exchange rate systems to the effects of other trade taxes and subsidies it may, for some purposes, be desirable to take account of some of the other taxes and subsidies, where they are of comparable size, in the value figures for internal comparison described in sub-paragraph (b) of the above resolution. That and other related questions should be the subject of further work specifically directed towards the methods of integrating external transactions into systems of national accounts and other data expressed in national currency.

37. The Commission noted the information addressed to it by the Third Inter-American Statistical Conference held by the Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI), that American countries were experiencing difficulty in excluding second-hand ships and aircraft from the body of their trade statistics as recommended by the Commission at its eighth session.³ The Commission expressed the opinion that when this difficulty existed, countries might include second-hand ships and aircraft in their statistics in such a way that they could be distinguished from new ships and aircraft and that, if such distinction was difficult, its wishes would also be met by a footnote to the relevant commodity headings stating that second-hand, as well as new, ships and aircraft were included in the heading.

38. The Commission agreed, first, that the inward and outward movement of developed motion picture film, musical recordings, etc., rented abroad for exhibition, performance, etc., should be excluded from the external trade statistics and that the resulting payments should be considered as payments for services; secondly, that goods moving in exchange for other goods under barter arrangements should, where necessary, be evaluated by means of a theoretical transaction value.

39. At its eighth session the Commission had recommended that wherever the size of fish landings was of importance and wherever it was possible to do so, countries should include in their import statistics fish landed directly from foreign fishing craft and include in their export statistics fish landed abroad by domestic fishing craft, and had asked that a proposal be formulated to extend the recommendation to other marine products.

40. The Commission adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 5 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Endorses the proposals of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations that:

(a) Wherever they are important, marine products of all kinds be included in national import statistics when

landed directly from a foreign fishing, hunting or gathering craft⁴ and be included in national export statistics when landed abroad directly from a domestic fishing, hunting or gathering craft;⁴

(b) The same treatment be accorded, wherever they are important, to the result of processing marine products on board ships at (or en route from) the fishing, hunting or gathering grounds whether the process takes place on the original fishing, hunting or gathering craft or in another craft to which the goods were transferred at sea.

41. The Commission noted that a number of countries had followed, and additional countries were planning to follow, its recommendation that sub-indexes of indexes of quantum and unit value be compiled on the basis of the "sections" of the SITC. The Commission noted that the Secretary-General planned to invite the attention of Member States whose exports were largely composed of primary commodities to the informative value of the regular presentation of data on the principal components of their quantum and unit value indexes for aggregate exports. Such presentations would consist principally of time series showing the effect on the aggregate indexes of the behaviour of each principal export commodity. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to present a brief report on this matter to the Commission at its tenth session.

42. In connexion with the suggestion made by the Commission at its sixth session that the customs area of each country as defined by the country itself should constitute the basis upon which the trading partners of each country compiled their statistics of trade-by-countries, the Commission noted the progress made by the Secretary-General in listing national definitions of customs areas and recommended that, in the list, the following definition of customs area be applied where possible

"A customs area is, for statistical purposes, taken to mean the area in respect of which a single customs administration exercises control over the entry and/or exit of goods. When two or more States have a customs union and compile statistics for the area as a whole, it may be considered as a single customs area."

43. The Commission suggested that the Secretary-General enumerate free ports and free zones, indicating, where possible, the magnitude of the trade of each and the extent to which that trade was included in national statistics of merchandise imports or exports.

C. STATISTICS OF ENTERPRISES

44. The Commission discussed a memorandum prepared by the Secretary-General on national practices in the collection and use of statistics of business enterprises (E/CN.3/202). The memorandum described statistics on the size and structure of the population of enterprises, the changes therein and the interrelationships between establishments and their parent enterprises. The memorandum also covered the data abstracted from the balance-sheet and profit-and-loss accounts of

⁴ The description of craft should, where appropriate, be taken to include mother-ships and other vessels which take part in the fish catching, fish processing and fish transportation and related operations.

³ *Ibid.*, Eighteenth Session, Supplement No. 5, para. 15.

enterprises. It was noteworthy that increasing interest was being taken in the data obtainable from balance-sheets and profit-and-loss accounts because of their use in measuring liquidity, saving and investment, flow of funds and the contribution to the national income for particular sectors of the economy. The Commission also noted the relationship of these data to the work of the International Monetary Fund on money, banking and financial statistics. The Fund prepares balance-sheets for the monetary sector and corresponding data on the cash accounts of governments. It hopes to extend this work to other financial institutions and, in so far as possible, to business enterprises and households. The International Chamber of Commerce was also engaged in related work in its studies of the collection of data on operating costs from retail and wholesale enterprises.

45. The Commission felt that research should be continued on statistics of business enterprises and of their balance-sheet and profit-and-loss accounts. It would be useful to develop guiding principles as to what items of data should be sought and how they might be organized into statements for the industrial, distributive, financial and other sectors of the economy, as a number of countries had found it necessary to work in this difficult field of statistics. Among other uses, the data were valuable in studies of the problems of economic development and monetary conditions. In the research, account should be taken of the need for data describing the financial and managerial interrelations of business enterprises. In order to formulate useful and practicable suggestions as to statistics of enterprises, it would be necessary, at an appropriate stage, to have the assistance of a group of experts and to consult with the Governments of Member States.

46. The Commission considered that study was also needed with regard to the reporting unit utilized in various fields of statistics. For the most part, censuses of industry and distribution were based upon the establishment as the unit of reporting, although the use of this unit involved difficulty in the collection of statistics of capital investment and, in some cases, of data on the value of inventories. On the other hand, in financial statistics and other series obtained from accounting summaries, the enterprise was generally utilized as the reporting unit. There were many unsolved problems in reconciling the need for statistics analysed by location and by kind of industry with the practical difficulties of utilizing the establishment as the reporting unit. There were also the problems of relating data obtained for the establishment with data collected for the enterprise. Similar difficulties arose in the construction of short-term indicators. Current reporting of data for such indicators often relied upon the bench-mark data provided by the censuses of industry and distribution and was frequently based on the enterprise or on broad industrial divisions of the enterprise. The enterprise was utilized because it might be the only available basis for monthly or quarterly reporting or might promote essential speed in reporting. The Commission felt that the choice of the reporting unit was, to a large extent, dependent upon the industrial organization of the country, the purpose for which the information was collected and the nature of the information required. A study from the point of view of those

considerations of the reporting unit utilized in different fields of statistics might clarify a number of the problems mentioned above.

47. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 6 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Invites the Secretary-General :

1. To investigate the experience of Member States with respect to the reporting unit (i.e., the unit for which data are reported) utilized in the collection of different statistical series with a view to ascertaining the series for which the establishment on the one hand or the enterprise on the other may be the most appropriate unit;
2. To develop suggestions as to programmes, concepts and definitions for statistics of the number, characteristics and activities of business enterprises;
3. To develop suggestions, taking account of the related work of the International Monetary Fund, as to items of data to be abstracted from the balance-sheet and profit-and-loss accounts of business enterprises and their definition, classification and organization into statements for such purposes as measuring the liquidity, saving and investment and flow of funds for sectors of the economy;
4. To maintain close consultation with the Governments of Member States on the work in this field, with the aid of experts where necessary.

D. INTERNATIONAL STANDARD INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION OF ALL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

48. The Commission discussed the *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities*⁵ and took note of paragraphs 83 and 84 of document E/CN.3/196, which referred to the need for redefinition and subdivision of certain items of the classification. It noted that numerical and alphabetical indexes to the international classification scheme had been issued. That work, as well as the work on industrial and distribution statistics and on the 1960 world population census programme, had indicated the need for revising and clarifying the coverage of some groups of the *International Standard Industrial Classification* while preserving the basic principles and structure of the Classification.

49. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 7 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Invites the Secretary-General :

1. To investigate changes needed in the *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities*⁵ in the light of national needs and practices ;
2. To consult with the Governments of Member States and other interested bodies on proposed changes in the *International Standard Industrial Classification* ;

⁵ Statistical papers, Series M, No. 4, 1949.

3. To report to the Commission on this subject at its tenth session.

E. BASIC INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS

50. The Commission considered a progress report (E/CN.3/203) prepared by the Secretary-General concerning annual and less frequent statistical inquiries into establishments engaged in mining, manufacturing, construction and the production of gas and electricity. The surveys taken throughout the world in the past ten years had been analysed with particular reference to the recommendations that the Commission had made at its sixth session on the items of data to be sought and the taking of comprehensive inquiries in that field around 1952. It was noteworthy that more than forty Governments had made basic industrial inquiries since the sixth session of the Commission, taking account fully or partly of the Commission's recommendations. Governments were finding it difficult to gather some of the items of data recommended by the Commission, particularly for establishments engaged in construction and the production of gas and electricity. In addition, a need had become apparent for certain basic industrial statistics not included in the recommendations. Moreover a number of countries were preparing to take comprehensive industrial inquiries or censuses in the next few years.

51. The Commission considered that it would be desirable to review its recommendations on basic industrial statistics in the light of national practices and recent developments. It felt that most Member States would welcome a review of basic industrial statistics, as a number of them were engaged in active work in that field. Though the Commission held the view that it was desirable that comprehensive industrial inquiries be made at roughly the same time internationally, some Governments face the practical problems of relating the time of their censuses of industry to censuses in other fields. The Commission concluded that the question might therefore be considered at its tenth session, after information had been gathered on national programmes.

52. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 8 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General :

1. To analyse recent national practices and experiences with respect to basic industrial inquiries in the light of the recommendations of the Statistical Commission concerning these statistics;

2. To consult with Member States, through regional meetings and other means, with regard to the revisions that are required in the recommendations of the Statistical Commission concerning basic industrial statistics and with regard to a world-wide industrial census programme;

3. To report to the Statistical Commission on this subject at its tenth session.

F. WHOLESALE PRICE STATISTICS

53. The Commission discussed the subject of index numbers of wholesale prices on the basis of a memorandum

by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/204). The memorandum had been prepared in response to the Commission's request at its eighth session that it be kept informed of the development of work on those indexes in the different countries. The memorandum contained a description of new index numbers issued by four Governments using different systems of indexes, described as the traditional system, the net sector system and the gross sector system. In addition, the character and uses of the systems were analysed, together with some of the problems which they posed in the matter of collection, compilation and weighting of basic data. The Commission noted that for purposes of economic analysis, price data were required for items additional to those normally included in wholesale price indexes, namely, retail prices and prices of certain services which were important in the activities of producers. It noted also that all new index numbers were directed towards providing price information as to goods supplied or utilized by particular segments of the economy and that the new indexes made the difficulties of collecting comparable and representative prices more apparent.

54. Following an exchange of views as to the different systems of index numbers of wholesale prices, the Commission felt that it was unlikely that any single scheme of index numbers could be recommended for use internationally. The choice that Governments made as to the system of index numbers of wholesale prices would depend on the use of price data that they wished to emphasize and the practical problems of collecting and compiling price series that arose. There was general agreement, however, that sector index numbers of wholesale prices were most useful for economic analysis. In choosing among the various systems of index numbers, Governments would find it helpful to have information as to the characteristics of the different systems and their relative uses and practical difficulties. Continued research on systems of index numbers of wholesale prices should therefore be directed towards providing such information. Irrespective of the system of index numbers of wholesale prices adopted by Governments, a wide range of price information for individual commodities was required; and this involved a number of practical difficulties in the collection and compilation of comparable and representative price series. Some of the difficulties involved the collection of comparable price data for goods that were highly fabricated or that changed in quality or supply, seasonally or otherwise. Other problems of collection were due to the large number of price series for which information must be gathered. It would be very useful if these problems could be given considerable attention in future work on wholesale price statistics. It was thought advisable to defer work on the pricing of services until the difficulties with regard to the pricing of commodities had been considered more fully.

55. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 9 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General :

1. To continue the study of systems of index numbers of wholesale prices and of the most appropriate and useful sector and group indexes;

2. To develop suggestions for the collection of comparable price series for goods which are highly fabricated or which are subject to wide changes in quality or supply, seasonally or otherwise and for the collection of representative prices through probability sampling or other means;

3. To inquire, in co-operation with the International Labour Office, into concepts and methods for general-purpose price indexes for sales at retail;

4. To maintain close consultation with the Governments of Member States in work in this field, with the aid of experts, where necessary, to keep Governments informed of developments and to report to the Commission at its tenth session.

G. BALANCE-OF-PAYMENTS STATISTICS

56. The Commission heard a report by the representative of the International Monetary Fund on progress in the development of balance-of-payments statistics (E/CN.3/222). It was informed of the new publication plan introduced with volume 5 of the *Balance-of-Payments Yearbook*, under which a base volume would be issued periodically giving revised data for several years followed by two or three supplementary volumes covering new and current data. By that system it was possible to present in the *Yearbooks* a fairly complete historical record as well as preliminary data for recent periods.

57. The Commission was also informed that representatives of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) had met recently at United Nations Headquarters to review the problems that arose in integrating the *Balance-of-Payments Manual* issued by the Fund with the United Nations and OEEC systems of national accounts at the points at which they were inter-connected. It noted with satisfaction that the meeting had resulted in recommendations that would remove most of the inconsistencies among the three systems, and that the efforts to reconcile the remaining differences would be continued.

58. Note was taken of the fact that the *Balance-of-Payments Manual* was currently being revised. The time-schedule for the revision suggested in the progress report by the Fund to the eighth session of the Commission had been set back so that the revision of the *Manual* could take account of the conclusions reached at the meetings referred to in paragraph 57 above.

59. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the Fund was continuing its intensive training programme in balance-of-payments techniques for statisticians of Member States engaged in that work.

60. The Commission expressed appreciation of the work that was being carried on in balance-of-payments statistics and requested that it be kept informed of subsequent activities in that field.

V. National accounts

A. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

61. The Commission had before it a memorandum by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/205) which contained an account of the work done since its eighth session in the general field of national accounts. It reviewed the progress achieved in implementing the standards proposed in the report *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables*,⁶ examining briefly the steps taken to circulate the report, to co-ordinate the proposed standard concepts and classifications with related international standards, and to assist countries in adopting a system of national accounts along the lines of the report. In an appendix to the report the general content of the comments from Governments and interested international organizations on the proposed standards was discussed.

62. The Commission noted that meetings had recently taken place in New York between officers of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) with a view to removing inconsistencies between the *Balance-of-Payments Manual* and the United Nations and OEEC systems of accounts. Considerable progress had been made in formulating proposals for further co-ordination of the concepts and classifications of the three systems and in reaching agreement on their common amendments at certain points. The Commission expressed its appreciation of the progress made in that work and urged that co-operation between the various interested international organizations in that field should be continued to ensure the consistency of international recommendations.

63. In order to establish a regular system for the reporting of national accounts data within a standard framework, a draft questionnaire had been prepared by the Secretary-General. The questionnaire had been circulated to countries for comments in 1955 and it was expected that a final version would be ready for distribution in the summer of 1956. The Commission considered the introduction of the questionnaire to be an important step towards the achievement of greater comparability and understanding of the national income data published by the United Nations. It also felt that special attention should be directed towards supplementing the published data by the inclusion, for each country, of details on concepts and methods of estimation employed and by indicating, where appropriate, any other limitations on comparability.

64. The Commission noted that a provisional manual on methods of estimating national income had been published in 1955. The handbook had been prepared at the request of the Commission primarily as a practical aid in the estimation of national income statistics, with the needs of the less developed countries specially in mind. As a basis for the exposition of methods, the conceptual foundations proposed in *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables* had been adopted. The manual had been circulated to Governments for

⁶ Studies in methods, Series F, No. 2. United Nations publication, Sales No. : 1952.XVII.4.

B. CAPITAL FORMATION

comments under the title *Methods of National Income Estimation*.⁷ The Commission felt that the preparation of a final version should be undertaken as soon as practicable and that in the revision special attention should be given to methods of estimating such difficult items as capital formation, capital consumption and personal saving. It was stressed that at the current stage of development special emphasis should be placed on ensuring the compilation of reliable estimates by countries; however, work should be continued on refinement of the basic accounting concepts.

65. With reference to future work in the development of standards for national accounting systems, the Commission noted that as regards the United Nations system as described in *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables*, no major changes should be made at the current stage. At the same time, several minor modifications were desirable to maintain and improve comparability with related international standards and to take account of clarifications and adjustments sought by Governments and other international organizations. Those minor changes should be explored by the Secretariat and recommendations made to the Commission.

66. It was also necessary, in the opinion of the Commission, that the Secretary-General should give special attention to the needs of under-developed countries. Appropriate systems of national accounts for those countries would emphasize particular sectors and items at different stages of economic development.

67. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 10 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General to formulate specific proposals for the amendment of the existing text of *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables*, to circulate these proposals for comments to the Governments of Member States and to report to the Commission at its tenth session.

68. In addition, the Commission felt that the Secretary-General should continue to study other existing systems of national accounts, especially those employed in countries with planned economies, in order to set forth the points of correspondence and of difference.

69. The Commission therefore adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 11 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General to prepare a study of the points of correspondence between the system of accounts employed in countries with planned economies and that set out in the report *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables*, and to report to the Commission at its tenth session.

70. The Commission had before it a memorandum (E/CN.3/207) describing the progress made with respect to various aspects of capital formation statistics since its eighth session. The report was divided into two parts. The first part concerned the experiences obtained by countries in the application of the present international standards and listed some of the major conceptual differences remaining among national estimates. The conclusions reached by the Working Group on Statistics of Capital Formation, Input-Output Tables and Savings established by the Conference of European Statisticians were particularly noted since the Group had discussed in detail the experiences of European countries in applying the standards. The second part of the report reviewed methods of estimating capital formation on the basis of an analysis of available estimates.

71. The Commission took note of the work done in this field since its eighth session and requested the Secretary-General to continue to collect information on the experience of the Governments of Member States in applying the standard definitions and classifications and also on the methods of estimation employed. It felt that major emphasis should, however, be given to assisting countries to improve their basic data and methods of estimation as a means of ensuring more reliable and comparable statistics for national as well as international purposes.

72. On the subject of the relative merits of different methods of estimation the Commission observed that the expenditure approach had not been especially stressed in the memorandum submitted for its consideration. It was pointed out in this connexion that the expenditure approach held a number of advantages over the production approach. The former method facilitated the compilation of classifications of gross capital formation by industry of use, it resulted in data which were more consistent with the figures obtained for trading profits, and it lent itself readily to the collection of short-period information and the preparation of forecasts of capital expenditure. On the other hand, the production approach frequently involved difficulties in the separation of exports of capital goods from domestic purchases and in the elimination of that part of the total supply devoted to normal repairs and maintenance. The production approach was, however, particularly useful in obtaining an over-all check on the aggregate and also in determining its composition.

73. The Commission was also informed of the progress achieved by the Working Group of the Conference of European Statisticians. It was noted that a programme for the collection of statistics of aggregate stocks had been adopted and that a similar programme on gross fixed capital formation would be considered shortly by the Conference. The programme includes a proposed list of the statistics which countries members of the Conference would be asked to collect and make available at specific intervals, together with a set of standard definitions (with some elements of flexibility) to which the data should conform. These definitions and classifications were largely identical with the recommendations contained

⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1955.XVII.5.

in the report *Concepts and Definitions of Capital Formation*.⁸ The Working Group had also discussed the subject of capital consumption but had not reached agreement on a statistical programme in that field. It had recommended further study by the Conference secretariat of conceptual problems and also of existing differences between national practices. The Conference was also making a separate study of the problems and possibilities of short-period surveys of current and prospective capital outlays in connexion with its work on indicators of short-term economic changes. The Commission proposed that a similar programme for the collection of statistics of capital formation and of capital consumption should be prepared by the Secretary-General with special attention to the needs of the under-developed countries.

74. In the light of the conclusions of the Working Group and other information available on the experience of countries in applying the standard concepts and classifications, the Commission thought it would be advisable for certain modifications to be made in the report *Concepts and Definitions of Capital Formation*. In order to maintain consistency, those modifications should be considered in conjunction with proposals for amendment of the report *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables*.⁹ It was urged that in revising the document, particular attention should be devoted to (a) the special conceptual problems of the under-developed countries—e.g., the treatment of capital formation undertaken as voluntary work, (b) the problem of the derivation of rates of capital consumption for specific assets, and (c) the need for additional classifications of gross capital formation—e.g., by capital goods and consumption goods industries.

75. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 12 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General :

1. To continue to collect information on the experiences obtained by the Governments of Member States in applying the standard definitions and classifications of capital formation, and to formulate proposals for revising the report *Concepts and Definitions of Capital Formation*;⁸

2. To continue to collect information on methods of estimation and to prepare a programme for the collection and presentation of statistics of capital formation and of capital consumption, giving particular attention to the needs of under-developed countries;

3. To submit a report on the subject to the Commission at its tenth session.

C. PRICE AND QUANTITY INDEXES
IN NATIONAL ACCOUNTING

76. At its eighth session the Commission requested the Secretary-General to continue the study of developments

⁸ Studies in methods, Series F, No. 3. United Nations publication, Sales No. : 1953.XVII.6.

⁹ Studies in methods, Series F, No. 2. United Nations publication, Sales No. : 1952.XVII.4.

in the forms and methods governing the estimation of national product and expenditure in constant prices. The Commission had before it a memorandum by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/206) which summarized the work of the Secretary-General on this subject since its eighth session. The memorandum discussed briefly problems of concept and classification affecting the construction of price and quantity indexes within the framework of an accounting system, and then described the principal methods of measurement and problems encountered in the construction of specific indexes. The memorandum was based on a draft technical report on the subject of price and quantity indexes prepared by the Secretary-General, and was intended to indicate, in general terms, the form and methods followed in the technical report, while omitting its many points of detail.

77. The Commission noted that complex questions of concept and method arose in this area of statistics, and emphasized the importance of a realistic approach to the practical statistical problems involved. Attention was drawn to the need for detailed descriptions by countries of the conceptual bases and methods employed in the preparation of their estimates to assist the development of the study. The need to improve the quality of available price and quantity indexes was also underlined. The Commission called attention to the desirability of maintaining comparability in recommendations made by the Secretary-General and other international agencies in this field.

78. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 13 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General :

1. To continue to collect information from the Governments of Member States on statistics of national product and expenditure in constant prices as well as on the methods of estimation used;

2. To assist countries in the preparation of estimates of national product and expenditure in constant prices;

3. (a) To circulate a technical report on price and quantity indexes in national accounting to the Governments of Member States and interested international organizations for their comment;

(b) Subsequently, to prepare a more conclusive report on the subject with the assistance of experts, taking account of the comments received from the Governments of Member States and international organizations;

(c) To submit a report to the Statistical Commission at its tenth session.

D. DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

79. At its eighth session, the Commission requested that the Secretary-General continue the study of the principal methods by which countries compile statistics of the distribution of income.

80. The Commission reviewed this subject on the basis of a memorandum by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/208), which examined the practices employed by countries

in the compilation of basic data on the distribution of income obtained from income tax and other financial returns, population censuses, and sample surveys. While emphasis was given in this document to the distribution of income by size, attention was also directed to the distribution of income by other social-economic characteristics.

81. The Commission observed that quantitative information on the subject served many useful purposes and noted that an increasing number of countries had been developing such data in recent years. At the same time, it recognized that the scope and quality of the information thus far collected differed very substantially from country to country. The major differences were found to exist in the concept of income used and thus in the items included therein, the definition of the income recipient unit, and the size of the universe included in the tabulations. It was pointed out, moreover, that the choice of the concepts and definitions used was to some extent determined by the sources of data available. Where statistics of the distribution of income were obtained, for example, from tax returns, the definitions of income and the income recipient unit and coverage of the data were conditioned by tax laws of the particular country. It was also noted that the form and content of income distribution statistics might also be affected by the particular and special needs for which they were compiled. Thus in under-developed countries where the household was often the principal economic unit, and household enterprises were quite considerable, distribution of income by such units was generally more appropriate than by individuals; furthermore, expenditure might be a better indicator of living conditions than income.

82. The Commission was of the opinion that it was premature to attempt to seek uniformity in the concepts, methods of collection, and form of publication of statistics of the distribution of income through the recommendation of international standards and definitions. In view of the present diversity, the Commission suggested that countries should provide a full description of concepts and coverage to accompany their income distribution studies. It would be important, for example, to describe the extent of the universe covered by statistics based on income tax data together with the relevant definitions implicit in the tax structure. It also considered it important, at the current stage, that more information should be collected on country experiences in this field as a basis for the analysis of the techniques and methods suitable for the various purposes of particular countries.

83. The Commission adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 14 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General:

1. To circulate the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/208) to the Governments of Member States for comments;

2. To continue to collect information from Member States on the methods used in statistics of the distribution of income;

3. To submit a report on this subject to the Commission at its tenth session.

E. CLASSIFICATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS

84. The Commission reviewed a progress report (E/CN.3/209) on the work being carried on by the United Nations on classification of government accounts. This work is concerned with the construction of "policy accounts", which are designed to provide information for economic and social programming in contrast to the "accountability accounts", which are generally maintained for purposes of budgetary control.

85. The Commission was informed that a revision of the 1954 draft manual was initiated in 1955 with a view to achieving greater uniformity between the concepts and classifications developed in it and the corresponding standards proposed in the report *A System of National Accounts and Supporting Tables*.¹⁰ It was also informed that the preliminary results of the work on the manual had been discussed at a United Nations Workshop on Problems of Budget Reclassification in Asia and the Far East held at Bangkok in September 1955. The participants in the Workshop designed a minimum system of economic classification as a basis for experiment by member Governments of ECAFE.

86. The Commission noted that the Secretary-General expected to complete the revised version of the manual in 1956 and that arrangements would be made to obtain comments on the new version from the national statistical services as well as from other national authorities of Member States. The Commission requested that the Secretary-General submit a progress report on this subject to the Commission at its tenth session, the report to include a summary of the comments received from Governments and interested regional and international organizations.

VI. Demographic and social statistics

A. WORLD POPULATION CENSUS PROGRAMME

87. The Commission reviewed the progress which had been made throughout the world in the use of population censuses as one of the important techniques for collecting basic data required for national purposes (E/CN.3/210) and considered the next steps to be taken in the preparations for the world population census of 1960.

88. It was noted that during the decade 1945-1954 more than 150 countries or areas, with an aggregate population in excess of 2,000 million, had been enumerated. These censuses, taken in all parts of the world, represented a considerable advance and the statistical information compiled from these sources during the decade exceeded any previous period in coverage and comparability. The success of the censuses taken around 1950 represents an encouragement to the work of the Commission and other agencies in developing international and regional census standards and in stimulating countries to take censuses in the past decade.

¹⁰ Studies in methods, Series F, No. 2. United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1952.XVII.4.

89. More significantly, the progress which had been made indicated a positive recognition by Governments of the value and need for various forms of demographic statistics for the social and economic welfare of their people. It was essential that that progress should be maintained and consolidated during the next census period. Accordingly, the Statistical Commission recommended that the Economic and Social Council adopt the resolution set forth in chapter IX of this report.

90. At its eighth session the Commission had recommended that the Secretary-General should continue to study methods used in recent censuses and that this experience should be used to develop recommendations for the organization of the 1960 censuses. At its eighth session the Population Commission had recommended that in preparing recommendations for the 1960 censuses more concentrated attention should be given to problems of organization, the need for technical training, the tabulation programme and methods of compilation.

91. As a result, the Commission had before it preliminary draft recommendations (E/CN.3/211 and Add.1 and 2) which not only covered basic census items and definitions but also dealt to some extent with problems of planning and administration.

92. The Commission noted with satisfaction that four regional meetings had considered these draft recommendations in detail and recommended modifications to suit the special conditions of particular regions. The reports of these regional meetings were available to the Commission (ST/STAT/P/L.17-20). It was evident from the reports that most countries were beginning early planning and preparation for the national censuses to be taken around 1960.

93. Taking into consideration the detailed comments of the regional groups, the Statistical Commission reviewed the draft recommendations and indicated the character of the modifications that should be made in the revised draft. In general, it was considered that more attention should be given to social and economic characteristics of the population; to technical operational aspects of the census such as sampling and methods of compilation; that the various proposed lists of items could be simplified into a single list, which would be neither a minimum nor a maximum list; and that additional studies should be made by the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies, in consultation with Member States, as a basis for the revision of some of the draft definitions, particularly those relating to the economic and social characteristics of the population, such as position in occupation, mother tongue and nationality.

94. The Commission noted also the work already begun on aspects of this subject by the Conference of European Statisticians, the views expressed by the Fourth Conference of Statisticians in the ECAFE area that additional work would have to be undertaken, and the request of the Census Sub-Committee of the Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS) of the Inter-American Statistical Institute that the United Nations establish a group of experts to draw up recommendations concerning the census questions on economic characteristics. The Commission stressed the importance of wide consultations and requested the Secretary-

General to make specific arrangements with regional working groups and the specialized agencies concerned to consider the questions to be recommended on economic characteristics as a basis for drafting international recommendations. It was agreed that the Secretary-General might wish to decide, at a later date, to establish a group of experts if it appeared that this would be necessary in order to draw up suitable recommendations.

95. It was noted that in many under-developed countries it would be of advantage to confine the census to a small number of items to ensure that the information should be collected with sufficient accuracy for practical purposes. Sample surveys could be used for more difficult items. It was further noted that elaborate methods of tabulation and the use of mechanical equipment would not make up for poor quality of primary data.

96. In order that international recommendations might be available in sufficient time for their use in censuses to be taken around 1960, the Commission adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 15 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Recommends:

1. That the Secretary-General complete the methodological census studies which are now under way, and that, as soon as possible, a revision of the draft recommendations for the 1960 world population census be prepared in the light of the discussions at regional conferences and in the Statistical Commission;

2. That co-operation be maintained with the interested specialized agencies and with such regional groups and conferences as may be able to assist in the development of recommendations of maximum usefulness for national, regional and international purposes;

3. That a revised draft of the recommendations be submitted to the Population Commission at its ninth session, and for final consideration to the Statistical Commission at its tenth session.

97. The Commission expressed its satisfaction with the methodological studies prepared by the Secretary-General and made a number of suggestions for the incorporation of the findings of these and future studies into handbooks and guides for the use of countries planning censuses around 1960.

98. Stress was laid upon the importance of further studies on the problems of planning, organization and administration, and in particular on the practical problems of tabulation programming and data processing. Further studies and evaluations of the varying applications of sampling methods were also considered useful. It was felt that the difficulties experienced by countries in the censuses taken around 1950 should be described in subsequent studies. The Secretary-General was therefore requested, to the extent possible, to draw the attention of Member States to the nature of the difficulties encountered. It was urged that all materials prepared be distributed to Member States without the necessity of their submitting requests. The Commission drew attention to and endorsed the view of the Statistical Seminar for Arab States, that if the United

Nations found it possible to issue an Arabic version of its recommendations pertinent to population censuses, such a version would be more useful in the area.

99. Since the issuance of handbooks and guides is one of the most effective methods by which the United Nations can facilitate the exchange of information on the planning and implementation of national censuses, the Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 16 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Recommends that the Secretary-General undertake the early preparation of a new series of handbooks and guides covering problems of planning and implementation of national population censuses.

100. In reviewing the future stages of work outlined by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/210), the Commission stressed the importance of an early development of a technical assistance programme for the national censuses of population to be taken around 1960. It felt that, although similar to the programme conducted by the United Nations in connexion with the 1950 censuses, the new programme should be flexible and balanced among the various forms of technical assistance, in view of the fact that the needs might vary widely from country to country and from region to region.

101. With regard to fellowships, it was emphasized that they should be granted well in advance of the proposed date of the census in order to permit the full participation of the trainees in the preparation and conduct of the census. It was recognized that a careful selection of the trainees was highly important in preventing uneconomical expenditure of effort and resources.

102. The Commission stressed the importance of establishing census training centres in collaboration with national Governments and interested international agencies and recommended that the specific purpose and organization of such centres should be determined in the light of needs expressed by the countries concerned. It was suggested, however, that the programmes should emphasize the practical aspects of census methodology with particular attention to cartography, listing of households, enumeration arrangements, tabulation programming, alternative data processing procedures, and the application of international standards.

103. Several members of the Commission pointed out that it would be of advantage if opportunities could be provided by mutual agreement for technicians from one country to observe census operations in other countries, and several countries expressed their readiness to receive census observers from other areas. It was suggested that the United Nations might co-operate in organizing experimental censuses in countries planning to take censuses before 1960. Such censuses would also serve as demonstration training programmes for personnel of countries scheduled to conduct censuses later.

104. The Commission noted with satisfaction that under the technical assistance programme opportunities were already available for providing expert advice to countries in connexion with the 1960 censuses. It

noted that this type of assistance might cover some or all phases of a national census programme but it recommended that the experts should be made available to the country receiving such assistance for adequate periods of time.

105. The needs of several countries for assistance in the processing and publication of their census data were considered by the Commission. It was suggested that the Secretary-General should explore possibilities of providing aid in connexion with the processing of the data, such as the establishment of regional data processing centres or the rotation of equipment among countries. The request was made that the Secretary-General give consideration to the possibility of providing assistance to expedite the early publication of census results in those countries where the lack of experienced personnel, equipment or other facilities might unduly delay or even prevent final publication.

106. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 17 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Recommends that the Secretary-General develop, within the existing technical assistance programmes or with other resources which may be available, a programme of technical assistance, training and expert advice for the preparation and conduct of national population censuses.

107. The Commission felt that the programme should be made flexible, in view of the fact that needs might vary widely from country to country and from region to region; and that provision should be made for the granting of training fellowships; for the establishing of census training centres in collaboration with national Governments and international agencies; for helping, when requested and by mutual agreement, in arrangements for the participation by technicians of one country in observation and demonstrations of census work in other countries; for the furnishing of expert advice for one or all phases of the national census programme; and for supplying services and facilities, including equipment, for the processing and publication of the data. With regard to the implementation of the above recommendation, the Commission drew the attention of the Secretary-General to the recommendations of the Statistical Seminar for Arab States on these points (ST/STAT/P/L.18, paras. 53-57) and requested him to give consideration to the needs expressed.

B. VITAL STATISTICS

108. The Commission had before it a memorandum prepared by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/212) setting forth developments in the field of vital statistics since the previous report on this subject (E/CN.3/186) and plans for further activities. The memorandum outlined, *inter alia*, three specific projects to which efforts might be directed : (1) the preparation of materials to guide countries in the utilization of vital statistics, (2) the study of the application of modern sampling theory to the production of vital statistics, and (3) a systematic survey and evaluation of population registers as statistical mechanisms. Efforts to devise more precise methods of

evaluating the quality of vital statistics were considered to be a continuing aspect of the work, inextricably connected with the regular work of collecting and publishing demographic data.

109. In considering the memorandum, the Commission expressed its appreciation of the *Handbook of Vital Statistics*,¹¹ which the Secretary-General had completed and published at the request of the Commission,¹² indicating that it had already proven useful as a reference document for countries in which vital statistics were relatively highly developed, and would undoubtedly serve as a guide for parallel development and improvement of vital statistics in statistically less advanced countries.

110. The Commission noted with approval the increase in the scope and coverage of national vital statistics, and expressed its view that emphasis should in future be placed on improvement of the quality of vital statistics. Several members noted that the quality had improved in recent years, but that, in many areas further improvement would have to be made before data collected were sufficiently reliable and adequate to meet the needs.

111. In connexion with the evaluation of quality, the Commission expressed interest in the preparation of materials to guide countries in the appraisal of existing data and in the adjustments required for the utilization of fragmentary and inadequate data, and indicated that the project should have high priority in the work of the Secretary-General.

112. The Commission expressed interest in the need for a direct exchange of experience between countries as a means of improving vital statistics. It was suggested that the exchange might take the form of regional and international seminars or conferences on registration practices and on the methods for the compilation of demographic data.

113. The need for experimental work on methods of collecting vital statistics in under-developed countries, especially those where efficient legal registration was not yet established, was stressed by the Commission. It was noted that several approaches were possible—e.g., (1) the concentration of data-collecting facilities and resources for improving the registration method in a limited geographical area (tabulation areas, as defined in the *Principles for a Vital Statistics System*),¹³ and (2) sample surveys to produce global indices as an interim measure until collection of data by the registration method becomes feasible. In connexion with the "tabulation-area" approach, it was pointed out that concentration of resources in selected areas might have the effect of changing the area so that it was no longer representative of the whole. It was also emphasized that sampling surveys were not to be considered as alternatives to registration methods, but as a complementary tool useful for collection of data required for social and

economic analysis. Attention was also drawn to the extensive use of sample surveys for the collection of vital statistics in certain under-developed countries. Sampling methods are applicable also to developed areas for obtaining additional information. Recognizing these factors, the Commission was of the opinion that information on the practical application of both these methods would be very useful, and that a demonstration project would also be desirable.

114. The utility of a critical evaluation of continuous population registers as a statistical mechanism had been mentioned by the Commission at previous sessions.¹⁴ The Commission indicated its continuing interest in the subject. It felt that in planning future activities, this subject should not be neglected, inasmuch as many countries were establishing registers of some type and a compilation of international information on this subject, including the quality of the information obtained from such registers, would be of great value. It therefore expressed the hope that such studies could be carried out concurrently with other phases of the vital statistics programme.

115. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 18 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Recommends :

1. That the Governments of Member States be requested to study their procedures in vital statistics in the light of the *Principles for a Vital Statistics System*¹³ and the *Handbook of Vital Statistics*¹¹ with a view to revising and improving them so that they may more adequately meet national needs and consequently improve international comparability;
2. That emphasis be given to evaluating the accuracy of vital statistics, both by internal checks and by studies of the relationships between data obtained from population censuses and vital statistics;
3. That materials be prepared to guide countries in the utilization of fragmentary and defective vital statistics;
4. That the interchange of national experience be encouraged through the setting up of conferences and seminars;
5. That sampling and other methods of collecting vital statistics in countries not yet able to produce reliable statistics by the conventional registration method be explored both with a view to the orderly development of a registration system and to the collection of data needed for social and economic analysis;
6. That a study and evaluation of continuous population registers be undertaken with a view to an examination of their usefulness as a statistical mechanism both in statistically developed countries and in those less advanced.

¹¹ Studies in methods, Series F, No. 7. United Nations publication, Sales No. : 1955.XVII.1.

¹² *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Eleventh Session, Supplement No. 4*, para. 88.

¹³ United Nations publication, Sales No. : 1953.XVII.8.

¹⁴ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Eleventh Session, Supplement No. 4*, para. 87; *ibid.*, *Thirteenth Session, Supplement No. 5*, para. 35; and *ibid.*, *Eighteenth Session, Supplement No. 5*, para. 99.

C. HOUSING CENSUS STATISTICS

116. In continuing its review of housing statistics begun at its eighth session, the Commission considered a study of definitions and procedures used in housing censuses during the decade 1946-1954 (E/CN.3/216). In its discussion the Commission dealt with certain of the problems of definitions which arise from the operational relationship between the housing census and the population census as well as with the limitations which are imposed on the list of housing items for which suitable data can be obtained in such censuses. The Commission stressed the importance of consultation with national offices prior to the completion of plans for the current housing censuses in order to clarify the aims of housing statistics and to assist in developing concepts and definitions for the basic units to be used in housing census programmes.

117. Members of the Commission pointed to the fact that housing programmes were assuming an ever larger importance in both the economic and the social policies of national, and especially local, authorities. The attention of national statistical services was being directed to the need to develop, from housing censuses, the sort of bench-mark statistics in housing that could be supplemented by current building and construction statistics and which would provide a continuous up-to-date picture of the housing position needed for the consideration of housing programmes. Such a system of housing statistics would permit the use of more intensive surveys of housing and more adequate utilization of housing data obtained through household inquiries or by special sample surveys. Thus, the census data would provide a frame for such samples and surveys.

118. The discussion regarding the basic list of items in housing census schedules pointed to the extent to which countries continued to link their population and housing censuses. This practice limited the number and scope of housing items which could be included in the census schedule and emphasized the difficulty of obtaining the minimum basic data needed to provide the information necessary for guiding and assessing national and local housing programmes. Members pointed out that without overloading the schedule with detailed questions or using those which required technical competence beyond that usually available in census enumerators, a minimum list of items, adequately defined, could be established which would provide a framework of housing statistics. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to give attention to the immediate task of developing such basic housing census programmes (where feasible and necessary) by means of consultations with national statistical services and regional working groups. It felt that special attention should be directed towards developing a programme and list of items suitable to the needs and resources of those countries which required housing censuses and which had not yet developed housing census statistics.

119. Considerable attention was directed to the fact that both the terminology and the basic concepts being used in housing censuses differed widely among countries, even within the same region. The Commission felt that additional study of the concepts and aims for housing

statistics was urgently needed. It accordingly recommended that high priority be given to the Secretary-General's work in completing an analysis of the concepts and in preparing draft recommendations which could be considered by countries and by regional groups. This work should be carried forward so that the results of the regional consultations, together with the comments of national statistical offices, would enable the Secretary-General to prepare revised draft recommendations for consideration at the tenth session of the Statistical Commission.

120. The Commission adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 19 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Recommends:

1. That the Secretary-General continue the study of housing census definitions and concepts and prepare draft recommendations for a programme or programmes of housing censuses suitable to the needs of various countries;
2. That such draft proposals be presented to regional groups and national statistical services of the Governments of Member States for comment; and
3. That revised draft recommendations suitable for use in censuses to be taken around 1960 be prepared for consideration at the tenth session of the Statistical Commission.

D. SUBJECTS REFERRED TO THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION BY THE POPULATION COMMISSION

121. Acting upon a request of the Population Commission at its eighth session, the Secretary-General brought to the attention of the Statistical Commission a number of items relevant to its interests, in the summary reports of certain meetings of the World Population Conference (E/CONF.13/412)¹⁵ and in the report of a committee of experts appointed by the Secretary-General, on gaps in existing knowledge of the relationships between population trends and economic and social factors (E/CN.9/119). The Commission appreciated the action of the Population Commission in requesting that these important items be brought to its attention.

122. The Statistical Commission felt that the World Population Conference, which was held in Rome in 1954 under the auspices of the United Nations, had made a very important contribution to the development of a better understanding of population problems and of the need for more adequate statistical information in this field. The Commission was fully in accord with the emphasis on the need to improve the quality as well as the scope of demographic statistics, which appeared in the summary reports of several meetings of the Conference. The training of demographic statisticians, which was discussed at one of the meetings, was also a matter of interest to the Statistical Commission, and the Commission felt that the discussion on this subject at the Conference had yielded valuable results, particularly

¹⁵ United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1953.XIII.8.

with reference to the possibilities of international co-operation in training programmes.

123. The Commission also wished to emphasize the importance of the recommendations concerning demographic statistics contained in the report of the committee of experts on gaps in existing knowledge of the relationships between population trends and economic and social factors. The Commission agreed with the special emphasis which the committee of experts had placed on the first two of its recommendations, namely, (1) that steps be taken to establish basic series of population and vital statistics where they did not already exist, and to improve their quality where they were seriously inadequate or defective, and (2) that an international reference volume of basic statistics on population size and structure and on the components of population change be prepared, covering as long an historical period as possible. In regard to the first recommendation, the Commission expressed the hope that the national censuses of population to be taken in and around 1960 would result in a substantial improvement in both the quantity and the quality of basic demographic statistics. So far as the second recommendation is concerned, the Commission was pleased to note that the various historical series published in the *Demographic Yearbook* to date had provided much useful material for historical studies on an international scale. Nevertheless, the Commission hoped that it would be possible, in future issues of the *Yearbook*, to extend the scope of such historical material.

124. The Commission noted the importance of the following additional recommendations given in the report of the expert committee (E/CN.9/119): that the efforts of private scholars, Governments, and international organizations to evaluate the quality of existing demographic statistics should be extended (recommendation 3); that there should be a periodic stock-taking to make sure that the resources of national statistical systems were being utilized as efficiently as possible (recommendation 4); that more attention should be given to discovering what kinds of information were required for research on pressing problems and how such data could be obtained (recommendation 5); that attention should be given to the possibility of using data provided by social security systems for studies of internal migration, the labour force, mortality and fertility (recommendation 6); that the methods by which basic demographic statistics were to be obtained in the under-developed countries should not necessarily be assumed to be the same as those used in countries with more highly developed statistical systems (recommendation 7); and that *ad hoc* field studies should be undertaken on a sampling basis to supplement census and vital statistics in under-developed countries for which those basic sources of data were not adequate (recommendation 8). The Commission felt that the subject of the committee's recommendation 6 might be an appropriate item for the agenda of a future session.

E. STATUS OF THE SOCIAL STATISTICS PROGRAMME

125. The Commission considered the social statistics programme (E/CN.3/219) largely in terms of the reports

which had been made under other agenda items on the various elements of the programme. At previous sessions, the Commission had indicated that greater emphasis should be given to social statistics and that proposed work in that field should receive high priority within the resources that might be available.

126. It was apparent that some progress was being made in this difficult and technical field, but the Commission was of the opinion that the progress was not commensurate with the importance of the subject and the urgency with which many countries viewed the underlying problems.

127. The Commission pointed out that in many countries with adequate resources and in which the historical development of the economy had been rapid, the primary statistical concern had been with statistical problems related to industrial development. However, for countries with a lower level of development—and these included a large majority of the world's population—there was a need for much more adequate direct information about the social structure and conditions of living, and changes in the conditions of living of the population. Social statistics in this broad sense were the basic starting-point, and the measure of progress, in planning national development in all spheres. As such, the status of the social statistics programme, taken in its several different elements, should be a major and continuing concern of the Commission.

128. At the international level, work in the various aspects of social statistics related to the activities of the specialized agencies as well as to those of the United Nations. It was felt that all of those agencies should be encouraged to continue and accelerate their work in that field. Due attention should be paid to the systematization and the co-ordination of those efforts.

129. In stressing the importance and urgency of work in that field, the Commission did not wish to appear to overlook the intrinsic conceptual and technical difficulties which must be solved before satisfactory methods of measuring the numerous variables related to conditions of living could be devised. For that reason, it was felt that greater emphasis should be given by the United Nations and the specialized agencies to the study of the methodological problems involved, particularly for the less well developed areas, and that those agencies should intensify their technical assistance in social statistics so as to encourage a more rapid development of essential procedures and methods in the national statistical services of the countries which gave high priority to the improvement of social statistics.

130. In view of these considerations, the Statistical Commission adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 20 (IX)

The Statistical Commission,

Having regard to the importance attached to social statistics and to the great value that countries in the process of development attach to these data in connexion with programmes of economic and social development,

Recommends that the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the specialized agencies, intensify the work

in social statistics, developing a programme leading to a more rapid advance in methodology and in the national and international collection of data essential for national development.

F. INTERNATIONAL DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT OF STANDARDS AND LEVELS OF LIVING

131. At its eighth session, the Commission found itself in general agreement with the major conclusions contained in the report on *International Definition and Measurement of Standards and Levels of Living* (E/CN.3/179-E/CN.5/299),¹⁶ drawn up by a Committee of Experts in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 527 (VI) and Economic and Social Council resolution 434 B (XIV), and requested the Secretary-General to circulate the report to the Governments of Member States for comment.

132. The Commission had before it a summary of the comments made by Governments (E/CN.3/213) and by specialized agencies (E/CN.3/213 and Add.1 to 4), an extract from the report of the tenth session of the Social Commission to the Economic and Social Council (E/2758),¹⁷ an extract from the report of the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly (A/2943),¹⁸ and a summary of the conclusions prepared by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/214).

132. At its twentieth session the Economic and Social Council, after having considered the recommendations of the Social Commission and the preliminary recommendations of the Statistical Commission, requested the Secretary-General, in resolution 585 B (XX), *inter alia*, "to provide over-all planning and co-ordination in carrying forward work on levels of living...". The reports before the Commission were considered within that context.

133. The Commission stressed the complicated nature of the problem and pointed out that the Statistical Commission was concerned primarily with the methods of developing statistical tools for measuring levels or conditions of living. In this connexion it was suggested that the concept of "levels of living" should be replaced in future studies by "conditions of living", in view of the fact that "conditions of living" might be more adequately measured and did not necessarily imply a system of comparisons. The Commission requested that the Secretary-General examine this suggestion when the subject of the measurement of levels of living was next reviewed.

134. The Commission agreed that the practical value of statistical investigations of the levels or conditions of living lay primarily in that they made it possible for individual countries to evaluate the character, magnitude and degree of urgency of the problems with which they were confronted, and to design their programmes accordingly. Studies on conditions of living should therefore

be considered as an important tool for national economic development. A series of such studies showing variations over a period of time would be of particular importance. Studies on conditions of living also had value for the assessment of progress at an international level.

135. It was noted that it had been generally recognized that the concept of levels or conditions of living was extremely wide and could not be measured by a single numerical index and that a purely statistical approach would not be sufficient since interpretive and background information of an historical, social, economic and cultural nature needed to be considered, together with statistical information, in order to describe and evaluate the conditions of living.

136. The Commission heard statements from the International Labour Office, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, as well as from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the World Federation of Trade Unions, on the reports before the Commission. Each of the speakers recognized the necessity of improving basic statistical series. The Commission took note of the specialized work designed to define specific indicators such as measures of caloric or protein consumption, and drew attention to the necessity of continuing and intensifying such studies, making sure they were carried out according to scientific standards.]

137. The Commission noted [with satisfaction the collaboration among the international agencies in connexion with work on statistical problems connected with the family living studies and similar subjects, and expressed the hope that that collaboration would be maintained as the work advanced.

138. The Commission discussed conceptual and methodological problems involved in measuring levels of living by the component and indicator approach, and noted Economic and Social Council resolution 585 B (XX), which stated in part :

" *Considers* the measurable component approach summarized in paragraph 199 of the report¹⁹ to be a useful basis for future action with the ultimate aim of enabling international comparisons to be made;

" *Regards* the immediate need as one of choosing components which are capable of measurable analysis and whose significance has won international recognition..."

There was general agreement that even though the component approach was considered a useful basis for future action, much work had to be done before indicators could be selected to measure all components in the various countries.

139. Although the list of components developed by the Expert Group had been reviewed by the Commission at its previous session, there was some doubt that a single list was sufficient. The opinion was expressed

¹⁶ United Nations publication, Sales No. : 1955.IV.5.

¹⁷ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twentieth Session, Supplement No. 9.*

¹⁸ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Session, Supplement No. 3.*

¹⁹ *International Definition and Measurement of Standards and Levels of Living* (E/CN.3/179-E/CN.5/299) (United Nations publication, Sales No. : 1955.IV.5).

that the variation between countries and regions made it necessary to consider a number of lists, in view of the fact that no system or systems of indicators could exhaust the possibilities of measuring the conditions of living of each individual in every culture.

140. The importance of improving methodology for the measurement of levels of living was stressed. The following specific points were made with respect to methodology :

(a) No single index of levels of living would be adequate for all purposes;

(b) No attempt should be made at this stage to set up international standards;

(c) National averages or aggregates are not an adequate measure of levels or conditions of living and, consequently, more specific statistics and distributions should be compiled in order to describe groups of population within countries;

(d) The validity of synthetic indicators, such as real wages and real income, should be further studied as measures of levels or conditions of living;

(e) The statistical work on family living studies might form the framework for the development of an integrated system of social statistics, particularly in under-developed areas. Such inquiries may be necessary to supplement data obtained from other sources even in nations which have advanced statistical services;

(f) In developing indicators, the value or significance assigned to each indicator, as well as its interpretation and scientific basis, should be clearly stated.

141. The Commission also took note of the view expressed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 585 B (XX), namely that it " regards the immediate need as one of choosing components . . . and of initiating or developing, above all in under-developed countries, statistical systems which will take account of such components and enable accurate measurements of changes in levels of living over years to be made on a comparable basis ". This view is in accord with the Commission's opinion that the first step should be the development or improvement of national statistics in such a way as to produce the necessary basic data. Such statistical series will need to comprise not only national aggregates, but data for geographical and social-economic groups of the population.

142. Several members commented that the necessary statistical series were already available in a number of countries, or that plans were in progress to produce the required statistics. It was recognized, however, that statistical development was not uniform throughout the world and that steps would need to be taken to encourage the development of statistical systems for social and economic programmes.

143. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 21 (IX)

The Statistical Commission,

Recognizing the increasing importance of information on levels or conditions of living for national economic and social development,

Recommends :

1. That the Secretary-General pursue and intensify, in collaboration with the specialized agencies, studies on concepts, definitions and standards for the measurement of levels or conditions of living with a view to facilitating the exchange of information and promoting comparability in this field;

2. That the Secretary-General review the list of indicators after completion of the second report on the *World Social Situation* and re-evaluate the list as to its suitability for regional or broader international comparisons of conditions of living; and that the Secretary-General bring his conclusions to the attention of the Statistical Commission and to the attention of the Social Commission.

G. FAMILY LIVING STUDIES

144. The Commission noted the recent progress achieved in the field of family living studies as reported by the International Labour Office (E/CN.3/215). It also received a report prepared by a Group of Experts on Family Living Studies, which had been convened by the International Labour Office in September 1955.

145. The Commission endorsed the Experts' conclusion that family living studies provided appropriate means of studying patterns and levels of living, and noted that the Experts' report would be valuable as a basis for further work in that field.

146. However, the Commission expressed some dissatisfaction with the term " family living studies " because of the past association of that term with more limited studies of income and expenditure. Moreover, because of differences in definitions of households and families from country to country, the Commission was not entirely satisfied with the term " household inquiries into patterns and levels of living ", proposed by the above-mentioned Group of Experts. The International Labour Office was asked, therefore, to give further study to questions of terminology and to report its conclusions to the Commission at a subsequent session.

147. The Commission observed that comprehensive family living studies constituted an important method of investigation for all countries, but noted that the advantages of that method were greatest with respect to the less well developed countries, whereas for the statistically advanced countries, those studies could supplement data obtained from other sources. The Commission further noted that in under-developed countries such inquiries could supply a great deal of essential information for economic development and should, therefore, receive adequate consideration in connexion with programmes of technical assistance.

148. The Commission was gratified to note that the various international agencies most directly concerned with statistics of family living had co-operated in the recent work in this field. It urged that those agencies continue and increase their co-operative work in family living studies in the future, and recommended that periodic progress reports be submitted to the Commission through the Secretary-General.

149. Attention was called to the need for further work in the methodology of family living studies. The Commission expressed the hope that the ILO would be able to prepare a summary report on the methods used in various countries, calling attention to methods which had been particularly successful under differing circumstances. In this connexion, the Commission took note of the ILO proposal to invite countries in various geographic regions, together with the international agencies, to co-operate in regional studies which would test the feasibility of using uniform regional questionnaires and instructions and would contribute to the improvement of methodology in that field. The Commission also expressed the hope that the ILO, in connexion with its work on family living studies and the measurement of levels of living, would be able to prepare a report on methods which have been used to measure underemployment and irregular employment, with recommendations for further experimental studies of those problems.

VII. Other subjects

A. BASIC STATISTICS FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

150. The Commission discussed the question of a list of basic statistics for purposes of economic and social development based on a memorandum by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/197). It felt that such work would be very helpful to statistically less advanced countries if it produced material to assist them in developing an integrated system of statistics to meet national needs. Economic and social development was a major concern of those countries and they required a multiplicity of statistics despite limited resources. The material resulting from the Secretary-General's work should include not only a list of basic statistical series but also a discussion on the uses of each of the series in programming and assessing development and on the relation of the various series to one another. The series to be included in the list, while taking account of the limitations in statistical resources in many cases, should be sufficiently extensive to cover the main economic and social problems of less developed countries and should provide indicators of the rate of economic growth and of changes in conditions of living.

151. The task of providing guidance to statistically less advanced countries of the type described above was admittedly difficult. Once certain minimum needs were met, the needs of countries varied, depending on their individual problems and stage of development. The list of statistical series should be wide enough so that countries might select from it the series most pertinent to their needs; and care must be taken to ensure that the list should not be construed as a minimum or a standard. Considerable consultation would be required with individual Member States at different stages of development, and with regional organizations and specialized agencies in order to ensure that the materials produced should be practical and useful. Because of the difference in the statistical needs of Governments, it would probably not be possible to attach generally applicable priorities to different economic series.

152. The Commission adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 22 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Invites the Secretary-General:

1. To continue the work on a basic list of important statistical series for use by statistically less advanced countries in the course of their economic and social development, together with descriptions of the uses and interrelationships of the different series;

2. To consult with the statistical authorities of the Governments of Member States and with appropriate regional organizations and specialized agencies in this work.

B. INTERNATIONAL TOURIST STATISTICS

153. At its nineteenth session, the Economic and Social Council, recognizing the importance of international travel in promoting international co-operation, invited Member States of the United Nations to encourage tourist travel and, as part of that programme, asked the Secretary-General to study the statistics available relating to tourist travel and to report to the Statistical Commission as early as possible with a view to the establishment of uniform definitions, standards and methods (Council resolution 563 (XIX)). The Commission had before it memoranda summarizing the views of Governments and of the International Monetary Fund and the International Union of Official Travel Organizations on the collection of statistics of tourist movement and expenditure (E/CN.3/221 and Add.1 and 2). The International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization presented their views orally. The Commission noted that the definition of "tourist" given in the United Nations Convention (not yet fully ratified) concerning Customs Facilities for Touring (E/CONF.16/23),²⁰ predicated a stay of not more than six months for the tourist, whereas in migration and tourist statistics the line between a migrant on the one hand and a visitor or tourist on the other was drawn at a stay of twelve months. The Commission was of the opinion that both statistics of foreign visitors and migration statistics were components of passenger travel statistics. Beginning with the League of Nations definition, the use in statistics of the word "tourist" had been enlarged to include, besides persons travelling for pleasure, also business travellers (not remunerated from sources inside the country they were visiting), diplomats and students. For statistical purposes there would be advantages in using the word "visitors" for this larger class of travellers, as was done in the Commission's recommendation on migration statistics, thus leaving the word "tourist" free to be defined administratively. If this were done, it might be advisable to classify passengers in transit through a country separately from "visitors" to the country.

154. The Commission emphasized the importance of keeping to a minimum the formalities to which travellers

²⁰ United Nations publication, Sales No. : 1955.VIII.1.

were subjected for the collection of statistical data, and felt that this might be accomplished by collecting data for visitors and persons moving in transit as part of the operation of distinguishing them from migrants from whom fuller information might be required.

155. The Commission adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 23 (IX)

The Statistical Commission

Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States and in co-operation with the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Union of Official Travel Organizations, and taking into account the views of the Commission, to seek agreement on the statistical classification to be used in recording the movement of foreign visitors and on the terminology to be used in connexion with the classification, and to suggest methods for collecting statistical data according to the classification, as far as possible without increasing frontier formalities.

C. INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION
OF OCCUPATIONS

156. The Commission reviewed a report of progress in the development of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (E/CN.3/218) submitted by the International Labour Office. This report indicated that the classification had been extended through the "unit groups" (third digit) and would be presented to the Ninth International Conference of Labour Statisticians for final review early in 1957. The Commission stressed the importance of completing the classification at an early date and expressed its desire to be informed at its next session of the action taken by the Ninth Conference.

157. It was reported that adoption of the unit groups would complete the current phase of work on the classification since it is not contemplated that statistical comparisons of occupations among nations would be undertaken in further detail.

158. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the national statistical offices had been consulted during the development of the classification and that their observations had been studied by a Group of Experts which had reviewed the classification late in 1955.

159. The Commission observed that the International Standard Classification of Occupations did not reflect social-professional status, a classification which some countries considered highly desirable for the study of the social structure of the population, and noted that the ILO planned to carry on work on a separate international classification by social-professional status.

160. The ILO reported that the preparation of occupational definitions was under way, and that advice would be available to countries interested in preparing an occupational index. The ILO staff was also extending the International Standard Classification of Occupations through the fifth digit for the use of interested countries but international adoption of the classification in that

further detail would not be requested and it was not intended to propose international statistical comparisons in such detail.

D. EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL STATISTICS

161. The Commission received a progress report on the activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the field of educational and cultural statistics (E/CN.3/217). It noted with appreciation the progress which had been made, particularly in the publication of international compilations of statistics relating to education and culture, and in the promotion of statistical education through the activities of the International Statistical Institute.

162. It was noted that the development of educational and cultural statistics had special significance in relation to the international measurement of conditions of living, though it was recognized that special difficulties existed in regard to the international comparability of statistics in that field. In view of such difficulties, the Commission felt it all the more important for UNESCO to increase its efforts towards the recommendation of standards in definitions, classifications and tabulations of educational and cultural statistics.

163. It was recalled that a Committee of Experts on standardization of Educational Statistics had been convened by UNESCO as early as November 1951, but that definitive action on the report of the Committee had not yet been taken by the General Conference of UNESCO. The Commission therefore expressed its hope that such official action would be taken by UNESCO as soon as possible, and that more substantial progress in that direction might be reported to the Commission at its tenth session.

E. REGULARIZATION OF PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT
AT A HIGH LEVEL IN THE METAL TRADES

164. The Statistical Commission had before it an excerpt (E/CN.3/194) of the note on the proceedings of the fifth session of the Metal Trades Committee of the International Labour Organisation, which had been referred to the Statistical Commission through the Secretary-General. The relevant part of the note is contained in paragraph 6 (c), which reads as follows:

"The Governing Body of the International Labour Office is requested to refer to the United Nations Statistical Commission the question of what action might be taken to promote the availability of more detailed and more internationally comparable statistics on:

"(i) Inventories of metal trades products;

"(ii) The extent to which the principal products of the metal trades are used in other industries".

The Commission decided to take note of this request. In the discussion on the subject, attention was drawn to the probability that some of the statistics requested might result from the more extensive programmes of statistics which had already been initiated by the United Nations. Those broader programmes included basic industrial statistics (and the *International Standard Industrial*

Classification), the work on statistics of stocks by a Working Group of the Conference of European Statisticians and the inter-industry studies which a number of the more highly industrialized countries were undertaking. The Commission thought that the Secretary-General could bring these views to the attention of those concerned and that, therefore, it would not be necessary for the Commission to undertake any special and separate activity in connexion with improvements to these types of statistics in the metal trades. The representative of the International Labour Office reported that somewhat similar action had been taken by the Eighth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in reference to statistics of employment, unemployment and productivity in the metal trades.

F. CONFERENCE OF ASIAN STATISTICIANS

165. The Statistical Commission discussed the proposal of the Fourth Regional Conference of Statisticians (sponsored by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East and the Statistical Office) to establish the Conference of Asian Statisticians. The substance of the proposal was contained in document E/CN.3/223 submitted by the Secretary-General. A full account of the proceedings of the Fourth Conference was available in document E/CN.11/433 (E/CN.11/STAT/CONF.4/2), which was before the Commission as a background paper.

166. The Commission recalled its earlier discussions, particularly at its third and fourth sessions, of arrangements for regional consultations. It strongly welcomed the proposal to establish the Conference of Asian Statisticians, agreeing with the Fourth Conference that the proposal contained "the possibility of the more rapid development of regionally applicable standards, the more certain implementation of international statistical standards already in effect, the opportunity to exchange practical information on new methods and on the planning and conduct of statistical operations and the setting up of a mechanism to co-ordinate further statistical activities within the region". The Statistical Commission thought that the new Conference would give opportunities for the further integration of national statistical programmes in a region where important progress was being made in the development of statistics and their use in connexion with programmes of economic and social development. The time had come to pursue the work of developing appropriate standards more vigorously. The Commission urged the Secretary-General to make all the necessary administrative arrangements as soon as possible.

167. The Commission believed that the Conference of Asian Statisticians would offer a suitable mechanism for consultations on a wide scale and hoped that statisticians of the specialized agencies would collaborate directly and closely in the work of the new Conference. This would be particularly important if integrated statistical programmes were to be developed; the Commission had already noted earlier in its discussions the great importance of integrated plans for statistical development.

168. The members of the Conference of Asian Statisticians would be the members and associate members

of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. The work on the development and improvement of statistics would be carried on with due regard to the international standards and to the needs for international comparability as expressed in the recommendations of the Statistical Commission and of the statistical authorities of the specialized agencies.

169. The Commission noted with approval the following terms of reference which had been recommended by the Fourth Conference :

"(a) The development of statistical standards applicable to the region within the framework of international recommendations;

"(b) The improvement of the quality of statistics and the application of new techniques;

"(c) Arrangements for the exchange of information on statistical work and methods among Asian countries;

"(d) The development of particular statistical programmes which would be of maximum usefulness to the member countries and would at the same time provide for regional and international comparability;

"(e) Activities designed to give effect to existing international recommendations on statistics."

170. The Commission adopted the following resolution :

Resolution 24 (IX)

The Statistical Commission,

Noting with approval the proposal of the Fourth Regional Conference of Statisticians to establish the Conference of Asian Statisticians,

Requests the Secretary-General to communicate to the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East the views of the Commission concerning the establishment of the Conference of Asian Statisticians.

VIII. Programme of work and priorities

171. The following paragraphs, based on the Commission's discussion at its ninth session, contain the Secretary-General's proposals on the priorities which might be accorded to the various projects of the Statistical Office of the United Nations reviewed by the Commission.

172. In making those proposals the Commission wished to emphasize that it considered it important that in the statistical subjects covered by the Statistical Office, efforts should be made to furnish technical assistance to under-developed countries in need of aid with a view to improving their statistical systems; it considered this part of the work to be of first priority.

Continuing projects of high priority

(1) Advice and assistance in giving effect to existing standards or guiding principles for the improvement of national and international statistics :

(a) Population censuses,

(b) Vital statistics,

(c) Social statistics,

(d) Migration statistics,

- (e) Basic industrial statistics,
- (f) Index numbers of industrial production,
- (g) External trade statistics,
- (h) Transport statistics,
- (i) Distribution statistics,
- (j) National accounts,
- (k) Capital formation statistics,
- (l) Questions of methodology, including sampling,
- (m) The development of arrangements for field officers to assist countries at their request in planning and giving effect to different aspects of their national statistical programmes.

Ad hoc projects also of high priority

(1) Comparative study of national practices in the field of distribution statistics, including concepts and definitions.

(2) Continued development of definitions, digest of country experience, technical papers on various methodological aspects of the proposed World Census of Population, including the applications of sampling, and the preparation of informational material on tabulation methods, and activities designed to assist in the training of national statisticians of countries requesting assistance.

(3) Preparation of technical studies and draft recommendations for censuses of housing.

(4) Studies designed to improve the accuracy of vital statistics including experimental studies on methods of obtaining vital statistics in countries where the conventional registration methods may not be applicable, and an analysis of the methods and uses of population registers.

(5) Continued work towards the improvement of comparability in external trade statistics, especially trade-by-country statistics through consultations and, if necessary, with the assistance of an expert group; investigation of the statistical treatment of goods traded in free ports or zones.

(6) Preparation of suggestions for statistical programmes on the characteristics, balance-sheets and profit-and-loss data of business enterprises, including proposals for tabulations showing important aspects of economic activity; examination of the question what reporting unit, i.e., enterprise or establishment, would be most suitable for reporting different types of data.

(7) Investigation of the changes and refinements needed in the *International Standard Industrial Classification*.

(8) Examination of national experience with the existing standards for basic industrial statistics and preparation of any proposed revisions in definitions and concepts which may appear necessary.

(9) Continued examination of alternative methods of compiling index numbers of wholesale prices; development of suggestions for pricing highly fabricated goods

and other problems of collection and examination of methods for general-purpose indexes for sales at retail.

(10) Collection of information on national experience in the compilation of statistics on capital formation and consideration of the elements of a programme for the collection of those statistics.

(11) Preparation of a comprehensive report on methodology and problems connected with the development of price and quantity indexes, with the assistance of experts, if necessary.

(12) Collection of information on methods used to prepare distributions of income by size or by social-economic groups.

(13) Preparation of necessary draft amendments to the United Nations system of national accounts and investigation of systems of accounts used by countries with centrally planned economies.

(14) Development of standards for the improvement of social statistics generally including statistics bearing on levels or conditions of living and questions of employment and unemployment, co-operating with the specialized agencies towards this end.

(15) List of basic statistical series for economic and social development.

(16) Statistics of tourism.

IX. Draft resolution for action by the Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the importance of population censuses as a means of obtaining essential information for programmes of economic and social development,

Noting with satisfaction the progress made throughout the world during the period around 1950 in carrying out enumerations of population, and the present interest shown by countries in various regional meetings in making early preparations for their next censuses,

Having regard to the recommendations of the Statistical Commission on this subject at its ninth session²¹ and to the recommendation of the Population Commission at its eighth session that countries be encouraged to undertake censuses and to report the basic information obtained from census enumerations,²²

1. *Recommends* that the Governments of Member States conduct a population census during the ten-year period 1956 to 1965 and preferably around 1960;

2. *Recommends* that such censuses, which are primarily designed to serve national needs, should take into account as far as possible the wishes expressed in international and regional census recommendations.

²¹ See paragraphs 87 to 107 of this report.

²² *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Nineteenth Session, Supplement No. 5, para. 65.*

ANNEX

Programme of distribution statistics

1. The following programme of statistics of the wholesale, retail and related service trades involves the collection and compilation of (i) comprehensive data preferably once every five years but at least once every ten years, (ii) less detailed statistics for each intervening year and (iii) restricted figures monthly or quarterly.

A. COVERAGE

2. *Quinquennial or decennial inquiries*: The field to be covered in the collection and publication of data once every five or ten years should consist of reporting units that fall into International Standard Industrial Classification Groups 611 (Wholesale trade), 612 (Retail trade) 826 (Business services except professional consulting, accounting and bookkeeping), 831 (Motion picture production, distribution and projection), 832 (Theatres and related services), 833 (Recreation services, except theatres and motion pictures), 842 (Restaurants, cafés, taverns and other drinking and eating places), 843 (Hotels, rooming houses, camps and other lodging places), 844 (Laundries and laundry service; cleaning and dyeing), 845 (Barber and beauty shops), 846 (Portrait and commercial photographic studios), 849 (Personal service not elsewhere classified).^a It may be desirable to limit such inquiries initially to reporting units that fall into International Standard Industrial Classification Groups 611 (Wholesale trade) and 612 (Retail trade).

3. *Annual inquiries*: The field to be covered in the collection and publication of data for each intervening year between the quinquennial or decennial inquiries might be (i) limited initially to reporting units included in International Standard Industrial Classification Groups 612 (Retail trade) and in 611 (Wholesale trade) which hold stocks and (ii) extended later to the remainder of the reporting units in International Standard Industrial Classification Group 611 and the other International Standard Industrial Classification Groups listed above.

4. *Monthly or quarterly inquiries*: The field to be covered in the collection and publication of data monthly

or quarterly might be (i) limited initially to reporting units included in International Standard Industrial Classification Groups 612 (Retail trade) and in 611 (Wholesale trade) which hold stocks and (ii) extended later to the remainder of the reporting units in International Standard Industrial Classification Group 612 and in the other International Standard Industrial Classification groups listed above which are of particular importance in the country.

B. ITEMS OF DATA TO BE SOUGHT

5. The items of data that might be sought from reporting units quinquennially or decennially, annually and monthly or quarterly are set out in the table that follows. An entry of × in a cell of the table means that the corresponding item of data, indicated in the stub of the table, is recommended for collection and publication with respect to all of the kinds of reporting units which are encompassed in the pertinent inquiry, indicated in the boxhead of the table. An entry of the description of selected kinds of reporting units in a cell of the table means that the corresponding item of data should be sought only for these kinds of reporting units in the pertinent inquiry. The items of data to be sought in quinquennial or decennial and annual inquiries are also separated into categories I and II in order to suggest the order in which countries might consider including them in these inquiries. Items of data were placed into category II rather than category I for the following reasons: the item was often less urgently needed than those in category I; or was particularly difficult to collect. However, these factors may differ from country to country for particular items of data. Therefore countries will wish to examine the suggested category of priority for each item of data in the light of their own circumstances.

^a See Indexes to the *International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities*, Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 4, Add. 1, United Nations.

Item of data	Inquiries once every five or ten years		Inquiries for each intervening year		Inquiries for each month or quarter
	Category I	Category II	Category I	Category II	
A. Establishments characteristics					
1. Kind of activity	×		×		×
2. Kind of business	×		× ¹		× ¹
3. Type of operation	Wholesale and retail trade		Wholesale trade		
4. Location	×			×	×
5. Kind of economic organization	×		Retail trade	Wholesale trade	
6. Kind of legal organization	×				
B. Number of establishments as of one day	×		×		

¹ Kind of business should be distinguished according to broader classes in annual and monthly or quarterly inquiries than in quinquennial or decennial ones.

Item of data	Inquiries once every five or ten years		Inquiries for each intervening year		Inquiries for each month or quarter
	Category I	Category II	Category I	Category II	
C. Employment and wages and salaries					
1. Number of working proprietors, unpaid family workers and employees for one period					
(a) Total for each status group	×				
(b) Each status group distinguished according to sex and adult and youth		×			
2. Number of employees					
(a) Distinguished according to full and part-time for same period as in 1	×				
(b) For several periods, possibly one in each quarter of the inquiry year, one of which might be same period as in 1	×		×		
3. Wages and salaries paid during inquiry year					
(a) Total	×		×		
(b) Distinguished according to full and part-time		×			
4. Wages and salaries paid during same period as in 1, distinguished according to full and part-time employees	×				
D. Expenditures and sales for fixed assets during inquiry year					
1. Expenditures on fixed assets distinguishing new from second-hand goods and machinery, fixtures and equipment other than transport, transport equipment, buildings and other construction, and land from each other		×		×	
2. Sales of fixed assets distinguishing machinery, fixtures and equipment other than transport, transport equipment, buildings and other construction, and land from each other		×		×	
E. Inventories at beginning and end of inquiry year of goods intended for sale, whether processed or not	×		×		×
F. Value of all sales during inquiry year					
1. Total	×		×		×
2. Distinguished according to :					
(a) Sales of goods and sales of services	×				
(b) Sales of services by kind of activity		×			
(c) Sales on own account and sales on the account of others	Wholesale trade ²			Wholesale trade ²	
(d) Sales by kind of commodity		Wholesale and retail trade ³			
(e) Sales by type of customer		Wholesale trade			
(f) Sales by method of payment		Retail trade			
G. Accounts receivable as of end of inquiry year	×		×		
H. Value of all purchases during inquiry year of goods intended for sale, whether processed or not	×			×	

² If feasible, this distinction should be made only for wholesale trade for which sales on the account of others are common (e.g., wholesale agents and brokers).

³ Value of sales or purchases should be classified by kind of commodity, whichever it is more practicable to do.

C. DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS FOR THE REPORTING UNIT AND ITEMS OF DATA

(a) The reporting unit

6. *Definition:* The desirable reporting unit for purposes of collecting the items of data enumerated above is the establishment, i.e., the store, shop, office, or other

single location at which a combination of resources and activities is directed by one ownership in carrying out one kind of business. The establishment includes associated auxiliary units, e.g., subsidiary warehouses, garages, offices in its proximity. This definition contrasts the establishment with (i) the enterprise, which may consist of a number of establishments at different locations

and in different kinds of business or (ii) departments, which are subdivisions of the establishment engaged in the different activities involved in doing one kind of business. It should be noted that this does not preclude the desirability of using the enterprise as the reporting unit in other kinds of inquiries (e.g., into finances or operating costs) or even for some of the items of data enumerated above. In practice, the extent to which information can be obtained for different kinds of business at one or more locations or for one kind of business at different locations that are under the same ownership, determines whether it is feasible to divide them into different establishments. It may be particularly difficult to gather some of the data sought with regard to capital expenditures, inventories and purchases or especially inconvenient to gather monthly or quarterly information for each of separate kinds of business or locations that are under the same ownership. In these cases, it may be necessary to combine into one establishment (i) different kinds of business carried on by one ownership at one location, (ii) one kind of business carried on by one ownership at different locations or even (iii) different kinds of business carried on by one ownership at different locations. In these circumstances, efforts should be made to restrict the scope of the reporting unit as much as is practicable, e.g., to one location or to one kind of business at proximate but different locations.

7. *Totality of coverage*: The items of data gathered for reporting units which fall into the coverage of distribution inquiries should encompass all of the pertinent resources and activities of these units.

(b) *Establishment characteristics and number of establishments*

8. *Kind of activity*: The major kind of activity carried on by the establishment, i.e., wholesale trade, retail trade, or service. The *International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities*^b might be utilized to classify establishments by kind of activity.

9. *Kind of business*: This distinction is based primarily on the major kinds of commodities sold by wholesale or retail trade establishments and the major kinds of service rendered by service establishments. Without further study it is not feasible to suggest guiding principles or a system for classifying wholesale or retail trade establishments by kind of business. Service establishments should be classified by kind of business according to groups of the *International Standard Industrial Classification*^b. More detailed distinctions as to kind of business should be made in quinquennial or decennial inquiries than in annual and monthly or quarterly inquiries.

10. *Type of operation*: This heading relates to the principal way or means of doing business of wholesale and retail trade establishments. For wholesale establishments, classification is suggested into (i) wholesalers

who buy and sell on their own account—sometimes called merchant wholesalers, (ii) manufacturer's sales offices and branches—those who sell for a manufacturing enterprise of which they are a part and (iii) agents and brokers—those who buy and sell on the accounts of others. It may also be desirable (i) to separate assemblers of agricultural products from other wholesalers who buy and sell on their own account and (ii) to distinguish between manufacturer's sales offices and manufacturer's sales branches. The latter distinction might be based on whether the establishment invoices sales or holds stocks, whichever is the more appropriate for a country. Subdivision of the foregoing broad categories into more detailed ones that correspond to common ways of wholesaling may be appropriate for some countries. Examples of more detailed classes are division of (i) all or some of the foregoing broad categories into domestic, import and export trade, (ii) merchant wholesalers into wholesalers and manufacturers, wholesalers only, and wholesalers and retailers, (iii) domestic merchant wholesalers into full-service and limited service (e.g., cash-carry, wagon distributors, desk jobbers, drop shippers). For retail establishments, classifications that are most appropriate for the country might be used—for example, store (self-service or not), stall, public market, leased department, mail-order house, house-to-house canvassing or vending machine operator.

11. *Kind of economic organization*: The number of wholesale, retail or service establishments owned by the same enterprise. The classification might at least distinguish between single-establishment and multi-establishment enterprises. Multi-establishment enterprises might be divided into classes according to the number of establishments that are most appropriate for each country.

12. *Kind of legal organization*: The legal form of the enterprise which owns the establishment. The classification by kind of legal organization should at least distinguish individual proprietorships, limited liability organizations (e.g., corporations, joint stock companies, co-operatives) and all others. In addition, Governments might make distinctions which are meaningful according to their requirements, laws and customs, such as distinctions between privately-owned, Government-owned or jointly-owned enterprises.

13. *Location*: The place at which the establishment is physically located. A country should draw distinctions according to the areas that are used for administration, ranging from large areas (e.g., divisions or provinces), intermediate areas, to local areas (e.g., towns). In addition, countries may find it desirable to distinguish economic areas, utilizing, for this purpose, population density and distribution or geographic patterns of transportation, marketing or industrial characteristics.

14. *Size of establishment*: Number of engaged (working proprietors, unpaid family workers and employees) during one period and value of sales during the year of inquiry, should be utilized to classify establishments by size. Some countries may find it necessary to sub-

^b See *Indexes to the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 1956.XVII.2).

stitute number of employees for number engaged because of their source of employment statistics and the character of their economy. In classifying establishments according to number engaged, at least 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 might be utilized as lower class limits.

15. *Number of establishments*: For a count of the population of establishments, the number of establishments in business on a particular day should be utilized. For many other purposes, it will be found necessary to utilize the number of establishments to which the data relate.

(c) *Employment and wages and salaries*

16. *Numbers engaged*: The number of different working proprietors, unpaid family workers and employees who worked for an establishment (in or outside it) at any time during a specified period, preferably a pay period or calendar week should be utilized. Included are persons on short-term leaves such as sick leave, casual leave or paid vacations; excluded are persons on unlimited leave, military leave or pensions.

17. *Status groups*: Working proprietors are all owners of an unincorporated business (individual proprietorship or partnership) who were actively engaged in the work of its establishment. Unpaid family workers are members of the household of any of the owners of an unincorporated business who worked for its establishment without pay for at least a minimum amount of time—possibly one-third of the normal working time for similar establishments. Employees are persons other than working proprietors and unpaid family workers who worked for pay. Included among employees are directors and managers who receive salaries for their work except members of boards of directors who only attend meetings of these boards. Included also are salesmen and other employees who are paid on a commission basis.

18. *Distinction between adults and juveniles*: It is not feasible to suggest a standard age for distinguishing adults from juveniles. The distinction might be made in accordance with the existing laws and customs of each country.

19. *Distinction between full-time and part-time for employees*: It is not feasible to suggest a standard distinction for distinguishing full-time from part-time employees. The distinction might be drawn at some fraction of working time for a specified period that is normal to the kind of business and country involved.

20. *Wages and salaries*: All payments, in cash or in kind, made by an establishment to employees in connexion with their work during the period of inquiry, e.g., a calendar year. Included are wages and salaries, commissions, bonuses, cost-of-living or dearness allowances and dismissal grants paid to employees in the course of the year; and withholding taxes, social insurance contributions and the like payable by them and deducted by the employer. Excluded are social security contributions payable by the employer and family allowances, pension payments and other social insurance benefits paid. If feasible, data should be gathered with respect to these payments; and it may be desirable to distinguish tax and social-security deductions included in wages

and salaries from the rest of wages and salaries. Payments in kind (e.g., free accommodations, food, clothing) might be valued at the market price of the goods and services provided. In practice, it may be necessary to value payments in kind according to the cost to the establishment of the goods or services involved.

(d) *Expenditures and sales for fixed assets*

21. *Scope and valuation of expenditures*: This should include all acquisitions by the establishment for its business, whether obtained from other establishments or produced by its employees, of physical assets which are expected to have a productive life of more than one year (land, buildings, stores and shops, fixtures and furniture, machinery, equipment and vehicles), both new and second-hand, including major alterations and renovations but excluding repairs and maintenance. Acquisitions from other establishments should be valued at full cost incurred, i.e., at delivery price plus the cost of installation, including any necessary fees and taxes; and they should be recorded as expenditures only on their completion and delivery to the control of the establishment. For fixed assets produced by the establishment for its own use, the cost of all work put in place during the year should be recorded, whether they are completed or not, and the cost of the labour and materials and, if possible, the overhead utilized in this work should be included. In practice, the figures reported by establishments with developed accounting systems will relate to the expenditures charged to the establishment's fixed asset accounts. A number of conceptual difficulties can be avoided by seeking these figures, although the data are likely to depart, by understatement, from the concept defined above.

22. *Distinction between new and second-hand fixed assets*: New fixed assets are capital goods which have not been used before in the country, including all imported fixed assets whether new or used. Second-hand fixed assets are all capital goods other than new, i.e., all fixed assets previously used in the country, including those which have been reconditioned or altered before acquisition.

23. *Scope and valuation of sales*: All disposals of fixed assets which have been used by the establishment, regardless of their condition, valued according to the proceeds received for them.

24. *Distinctions between buildings and structures; machinery, fixtures and equipment other than transport; transport equipment; and land*: Buildings and structures include (i) all structures such as stores, shops, warehouses, garages and offices, (ii) integral parts of these structures, such as elevators, heating and ventilating systems and (iii) improvements to land such as clearing and preparing construction sites and landscaping. Fixtures, machinery and equipment other than transport include (i) furnishings such as counters, shelves, storage bins and store and office furniture, (ii) machinery such as generators, motors and grinders and (iii) equipment such as refrigerators. Transport equipment includes automobiles, trucks, carts, ships, aircraft and other means of road, water and air transport. Land includes the value of sites without taking into account improvements and structures.

(e) *Inventories*

25. *Coverage*: The value indicated should be the values at the beginning and end of the inquiry period for goods intended for sale, whether later processed or not and irrespective of where held, that are owned (i.e., to which title is possessed) by the establishment if it is part of a single-unit enterprise or that are controlled by the establishment and owned by its parent enterprise if it is part of a multi-unit enterprise. Goods for which the establishment has transferred the effective right to use to others with a view to ultimate purchase by them, are excluded; goods for which effective right to use has been transferred to the establishment with a view to ultimate purchase by it, are included. In practice, it may be necessary to exclude certain kinds of goods owned by the establishment but not held by it, e.g., goods bought by overseas agents and not received by the establishment. Goods intended for sale, whether later processed or not, include goods ready for sale and materials that are transformed by the establishment before sale in the form of either goods or services, e.g., tea that is blended, green coffee beans that are roasted and blended, foods used by restaurants to serve meals, or containers and other materials utilized in packing goods.

26. *Valuation*: In principle, stocks of goods intended for sale should be valued at replacement cost (i.e., at delivered cost to the establishment) at the date of inquiry. In practice, it is necessary to accept the values kept by each establishment in its accounting records, which may be replacement cost, original cost or some other value. In this connexion, efforts should be made to obtain stock values from each establishment on the same basis from period to period.

(f) *Sales*

27. *Coverage*: The sales value of all goods, whether transformed by the establishment or not, for which ownership or effective right to use with a view to ultimate purchase has been transferred to others; and of all services rendered during the inquiry period, irrespective of time or method of payment. Hire-purchase or instalment contracts should be included in sales when they are made. Included are goods which are sold by an establishment on its own account and on that of others or withdrawn by the owners of an establishment for their own use. Excluded are goods shipped for sale on consignment for display or similar purposes, or to other establishments of the same enterprise. Included in the sales value of services are commissions and fees received by the establishment for the sales and purchases made by it on the account of others. (Establishments that transfer the control of goods to other establishments of the same enterprise should deduct the purchase value of these transfers from the value of purchases.) In practice, the time at which sales would be reported depends on the time at which the transaction is recorded by the establishment. This may be at the time the sale is contracted for or invoiced, goods are shipped, services are rendered, or payment is made.

28. *Valuation*: The sales value of goods and services is the total sum to be paid. Included are sales price,

sales, excise and other indirect taxes and duties collected, and financing, delivery and installation charges if these services are rendered by the establishment. It is desirable to report indirect taxes and duties collected separately and, in addition, to obtain separate figures on subsidies received in connexion with sales. It may also be desirable to report financing charges separately from the other parts of sales value. Sales price is net of discounts, rebates and similar allowances granted, but it includes the value of goods traded in or bartered as part of the sale. Goods withdrawn by the owners of the establishments and services rendered to them should be valued at the appropriate market price (in other words, as if sold to a customer); and it may be advantageous to collect the value of these sales separately from the value of other sales. In practice, it may be necessary to value owners' withdrawals at cost to the establishment.

29. *Classification according to sales of goods and of services by kind of activity*: The value of sales should be divided into sales of goods and receipts by kind of service rendered, according to whether the principal activity involved in each sale is the transfer of goods or the rendering of a particular kind of service. The value of commodities used in the rendering of services (e.g., food in restaurants, materials and parts in repairing) would be included in receipts for services. The classification of receipts for services should be in accordance with the categories of the *International Standard Industrial Classification* or if desired, subdivisions of them, e.g., restaurants, lodging, laundering and cleaning and dyeing, and barbering and beauty culture. Receipts of commissions and other fees for the sale or purchase of goods on the account of others should be shown separately.

30. *Distinction between on own account and on the accounts of others*: Sales of goods on own account are all sales of goods that are owned by an establishment which is part of a single-unit enterprise or that are controlled by an establishment which is part of a multi-unit enterprise that owns the goods, to another. Sales of goods on the account of others are all other sales of goods.

31. *Classification of value of sales by kind of commodity, type of customer and method of payment*: Value of sales should be classified by kind of commodity, type of customer and method of payment for sales that are negotiated in detail by the establishment itself (e.g., invoiced by it), whether on its own account or on that of others. It is not feasible at this juncture to suggest a system or guiding principles for classification by kind of commodity for use internationally. In classifying sales by type of customer, the value of sales should be distinguished according to sales to (1) foreign customers and (2) domestic customers, which might be further classified into (a) sales for resale to wholesale establishments, (b) sales for resale to retail establishments, (c) other sales to business establishments including manufacturing establishments, (d) sales to educational, health and welfare institutions, (e) sales to government and (f) sales to households. In classifying sales by method of payment, a few broad categories that draw distinctions according to length and method of payment and financing charges should be used. Cash, instalment or hire-purchase (spread of

payment over an extended period of time with right of repossession) and all other methods of payments are suggested.

(g) *Accounts receivable*

32. The value of the credit outstanding as of the end of the inquiry year that was advanced in selling goods on own account and in rendering services.

(h) *Purchases*

33. *Coverage*: The delivered value of goods intended for sale, whether later processed or not, the ownership of which has been acquired by the establishment if part of a single-unit enterprise or the control of which has been acquired by the establishment if part of a multi-unit enterprise which owns the goods; and the cost of sub-contracted work. Included are goods for which effective right to use with a view to ultimate purchase has been transferred to the establishment. Purchases of goods should be recorded at the time of transfer of ownership, effective right to use, or control; and cost of sub-contracted work at the time of completion, irrespective of time

of payment. In practice, the time when purchases are reported would depend on the time at which they are recorded by the establishment. This might be (i) at the time of contract, (ii) at the time of transfer of title, effective right to use, or control through shipping bills or similar documents, or (iii) at the time of receipt.

34. *Valuation*: Purchases of goods should be valued at delivered cost to the establishment, including, in addition to purchase price, sales, excise and other indirect taxes and duties, and delivery and similar charges involved in the purchases and net of returns, discounts, rebates, and other allowances received. In the price of purchases by the establishment there should be included the value of goods traded in or bartered in payment for the purchase. Transfers from other establishments of the same enterprise should be valued as though purchased. When this is not possible in practice, transfers might be valued at cost to the enterprise on delivery to the establishment, i.e., original purchase price, delivery and similar charges, labour and material directly used and possibly overhead. Subcontracted work should be valued at its actual cost to the establishment.

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