46179

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.14/687
E/CN.14/CAS.10/21
13 January 1978

ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

REPORT OF THE TENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN STATISTICIANS

Addis Ababa, 17-22 October 1977

CONTENTS

CONTENTS (continued)

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Opening and duration of the session

1. The tenth session of the Conference of African Statisticians was held in ECA Headquarters, Addis Ababa, from 17 to 22 October 1977. The meeting was opened by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa.

Attendance

2. The session was attended by representatives of the following member States of the Commission: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Zambia and Zaïre. The associate member States of France and the United Kingdom were also represented.

3. The following States Members of the United Nations were represented by observers: Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden and the USSR. A representative of the United Nations Statistical Office was present. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme were represented. The session was attended by representatives of the following specialized agencies: the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The following intergovernmental bodies were represented: the Commission of the European Communities, the East African Community (EAC), the African and Mauritian Common Organization (OCAM) and the African Association of Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO).

4. Observers were also present from the Munich Centre for Advanced Training in Applied Statistics for Developing Countries, CESD of Paris, the Institut africain et mauricien de statistique et d'économie appliquée of Kigali, the Institute for Demographic Training and Research (IFORD) of Yaoundé, the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics of Makerere University in Kampala and the East African Statistical Training Centre of Dar es Salaam.

Election of officers

5. Mr. Parmeet Singh (Kenya) was elected Chairman of the Conference, with Mr. Lamine Diop (Senegal) and Mr. Luis Colaço (Angola) as first and second Vice-Chairmen respectively and Mr. S.O. Adeyinka (Nigeria) as Rapporteur.

B. AGENDA

6. On 17 October 1977 the Conference adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening address
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda (CAS.10/INF.1)

4. Matters arising from the ninth session of the Conference
   (a) Report on ECA statistical activities, 1975-1977 (E/CN.14/CAS.10/1)
   (b) EDP inventory (E/CN.14/CAS.10/2)
   (c) Directory of African Statisticians

5. Statistical organization and training
   (a) Working Group to Review Statistical Training Needs in Africa (E/CN.14/CAS.10/4 and 5)
   (b) Technical assistance in statistical development (E/CN.14/CAS.10/6)

6. National accounts and related statistics
   (a) Implementation of the revised system of national accounts (E/CN.14/CAS.10/7,8 and 9; E/CN.14/SEIB/10)
   (b) Public sector statistics (E/CN.14/SEIB/11)
   (c) Prices (E/CN.14/CAS.10/10)

7. General economic statistics
   (a) External trade (E/CN.14/CAS.10/11)
   (b) Energy (E/CN.14/CAS.10/12; E/CN.14/SEIB/10)
   (c) Industry (E/CN.14/CAS.10/13 and 20; E/CN.14/SEIB/11)
   (d) Agriculture
   (e) Other economic statistics (E/CN.14/SEIB/8,9 and 10)

8. Demographic and social statistics
   (a) Population and housing censuses and surveys (E/CN.14/CAS.10/14,15 and 16)
   (b) African Household Survey Capability Programme (E/CN.14/CAS.10/17 and 18)
   (c) Other demographic and social statistics (E/CN.14/CAS.10/19; E/CN.14/SEIB/8 and 10)

9. Programme of work and priorities (E/CN.14/CAS.10/1)

10. Other matters

11. Consideration of the draft provisional agenda for the eleventh session of the Conference

12. Adoption of the report of the Conference

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Death of Mr. Koko Kouakou (Ivory Coast)

7. Before beginning its proceedings the Conference observed a minute's silence in memory of Mr. Koko Kouakou, former Director of the Statistical Service of the Ivory Coast, who had died in January 1977 after a brief illness, leaving a wife and four children. Mr. Kouakou had graduated as ingénieur statisticien-économiste in 1962. In addition to directing the Statistical Service of the Ivory Coast for more than 10 years, he had represented the Minister of Education as Chairman of the Governing Council of the Abidjan School of Statistics. His death had been a severe loss to the Ivory Coast and to the statistical community in Africa.

Opening address

8. The session was opened by the ECA Executive Secretary who, after welcoming the participants, noted that the Conference had decided to meet for only one week instead of the previous 10 days but that its workload remained heavy. Co-ordination and expansion of training through the proposed Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) would be a major item for consideration on the basis of recommendations made by African consultants and a regional working group. Other topics of special importance were the African Census Programme (ACP) and the follow-up African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP).

9. The Executive Secretary drew a distinction between STPA, which provided basic manpower inputs to statistical development, and ACP and AHSCP, which were more directly concerned with the work of statistical services. He urged that proper balance should be maintained between those two kinds of activity.

10. The Conference also had important work to do in the fields of national accounts, external trade, industrial and other statistics, which should be dealt with during the short meeting.

11. In addition he pointed out that ECA was striving to develop all its activities along more operational lines, and requested the Conference to consider its own contribution to that effort on the basis of suggestions made by the secretariat. He appreciated that changes would have to come slowly, because most statistical resources currently available were needed for national purposes. Nevertheless, statistics was a promising field for technical co-operation among developing countries, and it would be wise to make an early start.

Matters arising from the ninth session of the Conference (agenda item 4)

(a) Report on ECA statistical activities, 1975-1977

12. A member of the secretariat presented a report on ECA statistical activities since the ninth session of the Conference (E/CN.14/CAS.10/1). A number of factors relevant to the planning of future work were noted for consideration.

13. The Conference then devoted itself to meeting the challenge of the Executive Secretary in his opening speech to become more operational and more responsive to the changing situation in Africa. The Executive Secretary had identified two main

requirements: measurement of the physical quality of life, which would involve demographic and socio-economic data, and data in support of the effort to establish a new international economic order, which involved greater self-reliance and an increase in net financial inflows.

14. Regarding the first of the two points, the Conference noted that demographic data in the region had been considerably improved through the African Census Programme and that integrated and continuing data on levels of living and the related economic, social and demographic characteristics would become available through satisfactory implementation of the African Household Survey Capability Programme.

15. On the second point, improvement of price data at various levels was essential for a satisfactory analysis of the region's position in world trade. Most of the other requirements enumerated by the Executive Secretary could be met through better external trade statistics and effective utilization of other statistics derived from administrative records.

16. The Conference fully supported the view that the time was opportune for a change in its previous consultative and advisory activities in order for it to become more self-reliant. Relevant considerations were the assumption of direct responsibility for some aspects of African statistical development, and the possible reconstitution of the Conference with its responsibilities and status precisely defined within the ECA structure. That would require the formulation of a new set of terms of reference and new legal and administrative arrangements.

17. There was extensive discussion of operational activities that could be organized by the Conference with secretariat support. Such activities concerned technical co-operation among countries of the region and included intergovernmental advisory services, the hosting of working groups by countries with experience in particular fields and the provision of in-service training by such countries, study tours and the exchange of expertise through technical documents. It was agreed that the secretariat should compile a list of national experts with special experience as a basis for extending existing co-operative activities. In that connexion it had to be borne in mind that experts would be available, if at all, only for limited periods. There was also a need for a co-ordinating service, which might be provided by the secretariat.

18. The Conference requested the secretariat to study possible new constitutional arrangements in the light of international experience. Relevant considerations were the limited success of the Conference of Asian Statisticians in converting itself to a Committee on Statistics, and the rather more operational activities of the Conference of European Statisticians and the working group of the United Nations Statistical Commission. The secretariat's investigation should also pay attention to the experience of socialist and Latin American countries. The secretariat undertook to prepare a working paper and circulate it for comments by countries of the region. If a consensus emerged among African statistical services on future arrangements, it would be possible to present definite proposals to the ECA Conference of Ministers before the eleventh session of the Conference of African Statisticians.

19. In connexion with those arrangements, the Conference expressed concern about the use of limited national resources for regional activities. There was a need for concerted regional action, though it was noted that financial constraints might limit the success of the proposed programme unless the secretariat vigorously sought ways and means of providing the financial support needed.

(b) EDP inventory

20. A document entitled "Electronic data processing inventory" (E/CN.14/CAS.10/2) was introduced by a representative of the secretariat. It was pointed out that the document reflected mainly the results of a recent inquiry among African countries, to which only 22 countries had responded. If there had been a better response to the inquiry, a more definitive document might have been produced. An appeal was made to countries to make the next round of the survey a success.

21. The Conference noted that there was increasing demand for the use of computers in data processing in order to speed up publication of the results of important statistical work on such topics as external trade, population censuses and household surveys. However, the question of under-utilization of computers was raised in the light of the considerable foreign exchange cost involved in the installation and wire of hardware and procurement of software. A representative of the secretariat pointed out that it was difficult to make any comparison of the rate of utilization of computers because of differences between makes and models. He described briefly the two different concepts of such measurement, which were referred to as quantitative and qualitative measurement. In view of the difficulties he recommended the adoption of the simplistic method of measuring the monthly elapsed clock time for standardized types of computer applications, like production, programme development, programme tests, equipment maintenance and equipment down-time.

22. The Conference was concerned at the problem of proliferation of computer equipment in the region. It agreed that the need had arisen for the establishment of a data processing authority in each of the countries where date processing installations were in existance or were proposed. Such a body would initiate policy for the optimal use of computer time, and rationalize equipment acquisition and utilization. The authority would also promote the development and applications of informatics.

23. In the course of the discussion three areas of difficulty were recognized: inadequate training facilities, shortages of suitably qualified staff and problems in software development.

24. The Conference examined the three areas and noted that there had been undue dependence on training provided by the manufacturers and suppliers of the equipment, a situation which was likely to lead to bias in favour of the kind of equipment they provided. The Conference therefore stressed the need for a quantitative increase training facilities in the region. Countries were also asked to intensify their inservice training programmes in the field of EDP and take advantage of bilateral and multilateral arrangements in developing their EDP capabilities.

25. The Conference noted that there was a training centre in Libreville, Gabon, known as the African Institute of Information. The centre had been established by African and Mauritian Common Organization (OCAM) and was opened to all African countries. The institute trained systems analysts and programmers. Consideration was being given to the establishment by 1979 of a systems engineering section. The Conference was informed of the training facilities provided by the Institute of Computer Science in London and the recent improvement of the training programme so as to accommodate management staff on short courses.

26. The difficulties encountered by newly independent countries, including a lack of expertise and trained personnel, were recognized. Such countries were advised to take advantage of existing training facilities in addition to seeking bilateral aid in achieving that objective.

27. On the question of developing software, the Conference learned of the efforts of the United Nations Statistical Office in developing software packages which were to be made available very soon.

28. In order to increase the utilization of computers it was also agreed that statisticians should be trained as systems analysts and programmers; it was believed that that approach would enhance the quality of statistical production by computer processing.

29. The Conference learned that participation in the field of EDP could also be improved by establishing an association of computer users in the region. That approach should help in promoting exchanges of expertise and computer software. Note was also taken of the work of the International Data Development Association in Marseille.

(c) Directory of African Statisticians

30. Introducing this topic, the secretariat indicated that the suggestions made at the ninth session of the Conference were taken into consideration in the new edition of the Directory. The title of the document has now been changed and separate lists have been drawn up for non-Africans who are classified according to their country of origin or their supporting agency.

31. Some participants suggested that more detailed information should be included concerning the experience and specialization of the statisticians listed in the Directory. It was pointed out that, in view of the considerable number of statisticians who have currently been inventoried, it would not be desirable to carry out such an operation. It would however be useful to prepare a separate "Directory of Specialists" featuring only statisticians with long experience in very specific fields.

32. In response to a question, the secretariat pointed out that only professional statisticians are included in the Directory. It was indicated that it would be desirable to take into account middle-level statisticians employed on important functions in certain countries with staff shortages.

33. Lastly, the participants were invited to up-date the information appearing in the computer sheets made available to them. The Conference set a deadline of 15 November 1977 for receipt of such information in the secretariat, after which the final printing of the Directory would begin.

Statistical organization and training (agenda item 5)

(a) Working Group to Review Statistical Training Needs in Africa

34. The secretariat reported on the implementation of the project entitled "Working Group to Review Statistical Training Needs in Africa" and called the attention of the Conference to the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group contained in document E/CN.14/CAS.10/5, particularly in connexion with the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) which is annexed to this document. A second document entitled "Consultants Report on Statistical training needs in Africa" (E/CN.14/CAS.10/4) was also considered for reference along with the document earlier mentioned in connexion with this item of the agenda.

35. The Conference congratulated the secretariat for successfully carrying out the task entrusted to it at the last session. It also expressed its appreciation of the considerable amount of work done by the consultants and by the Working Group which met in Munich.

36. The Conference noted with satisfaction that the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) is designed as a permanent framework for the development of statistical training in the region during the next ten years and that it should be flexible so as to allow the centres which are not members of it at the time of its establishment to become members later.

37. The Conference debated at considerable length whether priority should be given to the training of professional statisticians, as recommended by the Working Group, or to the training of middle-level staff. In that connexion some participants pointed out that the estimates of requirements showed a ratio of middle-level statistical staff to professional statisticians of only 1.3 to 1, which did not appear realistic in view of the need for more middle-level personnel for the implementation of statistical projects such as censuses and surveys. In answer to that remark it was pointed out that, in accordance with the recommendations of the Working Group, STPA should cover the national needs of the region and not merely those of statistical services or governments in general. It was noted that demand for professional statistical personnel in other sectors (public enterprises, private sector, etc.) is very substantial, while middle-level personnel, with the exception of the case of a few countries, generally remain in the statistical offices. Other participants, pointed out the difficulties in the organization of middle-level training at the national level and felt that such training should be provided in regional centres. On the basis of their experience, some representatives emphasized the importance of middle-level national training courses. The secretariat then noted that the Working Group recommended the organization of such courses at the national level where possible, and suggested the continuation of the courses offered by the regional centres serving more than one country, which will form part of STPA. In addition the regional statistical training programme should assist countries which wished to establish middle-level in-service training programmes.

38. The Conference endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group on this issue but expressed a wish that, where necessary, certain regional centres providing middle-level courses should be expanded. In that regard it noted that the East African Statistical Training Centres (EASTC) in Dar-es-Salaam could take 100 or so students if the problem relating to premises is settled.

39. A few participants expressed doubts concerning the reliability of the estimates which were provided, particularly as regards statistical training requirements. It was indicated that these estimates were established on the basis of information obtained in two surveys organized respectively by ECA and CESD. Supplementary information was drawn from the Directory of African Statisticians and other surveys carried out by ECA in the past. This information thus derives first and foremost from national sources, but the consultants and the secretariat were obliged to make their own estimates for some countries on which the information required was not available.

40. The Conference was of the view that despite their imperfections, the figures presented in the tables relating to STPA probably give a fairly complete and realistic idea of the general situation.

41. Another question which was raised relates to the lack of suitable candidates for statistical training. In that regard the Conference was reminded of some solutions which were suggested by the Working Group, namely the introduction of statistical education in secondary schools, the opening of a preparatory class in the statistical training centres, the admission of some students without an examination, motivation of students, etc. It was confirmed that in all cases it is necessary to ensure good quality training.

42. Some participants said that, because of their considerable needs, their statistical offices recruited students trained in other related disciplines such as economics and sociology and gave those students practical and theoretical in-service training. It was suggested that the statistics contents of training programmes on those related disciplines should be improved.

43. The suggestion that the Directors of the Training Centres in the region should meet every two years was noted.

44. The need to include EDP courses statistics syllabuses was recognized. It was agreed that anybody who did training in statistics should be able to use package programmes and that it was not only enough to be able to communicate with EDP staff.

45. The Conference expressed its agreement on the following specific requirement which should receive special attention in the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA):

(1) The newly independent Portuguese-speaking countries require special help and a separate project is probably needed because of their specific problems;

(2) A new course is needed at the "ingénieur statisticien-economiste" level by the French-language group to complement the current operations at CESD, Paris and the Rabat Centre. The new course could be opened at one of the existing centres.

(3) The new French-speaking centre in Kigali should introduce a middle-level course as soon as possible.

(4) The Kampala Institute is the most difficult project in the programme. This Institute must be developed on an effective regional basis if English-speaking professional requirements are to be met.

(5) Nigeria, the largest country of the region, has correspondingly large requirements. The country will endeavour to pay for its own training but will need expert assistance. It should also envisage an interchange of students with other African countries to avoid isolation.

(6) Expansion of the facilities at the University of Ghana is envisaged as an important means of overcoming the shortfall in professional training for the English-language group. If the Ghanaian authorities agree with the idea, a new project will need to be negotiated.

(7) The English-speaking Centre of Dar-es Salaam (EASTC) which is offering intermediate and middle level courses should increase its capacity as soon as possible in order to meet increasing demands in the East African sub-region.

46. The role of ECA in the implementation of STPA was considered by the Conference. Some participants felt that ECA should co-ordinate the various funds which would be paid under the programme. It was indicated that if ECA received authorization to mobilize the funds required, that might have political implications since countries, particularly those hosting the training centres, have proregatives in that regard. In addition the current regulations within certain donor agencies give the right to negotiate only to countries taken individually or to groups of countries.

47. The Conference was of the view that ECA should play a role of co-ordination and leadership and, for that purpose, it might ensure the dissemination of information on statistical training activities, promote the development of the teaching programmes, particularly by strengthening co-operation among the various training centres, and assist in the quest for financial resources.

48. The Conference felt that the STPA document, although it constituted a sound basis for the programme, should be revised before being sent to African governments for endorsement, and then to international and bilateral sources of assistance. The document should, in particular, indicate ways and means by which each centre might resolve the problem of the training of trainers so that, in time, these centres should not depend on external assistance. The document should also indicate the opportunities offered by the various centres for post-graduate training. Lastly, it should provide more detail on the question of specialization, particularly as regards training in data processing.

49. The Conference confirmed the need for governments to express their willingness to participate in the financing of the programme in two ways: a) expenses arising for the host countries of the STPA centres and b) contributions from the countries using the centres, for example through the payment of that part of the scholarships reserved for tuition fees. It was pointed out that these scholarships may also be financed by external sources such as the indicative planning figure (EPF) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the multiannual programme of the European Development Fund (EDF).

50. Finally the Conference adopted the Report of the Working Group and the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), provided that the above-mentioned revision will be undertaken.

(b) Technical assistance in statistical development

51. The discussion was based on a report on technical assistance in statistical development in Africa (E/CN.14/CAS.10/6) which provided a broad classification of types of technical assistance activities into country projects, regional projects and interregional projects. It gave a quantitative review of the coverage of technical assistance in statistics to countries of Africa provided by UNDP, UNFPA and certain individual countries by a system of funds-in-trust. The review covered the period since the United Nations family had started providing technical assistance in statistics to countries in Africa, and also gave separate figures for the two-year period 1975-1977.

52. The report provided information regarding fellowships awarded and utilized by countries between 1974 and 1977 as a result of specific requests under country IPFs either as part of a project or as a full project. The report briefly discussed the adequacy of published statistics in Africa and also gave a general description of how requests to UNDP and UNFPA for technical assistance in statistics should be made by national statistical organizations.

53. Introducing the item, a representative of the secretariat emphasized that technical co-operation activities were basically directed to two objectives. First, they should enable countries to produce specific data required for drawing up and/or monitoring their socio-economic development plans and related programmes. Secondly, they should enable countries to develop statistical infrastructure and also develop the skills necessary to enhance self-reliance.

54. The secretariat representative observed that there was a constant decline in funds being provided for technical assistance activities in general, and particularly for technical activities in economic statistics.

55. The secretariat therefore sought guidance from the Conference on how that trend could be arrested, since the analysis of published statistics in Africa provided in the document gave no indication that a satisfactory level had been reached in the production of economic statistics. On the contrary, the analysis indicated that action was still needed in many African countries to improve statistics, and particularly economic statistics.

56. It was also pointed out to the Conference that the United Nations Statistical Office was developing additional census and survey data processing software for small computers under a UNFPA-sponsored project, and that an edit package extension to XTALLY had been produced. The representative of the secretariat said that a more extensive and powerful edit package was being developed and was scheduled to be released by the end of 1977.

57. The Conference reiterated its profound concern earlier expressed at the ninth session, at the inadequacy of technical assistance funds allocated to support activities in the field of statistics.

58. Representatives of the secretariat and UNDP explained that it was the responsibility of countries to include under their country IPFs programmes which would provide support for technical assistance in statistics. It was observed that there was a growing tendency for countries to consider technical assistance in statistics as a residual matter. The secretariat and UNDP representatives, while conceding the continual decline in financial allocations for technical assistance in statistics in the countries of the region, urged each statistical offices in the region to persuade the planning ministry, or other authority which co-ordinated all technical assistance programmes, to include statistics in the country's technical assistance programme as one of the areas of priority.

59. The Conference devoted considerable attention to problems associated with the appointment of technical assistance, and the qualifications and work of international experts. Some participants asked whether the secretariat would agree to their nominating experts to fill a post and would recruit such experts. Other observed that, out of ignorance of its actual needs, a country might request technical assistance to conduct a particular survey when in fact that survey was not important at that stage in its statistical development. It was suggested that the secretariat should advise the country concerned to drop the survey as soon as the facts became known instead of allowing the survey to go on and end without any significant results.

60. The secretariat representative noted that every consideration would be given to recruiting a country-nominated expert if he was qualified, but observed that experience showed that, in most cases, experts nominated by countries had proved unsatisfactory. He therefore, warned the Conference against the possible unfortunate consequences of nominating experts to fill posts on their country projects.

61. The secretariat representative further appealed to countries asking for technical assistance to ensure that they provided counterparts for the experts, as that was the only way by which the technical assistance given would yield the desired result of transferring skills to countries. At this point, some participants proposed that in order to ensure that suitable counterpart staff were made available by member countries, the secretariat should request countries to provide curricula vitae for counterparts at the time when requests for technical assistance were made. The proposal was rejected by the Conference.

62. The representatives of the secretariat, and UNDP further pointed out that a country had the final responsibility in deciding on areas for which technical assistance was required under its country IPF. They therefore advised member countries to develop three-to-five-year statistics development programmes and ensure that the programmes met the current requirements of policy makers as well as the general needs of other users. Statistics was not visible subject like bridge-building, and statisticians should stop considering statistics as an end-use product and begin to action-orient their products to serve policy makers in a demonstrable manner. Statisticians were urged to go all out in aggressively selling the products of their discipline. That was very important in view of the low priority that statistics was usually accorded in developing countries.

63. The secretariat representative then referred to a letter dated 6 August 1977 issued by the Deputy Administrator of UNDP to all UNDP Resident Representatives, calling for a special review of the machinery for co-ordination of technical assistance in the field of statistics in each country. It was suggested that, in future, information should be provided on all statistical projects and statistical components of other projects executed by all the specialized agencies in order to provide a more comprehensive picture.

64. The Conference was informed that the letter had been sent by UNDP at the instance of the United Nations Statistical Office, acting on the directions of a working group of the Statistical Commission.

65. In an earlier enquiry, a few countries had provided information on the co-ordinating machinery that existed in their countries, while others had indicated they had no co-ordinating machinery. The response for African countries had been poor.

66. The working group had considered a report based on the replies received, and had instructed the Statistical Office to undertake further work in that area. In order to be able to provide information covering the practices in African countries, the secretariat had circulated the UNDP letter to the Conference and requested member countries to provide information on:

(a) What machinery existed in member countries for the co-ordination of technical assistance in general and technical assistance in statistics in particular; and

(b) Whether the machinery, if it existed, was operational.

67. The secretariat also requested member countries to provide specific examples of problems or instances of the absence of co-ordination which might have led to duplication or inefficient use of resources. The secretariat also wished to learn of instances where there had been successful co-ordination at country level.

68. The secretariat requested member countries to provide the information in writing in order not to delay discussion of other agenda items.

National accounts and related statistics (agenda item 6)

(a) Implementation of the revised system of national accounts

69. Under this sub-item, the Conference discussed the following papers: "Current weaknesses in African national accounts estimates and suggestions for improvement with a view to further implementing the SNA" (E/CN.14/CAS.10/7); "Measurement and valuation of non-marketed production" (E/CN.14/CAS.10/8); and "Passage from the French (Courcier) system of national accounting to the revised SNA and vice versa" (E/CN.14/CAS.10/9).

70. The discussions on the first two subjects covered the development of basic data used for national accounts, while the third study was designed to help national accountants and planners in the French-speaking countries used to the French (Courcier) system to make the passage to SNA without difficulty.

71. Three common weaknesses in the basic statistics used for compiling national accounts in many countries were identified. They were:

(a) Deficiency of statistics on gross output and value added of agriculture, especially for food crops and livestock;

(b) Lack of information on gross output and value added of the services sector, as well as non-availability of data on non-organized activities not covered by censuses and surveys; and

(c) Lack of relevant information on household expenditure.

72. Suggestions for the development of basic statistics both in quantity and quality, which was a prerequisite for improving the quality of national accounts estimates, were examined. They included:

(a) Well organized annual agricultural surveys with extensive crop cutting exercises, and sample surveys to collect information on the labour force, the mode and use of production, farm management, expenditure on inputs and fixed capital formation, etc.;

(b) Specific sample surveys for livestock, fishing, the service sector and other non-organized activities; and

(c) Household budget surveys to gather information on income distribution, consumption, saving, etc.

73. The participants recognized that the defects enumerated should be remedied in order for national accounts to become an effective tool for economic analysis and planning. Some participants raised the question of the need for internal co-operation between the department responsible for compilation of national accounts and the departments which used the statistics. In setting up programmes for the development of statistics, the usefulness of multipurpose surveys was stressed in view of the limited resources in the countries of the region.

74. The representative of Nigeria informed the Conference of the adoption of SNA by his country, although there were still many gaps in basic statistics to be filled in the coming years, mainly in the fields of agriculture, livestock, forestry, road transport and distribution services. As far as non-marketed production was concerned, the evaluation of those activities had not yet been undertaken in the Nigerian national accounts, because of a lack of information and staff. However, efforts were being made to incorporate it into the national accounts.

75. The representative of Algeria said that his country had actually adopted SNA, but planned at the same time to present national accounts aggregates according to its own system to meet the needs of the Algerian economy by adopting some concepts and definitions of the MPS (Material Product System). Concerning the estimates of non-marketed production, he pointed out the weakness of the method of deriving non-marketed production as a residual. He expressed the hope that a more "refined" method could be found. At this point, it was replied that the method of estimating non-marketed production depended on the availability of information; therefore the method of estimation could be improved if more relevant information was made available.

76. It was agreed that the ECA secretariat should produce for the next session of the Conference a report on the status of national accounts development in the region and the uses to which the data were being put.

77. The Conference recognized that, in the field of national accounts, technical assistance would still be required for some time by many countries of the region. The representative of OCAM said that the ECA secretariat's efforts in that respect should be continued, and that training of national staff in national accounts should be intensified.

78. In view of the importance of non-marketed or subsistence production in the economies of many African countries, the Conference welcomed the idea of a working group which would provide guidelines for the measurement and valuation of their activities. The objective of the group would be to indicate the information needed and its use in order to improve the estimates of non-marketed production in the national accounts of the countries of the region.

79. Although considerable progress had been made in the region in introducing SNA during the past nine years or so, and although many African countries which had formerly followed the Courcier system had now more or less converted to SNA, it was recognized that the study would be of interest for national accountants and planners in providing guidelines for making adjustments and approximations in order to arrive at roughly comparable series to meet the needs of economic analysis and development planning.

80. The representative of the Munich Training Centre informed the Conference that two training courses in national accounts based on the revised SNA, including input-output tables, would be organized at the Centre in 1978 - one from March to June for English-speaking countries, and another from September to December for French-speaking countries. The two courses would emphasize the adaptation of the revised SNA to developing countries. The representative of the United Kingdom informed the Conference that a Seminar on National Accounts for Producers and Users of National Income Statistics was to be held from January to April 1978 at the Institute of Development Studies in the University of Sussex. Fellowships were available for the seminar.

81. A list of proposed modifications to the ECA work programme in national accounts, finance and prices was circulated for consideration under item 9.

(b) Public sector statistics

82. A member of the secretariat reported that papers on "Public finance statistics 1970-1974" and "Capital investment and financing in the public sector, 1960-1975" had been prepared for the eleventh issue of the "Statistical and economic information bulletin for Africa". As the bulletin was still with the printers, copies would be distributed to all statistical offices in the region at a later date.

83. The secretariat representative outlined the weaknesses and the time lag in current statistics relating to the public sector in general, and invited the Conference to make recommendations on remedial measures to improve such data.

84. The Conference noted that one reason for the late publication of some country documents was the need, in some countries, to obtain government clearance before the documents were published; another was the size of some countries. It suggested that if might be possible for statistical services in the region which needed government clearance and experienced long delays in the publication of their documents to request a special dispensation to extract certain data for advance distribution.

85. The Conference suggested that, in view of the importance of the public sector, the secretariat should undertake a study of those African countries which had so far adequately defined the public sector.

86. The Conference was informed that the United Nations Statistical Office was preparing a report for the next session of the Statistical Commission which will cover progress made on a public sector manual which would incorporate a revised classification of the purposes of the government. The report will cover progress on the IMF and UNSO manuals, including the reconciliation called for in both manuals and endorsed by the Statistical Commission at its nineteenth session.

(c) Prices

87. In introducing the topic, the secretariat informed the Conference that the document prepared on the topic E/CN.14/CAS.10/10 was not available for reasons of difficulty of reproduction. It then drew attention of the Conference to the need for the development of price statistics in relation to the analysis on price movement by kind of economic activity and the marked acceleration of inflation rates in the African region since 1972 and called on the Conference to consider the subject on the following context.

88. Firstly, the development of price statistics should be understood as an improvement of existing statistics: collection methods and processing, training of competent and responsible staff, up-dating of the weighting co-efficients, etc.

89. Secondly, the development of price statistics may be considered within the framework of the ECA Project for price comparisons in relation to the United Nations International Comparison Project which make it possible, among other things, to improve existing price statistics in terms of concepts, definitions, characteristics and selection of representative products, standardization of the basket of goods and services, etc.

90. Thirdly, the development of price statistics may be considered within the framework of the New International Economic Order. Regular surveys of prices for a few important products at various market levels would permit a better national strategy in the field of prices.

91. Fourthly, the development of price statistics may be envisaged through the integration of the data collection operations within the African Household Survey Capability Programme. This would make it possible to obtain additional information on prices.

92. Lastly, the development of price statistics might be undertaken within the framework of a working group set up by the Conference to discuss in detail the formulation of such a project, on the understanding that the expenses incurred in the convening of this working group should be paid by the participating African governments.

93. In the discussions that followed the Conference considered in broad terms the question of prices and the varying sources of prices, including foreign trade transactions. The difficulties of collecting satisfactory foreign trade price statistics were examined. Prominent among them were institutional problems such as currency variations, and the uncertainty created in price levels as a result of the fact that price quotations included non-itemized charges for installation as well as the cost of certain products which many countries were technologically not sufficiently developed to assimilate. Other difficulties, such as the use of local measures, determination of specifications, and unpredictable price movements resulting from unplanned marketing in the countries of the region, were noted.

94. The Conference agreed to the appointment of a working group to examine the details of collecting reliable price statistics and the achievement of timeliness in publication.

General economic statistics (agenda item 7)

(a) External trade

95. It was recalled that at the ninth session of the Conference the importance of external trade statistics had been emphasized, and that the secretariat had been requested to study and report on external trade statistics practices in the various countries of the region and compile meaningful analytical tables on a yearly and regional basis, duly interpreted in a new annual publication - "Foreign trade statistics for Africa, series C: Summary tables".

96. That new publication was intended to meet the need and the growing demand for complete analysis of African external trade data on a regional and subregional basis, in view of the joint approach adopted by member countries in their international negotiations, taking account of the realities of, and the active interest in, intra-African trade.

97. A member of the secretariat introduced a paper on "African external trade statistics practices" (E/CN.14/CAS.10/11), which was the result of a comprehensive survey involving intensive desk research and a mail inquiry addressed to 50 African countries. It was pointed out that, although the response rate appeared encouraging, there had been several follow-ups involving much correspondence, including telegrams, and that replies had been received from only half of the French-speaking and only two of the Portuguese-speaking countries. Furthermore, no replies had been received to some letters addressed to certain national offices seeking clarification on certain doubtful or incomplete replies.

98. The usefulness of the survey was emphasized in as much as it provided a basis for the explanatory notes necessary for a regional publication, as well as for comparability of country data. However, it was recognized that the resulting analysis suffered from the fact that some countries had not replied, and it was agreed that they should provide ECA with the necessary information on the completed questionnaires as soon as possible, and that all countries involved should reply as a matter of urgency to supplementary inquiries addressed to them.

99. The Conference was informed that although, on average, the entire process of compiling and publishing annual reports took eight months to complete, the external trade statistics available to the secretariat in respect of 1975 related to only 23 out of 54 countries of the region, and in respect of 1976, to only 4 countries. Also, in respect of some other countries, no data whatever, were available to the secretariat from primary sources.

100. It was pointed out that copies of relevant publications or machine print-outs could be despatched to ECA through UNDP. Also, copies of magnetic tapes could be sent to the United Nations Statistical Office in New York, their Trade Statistics Branch in Geneva, or directly to ECA, so that the necessary data would be available to the secretariat in good time. Countries should provide the materials free of charge, since there was no budget to pay for them and they would be receiving ECA publications in exchange. It was further pointed out that exchange arrangements existed between the European Economic Community in Luxembourg and the United Nations Statistical Office, so that countries sending tapes to Luxembourg need not send them elsewhere.

101. It was suggested that, in view of printing and distribution difficulties in certain countries, advance copies of annual statistical reports could be reproduced on dupplicating machines in order to save time. The representative of the United Kingdom suggested that countries might wish to consider requesting aid in that area.

102. It was also suggested that costs could be substantially reduced by reproducing the data on microfiches, of which not more than three films would be sufficient for the complete annual trade statistics of any African country. That would require the acquisition of a microfiche printer and a microfiche reader, the cost of which appeared to be within the reach of even small countries.

103. It was pointed out that there were significant differences in practice as far as coverage was concerned, and that none of the countries reviewed followed international recommendations relating to the treatment of commodities recommended for inclusion in, exclusion from or separate recording from trade statistics. There were also important differences in respect of the valuation and quantification of specific items, commodity classification and the definition and classification of partner countries, as well as the construction of index numbers. In addition, for the large majority of countries, no relevant index numbers were constructed.

104. It was recognized that a sovereign State should conduct and report on its statistical activities according to its own requirements, but in view of the demand for regional data there was an urgent need for standardization in concepts, definitions and practices in the area of international trade statistics. The survey was criticized for including no question relating to the level of detail within classifications used, or of the employment of secondary classifications such as statistics by end use or by economic categories. However, it was agreed that the need for standardization could be satisfied by the adoption and use of the relevant United Nations standards in every country of the region, and that the secretariat should initiate and maintain a flow of correspondence with the national statistical services of these countries to that end.

105. The Conference was informed that the first issue of "Foreign trade statistics for Africa, series C; Summary tables" had been prepared, but that it had not yet been sent for printing. A draft copy had been put on display, and comments were invited from the participants. Written in English and French, it covered an 11-year period ending in 1976 and contained just under 400 pages. It included 17 reference tables covering values of imports and exports by sections of the Standard International Trade Classification, quantities and values of principal exports, direction of trade, matrices of intra-African trade and indices of quantum, unit value and terms of trade. It was pointed out that the tables relating to the direction of trade, and more particularly the matrices, presented a sad reflection of the deficiencies at the country level, and that in order to compile proper regional statistics the secretariat needed complete data on imports from and exports to every single trading partner by commodity.

106. The document also included a detailed analytical review of Africa's external trade situation over the period.

107. The Conference welcomed the document as a serious endeavour to further regional interests, and it was agreed that, as soon as it was ready, copies should be sent to African national statistical offices for detailed criticism, all of which should be taken into account when the next issue was being prepared.

(b) Energy

108. The programme for the preparation of an energy balance sheet, as worked out by the United Nations Statistical Office in New York, was presented to the Conference (E/CN.14/CAS.10/12). The document provided a list of energy commodities, a table showing the framework of the energy balances and a summary of the various sector profiles. A representative of the Statistical Office emphasized the urgent need for a stock-taking of energy data for all energy commodities. The data would have to be worked out very carefully and cross-checked with all the available sources. Valuable balance sheets could only be prepared with reliable data.

109. One delegation drew attention to some problems in measuring non-commercial energy, and cited the cases of firewood and charcoal, for which energy measurement coefficients had not been developed. In the discussion that followed the Conference recognized the need for the development of a methodology in that area, and requested that standard conversion factors for the various energy commodities should form part of the questionnaires which were to be forwarded to countries.

(c) Industry

110. A report on "Trends in and Improvement of African Industrial Statistics" was introduced by the secretariat (E/CN.14/CAS.10/13).

111. The document contained a bibliography of reports of national industrial inquiries which had been received by the secretariat. The Conference was invited to co-operate in up-dating the list, if necessary by sending the missing publications to the secretariat. Countries were also invited to provide missing data and corrections to the secretariat for the table on gross output data.

112. A representative of the secretariat drew attention to the analytic tables, and particularly to the number of items for which data were missing. The table demonstrated the danger of comparing data on an international level. Many items appeared to be impossible to obtain in some countries, while they were available in others. The secretariat would appreciate comments on the table and explanations concerning the missing data. In order to improve the value of the results of industrial inquiries, the secretariat wished to suggest that in future the gross-output data should be divided into three different subgroups, namely consumer goods, intermediate goods and capital goods. That system had many advantages, such as the avoidance of double counting, increased possibilities for input-output studies, and differentiation of intermediate and final products.

113. In response to a suggestion by the secretariat that a uniform minimum size of establishments (20 employees and over) should be used in the annual industrial inquiries, many representatives indicated that that was an arbitrary figure which would be very difficult to use in all countries, because of local circumstances. However, representatives agreed to the suggestion that at least the main results of their inquiries should be published in such a way that the results for medium and large industries (20 employees and over) could be easily extracted.

114. Many representatives also emphasized the need to increase the number of units of study to be included in the annual inquiries by reducing the minimum size of units from 10 to 5 employees, as in the Benchmark inquiries.

115. Many were also in favour of the organization of a working group on industrial statistics as soon as possible. The working group should deal with such subjects as methodology for industrial inquiries, the 1983 world programme for industrial statistics, sample surveys for small-scale and household industries, the registration of industrial establishments and the problem of the mixed activities of industrial establishments. The Conference recognized that, in addition to the study of methodology, there was also a need to examine the frequency of publications on industrial statistics. It was agreed that monthly and quarterly figures were also needed. Those data were to be collected by specific commodities, as was done already in various countries. Some views were expressed on the need to keep the Benchmark inquiries to intervals of five years, instead of 10 years, which was the current practice.

116. As far as the World Programme of Industrial Statistics for 1983 was concerned, many representatives indicated their willingness to participate. Some suggested that that Benchmark inquiry should be prepared by a working group with special interest in the registration of small industrial establishments. A suggestion that the 1983 Programme should be extended to include construction, commerce and other censuses, as had been done in the past by some countries, was referred to the proposed working group. It was also suggested that the Munich Centre might consider repeating its course on industrial and handicraft statistics in 1981.

(d) Agriculture

117. The ECA statistician responsible for agriculture explained to the Conference that the FAO representative was unable to present his paper because of administrative problems. Nevertheless, because of the importance of agriculture, it was worth mentioning some of FAO's work in agricultural statistics in the region, particularly where such work was complementary to ECA's work in the region.

118. Reference was made to the many and varied types of agricultural statistical data that were collected and published by FAO. Because the countries in Africa were largely agricultural, such statistics were important in measuring the quality of life, as had been highlighted by the Executive Secretary in his opening address. In any attempt to measure the quality of life or to develop indices to measure human well-being, the use of data on agricultural situation was imperative.

119. The Conference learned that two consultants had recently completed a study on livestock, which was expected to lead to the development of a methodology for the collection of statistics on livestock production in the region. ECA and FAO had co-operated fully in the implementation of that project.

120. The FAO representative disclosed the elaborate plans which had been made to enhance the participation of countries in the 1980 round of the World Census of Agriculture Programme. FAO was preparing and offering assistance to countries in the region. That programme and the ECA household surveys programme were complementary, and countries in the region should endeavour to harmonize the two operations.

121. The participants were informed of procedures for forwarding requests for assistance to the FAO Statistics Division, and of proposed training courses for the 1980 World Census of Agriculture. Projects for the improvement of agricultural statistics in the countries in the region which would cover improvements in infrastructure were also being contemplated.

122. An appeal was then made to FAO to give priority to filling the post of Regional Statistician in Accra, which had been vacant for some two years. There was an urgent need for action in that regard because of the ever-growing need for agricultural statistical information.

(e) Other economic statistics

123. Under this item of the agenda, the secretariat made a short introduction of a study relating to the statistics of tourism which it has prepared and which was to be published in issue 11 of the Statistical Information Bulletin for Africa. Because of printing difficulties, the document was not available and therefore, could not be distributed to the participants.

124. Concerning the subject outlined, one participant raised the problem of all-inclusive tourist travel provided by travel agencies. Other participants felt that it was necessary to draw up standards and to have guidelines in order to have a better idea of tourism in African countries. In response to these concerns, the secretariat pointed out that the study it has prepared on statistics of tourism in fact, had the principal aim of serving as guidelines to assist African countries in compiling their statistics of tourism. The study examined the problems which have been raised and set out the relevant solutions. Another participant suggested that the secretariat should identify the effects of tourism on African countries and prepare a methodology to assist in identifying these effects. The secretariat took note of these requests but emphasized the difficulty of the problem because of the complexity of the factors involved and the absence of statistics in the field.

125. The secretariat also submitted, still under this item of the agenda, a study relating to transport statistics namely: rail transport, sea and road transport which had appeared in issued 8 and 9 of the Statistical and Economic Information Bulletin for Africa.

126. The introduction of this topic gave rise to almost no observations. One participant raised the complexity of the operations in the field of transport statistics and another spoke of the problems which arise when one railway serves several countries. The secretariat felt that these latter problems might be solved through concerted action by the countries concerned, but recognized the need to study these problems further.

Demographic and social statistics (agenda item 8)

(a) Population and housing consuses and surveys

127. Three background papers (E/CN.14/CAS.10/14, 15 and 16) were introduced by a member of the secretariat. Participants were invited to submit to the secretariat as soon as possible after the Conference more detailed written comments on the main document under discussion (E/CN.14/CAS.10/15), so that those comments could be taken into account in the revision of the document. It was envisaged that the revision would cover such topics as the time reference for the economic questions, which had inadvertently been omitted from the present report. The meeting was also informed that the draft recommendations from the Conference would be considered by a group of experts selected from all regions which would meet in New York early in 1978. The recommendations of the group would form the basis of the principles and recommendations for the 1980 population and housing censuses.

128. In the discussions which followed, participants regretted the inability of ECA to convene a meeting of the working group on the African recommendations for the 1980 population and housing censuses. It was pointed out that, since detailed study of the ECA document was essential and since concepts, definitions and classifications had to take into account conditions in the region, it would have been much better for a regional expert group meeting to examine the recommendations before they were submitted to the full Conference for approval. The secretariat explained that efforts had been made for the past two years to secure UNFPA or bilateral funding for the meeting, but had failed. The Conference urged that continued efforts be made to convene a working group or a number of small working groups to consider various aspects of the concepts, definitions and classifications of relevance to Africa.

129. It was also stressed that, in the field of census taking in particular, there was need for regional self-reliance whereby countries with the relevant expertise made experts and documents available to countries lacking these resources. The use of outside experts was not to be encouraged except as a last resort, since many of them were unfamiliar with African conditions.

130. The Conference endorsed with some reservations the main recommendations in document E/CN.14/CAS.10/15. In particular, the Conference noted that the law governing censuses should be as flexible as possible. The inclusion of very specific details, such as names of persons and dates, might cause frequent revisions of the law, and thus lead to unnecessary delays. For countries with a federal structure, it was suggested that the conduct of a census should be one of the special powers retained by the Federal Government.

131. It was also agreed that the census time-table should be carefully thought out so that adequate provision could be made for all major operations. In that connexion some participants said that the secretariat's suggestion that ideally the pilot census should take place a year before the main census, so that the lessons of the pilot census could be fully taken into account before the main census was undertaken, was rather unrealistic in view of the normal delays encountered in cartographic operations and the rather fluid staff position in a number of statistical offices in the region. It was argued that six months before the census would be a more realistic period for the pilot census. However, other participants stressed that it was essential that the pilot census - which should be viewed as a full-dress rehearsal for the census - should be conducted in almost the same climatic conditions as the main census so that any difficulties could be taken into account before the main census.

132. It was also agreed that the census budget should make adequate provision for all phases of the census operation, from the pre-enumeration stage to data processing, publication and subsequent analyses. That would ensure that, after considerable sums of money had been spent in collecting the data, there would be enough money left for data processing, publication of the data and other post-enumeration operations. It was also agreed that the budget should be as flexible as possible, to permit unforeseen items of expenditure to be catered for without undue delay. However, there was no consensus as to whether African governments should shoulder the main financial burden of the census operation. It was noted that, while that was the desirable long-term goal, a number of countries in the region might find it difficult to undertake a census programme, except with massive external aid.

133. The Conference endorsed the view that it was desirable to establish a set of bodies such as a central census committee, a technical advisory committee and a communications or publicity or local committee, since they all had a role to play in making the census operation a success. It was stressed that a ministerial committee (Central Census Committee) generally made it unnecessary for detailed memoranda to be submitted to the Cabinet with the usual attendant delays.

134. Participants also endorsed the suggestion that census offices should have a well defined structure and adequate staff.

135. While census cartography was considered essential for a successful census, some participants felt that the rather high cost involved in the operation was disproportionate to the benefits to be derived from the exercise. Some felt that detailed mapping was unnecessary and that sketches could be substituted for maps, while others held the view that the detailed maps used in a number of African countries had helped to reduce the coverage error of the census, and provided a geographical frame for quality control operations during the census and a basis for sampling frames for post-censal surveys. The secretariat reiterated the view that the cost of the cartographic operations should be viewed in relation not only to the census itself but also to the inter-censal surveys which made use of the maps created for the census.

136. With respect to the recommended topics relating to population censuses (E/CN.14/CAS.10/15, pp. 48-49), the secretariat indicated that the topics "type of activity, occupation, industry and employment status" were "recommended" topics and not "other useful topics" as had inadvertently been shown in the document. The Conference took note of the modification and accepted the recommendations in principle. It felt that a more detailed study of the topics should be undertaken before a final selection could be made, but in view of the fact that the working group could not meet, the only option open to the Conference, appeared to be to endorse the recommendations in principle. However, the endorsement did not necessarily imply that the questions were to be asked on a 100-per-cent basis or on a sample basis. In general four criteria had to be taken into account in deciding whether the topics should be investigated on a 100-per-cent basis or not. The four criteria mentioned by the Conference were the level of geographical breakdown for which the data was required, quality of staff, time and cost. In that context, the secretariat was requested to study in more detail the possibility of collecting some of the recommended information through post-censal surveys rather than through census operations. The results of its investigation should be brought to the attention of the Conference at its next session. The participants also felt that in present African conditions the shorter the questionnaire, the better the chances of achieving good results. It was suggested by some participants that retrospective questions such as those on births and deaths yielded poor-quality data and should not be included in the census. The recommended tabulations on population censuses were also approved, with the proviso that there should be a balance between the recommended topics and the recommended tabulations.

137. With respect to housing censuses, the Conference endorsed the following topics as recommended for inclusion for the 1980 round: number of houses, type of housing unit, type of occupancy, material of wall, material of roof, material of floor, source of water supply, source of light, source of fuel, type of toilet and bathing facilities. It also endorsed the recommended tabulations on housing censuses included in the Principles and Recommendations for the 1970 Housing Censuses. 1/

138. With respect to census tests, it was emphasized that apart from the pilot census a number of pre-tests on some aspects of the census could be carried out. Some participants, however, wanted guidelines on the right procedure to be adopted for tests in general and the content of each type of test in particular. They suggested that any revision of the document should include such guidelines.

139. For the enumeration of nomades, the Conference endorsed the recommendation that serious preparatory work should be carried out in African countries to determine the most suitable methodology to apply before selection and final testing of the method.

140. There was also a consensus on the recommendation that a census tabulation plan should be drawn up before the census questionnaire was finalized. The content of the questionnaire should be deduced from the data requirements of the tabulation programme.

1/ Statistical Papers, series M, No. 45 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 67.XVII.4).

It was emphasized by the secretariat that such an approach would yield the best possible questionnaire in which all the data collected would be tabulated and analyzed. Such a procedure would also be of great assistance to the data processing expert.

141. It was also suggested that, where country data processing experts were not available, regional or interregional advisers could be invited to identify procedural and resource requirements as early as possible.

142. Recommendations were made on the need for speedy publication of census results and the need for the evaluation of census results with respect to both coverage and content. With respect to data analysis, the participants generally accepted the view that the results of a census should be analyzed in depth. It was emphasized that such an analysis should be comprehensive and relevant to the needs of policy makers and planners. The need for extensive training of analysts was also emphasized.

143. Finally, attention was drawn to the fact that the census itself was only one of the operations in the data collection field, and that there was a need for an integrated programme of data collection at the country level.

(b) African Household Survey Capability Programme

144. The secretariat presented the Report on the African Household Survey Capability Programme (E/CN.14/CAS.10/17) and a paper entitled Some Aspects of Household Survey Methodology (E/CN.14/CAS.10/18).

145. The Conference was warmly congratulated on the African initiative in survey development. The proposals had been considered by the United Nations Statistical Commission and a draft resolution prepared by the Commission had been adopted by ECOSOC. As a result, interest in survey capabilities and the related requirements were being examined on a worldwide basis in preparation for a meeting of prospective donors and users to be held towards the end of 1978. It was envisaged that the surveys programme in each region would be organized by the regional commission and that it would comprise individual country projects.

146. The Conference re-affirmed its support for the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP) and emphasized that the objective was to develop survey capabilities in individual countries which would serve to meet the data needs of those countries. It did not envisage standardized arrangements for data collection throughout the region because priorities differed between countries and the information requirements were often of a detailed nature.

147. A number of points were raised in connexion with document E/CN.14/CAS.10/18. In the design for the year-long household survey it was suggested that the selection of 24 households in each enumeration area (EA) was too high. It was noted that this arose from transport constraints in the country concerned but that provision had been made to reduce the number to 18 or less.

148. It was further suggested that a three-stage sample design would be more appropriate under most African conditions. In reply the secretariat explained that the arrangement involving only two area stages had been evolved in the light of a new local government structure. Also only one EA had been selected from each local authority instead of two from a group of authorities in order to keep mapping operations within reasonable limits.

149. In reply to another question it was indicated that income stratification was based on information in respect of the entire household and not just the household head. However these records related to cash income and could lead to difficulties in obtaining an effective stratification in areas with a high proportion of subsistence consumption.

150. It was agreed that the use of substitutes in the sample of households for budget recording should be kept to a minimum. There was also a possible problem in the method proposed for introducing substitutes in that contact between the field staff and the central office might cause undue delays.

151. The desirability of obtaining records from individual households for periods of more than one month was questioned. The general view was that one month was normally adequate in urban areas but that much longer periods were needed in rural areas in order to take account of seasonal fluctuations in income. This was important in surveys aiming to obtain a good indication of the income distribution but not in those concerned with estimating aggregate income, production and consumption.

152. With regard to the definition of the household for survey purposes it was noted that it might be better to use the de facto membership rather than the definition which excluded visitors suggested in the paper.

153. In reply to a question about household trading, professional earnings, etc., it was explained that there was adequate provision in the budget form and satisfactory records should be obtainable if household members engaged in these activities were first identified. The single visit questionnaire was more explicit on this topic and dealt separately with individual enterprise activities.

154. It was appreciated that unusual items such as large personal loans could distort the budget picture. Nevertheless such items had to be recorded when they occurred. It might be possible to give special consideration to their treatment at the processing stage.

155. The section of the paper dealing with labour force surveys gave little explanation of the items to be recorded and it was suggested that standardized definitions should be introduced because results would be very much dependent on the interpretation placed on the various items. Information was given on a comparative study currently being undertaken by ILO on the definition of economic characteristics. While the Conference agreed in principle with the desirability of standard definitions, it felt that national requirements were the primary consideration and that it would not always be possible for countries to conform with rigid standards.

156. In general it was considered that the establishment of household survey capabilities could have enormous benefits. The ECOSOC resolution should therefore receive the strongest possible support. With regard to the setting up of these capabilities the Conference was informed that the United Kingdom had created a separate Social Survey which was later amalgamated with the agency responsible for population censuses and surveys. Such a division of the survey organization in its earlier stages of development had been of considerable advantage in securing the necessary financial resources.

157. It was pointed out that a permanent field survey organization with properly trained staff was essential for reducing non-sampling errors. Also in the earlier stages of developing such an organization better results would be achieved from integrated programmes of single subject surveys rather than from an attempt to mount complicated multisubject inquiries. Projects had to be carefully worked out to minimize costs to government and donor agencies. Data processing had been noted as a significant problem in many surveys and special help would probably be required in this area.

158. Although Kenya had made good progress in establishing its survey programme, the Conference was informed that a number of problems had been encountered. Initially the national sample had provided inadequate national coverage with too few clusters in some provinces. The number had been increased to provide for provincial estimates but would need to be doubled to allow for disaggregation of data to district level. There were logistic problems related to the increase in sample size and these concerned both transport and the optimal use of enumerators.

159. It had also been found in Kenya that there was an inadequate population base for establishing the sample and interpreting survey results. Ratio estimates using population projections were satisfactory at national but not at provincial level. Lack of adequate population data had also made it difficult to map cluster boundaries to give units of equal size; experience had shown that a count of structures did not lead to a good estimate of the number of households and it was necessary to undertake a listing of the households in primary sampling units. There was another problem relating to the need for unique single sampling frames. Population based samples were satisfactory for some inquiries but specialized frames were needed for the investigation of crop areas, markets, etc. It was noted that the third round of the Kenya Integrated Rural Survey was to a large extent labour force oriented.

160. The Conference was informed that Nigeria had been operating an integrated survey system for more than ten years in both rural and urban areas. The programme included the collection of agricultural, economic and demographic data, very often on a regular annual basis. The programme had been considerably expanded in 1970.

161. It was reported that Senegal had conducted an experimental multipurpose survey in 1973-75 to provide guidance for the organization of a national household survey. The field work had lasted for one and a half years and was concerned with rural areas, in particular the factors influencing the economic and social conditions of villages. Results were now under examination for the purpose of selecting the variables and characteristics to be included in the national survey.

162. Survey activities in Liberia were also described. Current work was concentrated on household expenditure and there would later be demographic and labour force surveys. The country felt the need for a more integrated approach to the organization of field operations but there was a problem in that surveys were funded from different sources according to subject. It was necessary for funding agencies to appreciate that it was often more economical for several topics to be combined.

163. The Algerian participant informed the Conference that his country was planning a household income and expenditure survey for 1978. This would be followed by labour force and fertility surveys. He observed that there was a need for countries to adapt the survey arrangements described in the ECA document to their own conditions and requirements. In some cases it might be difficult to choose between integrated programmes of surveys and multisubject operations. There was also a growing need to provide data for regions within countries.

164. It was suggested that the secretariat make contact with the Swaziland statistical authorities who were also engaged in a household survey. The Cameroon participant indicated that his country would shortly embark on a fertility survey and that a household budget survey would be organized when funds became available.

165. The UN Statistical Office reported the preparation of a revised Handbook of Household Surveys in co-operation with UN specialized agencies. This was intented as a contribution to the solution of the kind of methodological and organizational problems discussed by the Conference.

(c) Other demographic and social statistics

i) Social statistics in Kenya

166. The Kenyan delegate presented an overview of the work which the Central Bureau of Statistics in Kenya had undertaken in the last few years in the field of Social Statistics as well as Food and Nutritional Surveys. This was undertaken as part of the UNICEF Global Social Statistics Programme to enable developing countries to institutionalize their capability in collecting social data. The Kenyan programme was outlined in document E/CN.14/CAS.10/19 and Conference delegates were presented with a set of reports relating to a number of studies undertaken by the Bureau.

167. In the discussion which followed the Zambian delegate observed that a number of countries had mentioned the problem of sampling with regard to survey work in their contributions to discussions. He therefore proposed that it would be useful if the ECA could convene a regional meeting to discuss the issue. The delegate of USSR outlined the work undertaken in his country in this field. The representative of the Munich Centre brought to the attention of the Conference two courses to be held in 1979 at the Centre in the field of social statistics, one in French and the other in English. The delegate from the United Kingdom informed the Conference that, his country was hoping to undertake some research on food and nutrition surveillance programmes which would include some reference to the Ethiopian and Kenyan experience. In reply to a question on the relationship between social planners and the Bureau of statistics regarding the setting of priorities for the kind of data to be collected, the Kenyan delegation outlined the problems involved in this aspect and paid tribute to the role which UNICEF had played in this aspect of the work.

168. The UNICEF Regional Adviser also outlined work which had been undertaken to establish a feed-back between policy-makers and statisticians. He also pointed out that UNICEF was providing an advisory service for the East African Region in the field of social statistics and that there would be close co-operation with other agencies and the ECA in this matter. The UNICEF delegate based in New York informed the Conference about work to be undertaken in other African countries and other parts of the world. The delegate from Ethiopia informed the Conference about food and nutrition surveillance programmes which are being conducted in Ethiopia and offered to keep the ECA and other interested agencies informed of its future development. He also stressed the need for studies to identify social indicators which could best reflect the quality of life in African countries.

ii) Manual of demographic concepts and definitions

169. The draft manual of demographic concepts and definitions suitable for African conditions, the subject of ECA Conference resolution 230 (X), was introduced to the participants.

170. After an outline of the work carried out and the way in which countries could co-operate in improving the draft manual, the participants were requested to communicate the draft to the national demographic services.

171. The Conference recognized the usefulness of the draft manual and the need for co-operation from countries so that the improved draft could be submitted to the next session of the Conference of African Demographers. It was however, observed that such co-operation would be possible only if the draft manual was available in both English and French.

172. An undertaking was given that suggestions concerning the presentation of the draft manual would be forwarded to the ECA secretariat.

iii) Migration statistics in Africa

173. A study on migration statistics in Africa, published in issues 8 and 10 of the "Statistical and Economic Information Bulletin for Africa", was introduced by a member of the secretariat. The study related to internal migration among what is known as the sedentary population.

174. The Conference noted that the concepts and definitions used by the countries of the region to include migratory movements in population censuses and surveys are often vague and inaccurate. It was decided that the secretariat should continue its investigation of the problem taking into account recent country experience, particularly on the occasion of the implementation of the programme for the 1970 series of population and housing censuses, post-enumeration surveys and various household surveys. It was expected that the investigation would lead to the formulation of some guidelines concerning concepts and definitions to be used in the African context. It was also pointed out that the study should be supplemented by consideration of statistics on international migration. The participants in the Conference were invited to send to ECA all documentation available to them, both on internal and international migration.

175. In response to a question, the secretariat replied that it was not considered useful to draw up specific recommendations at the present stage of the study in view of the inadequate documentation available at ECA on the experience of the countries of the region that have undertaken collection of migration statistics.

176. Finally, it was noted that the date of the Independence of Algeria should read 5 July 1962 instead of 1 August 1962 in the above-mentioned study.

Programme of work and priorities (agenda item 9)

177. The Conference considered the ECA Statistical Programme as approved by the Conference of Ministers (E/CN.14/CAS.10/1, para. 54). After reviewing the changing needs and conditions of the region, it recommended the revised programme annexed to the present report.

Other matters (agenda item 10)

178. The Conference deplored the decrease in regional advisory services in statistics, and urged ECA to appoint as a matter of urgency two Regional Advisers in Household Surveys. If there were enough regional advisers, it would be possible to evaluate the household survey plans of national statistical offices before they were implemented.

179. Participants also commented on the duration of the Conference of African Statisticians. They realized that the decision to reduce the number of working days to five and a half had been taken by the Conference itself, but in the light of experience at the tenth session it was felt that a return to the previous 10 days' duration was necessary. It was pointed out, however, that if the working groups suggested by the Conference functioned properly, then the length of the Conference should be left flexible for the secretariat to take the final decision.

180. It was also suggested that there should be co-ordination between bilateral and multilateral agencies. In that connexion, the agenda item on technical assistance should deal rather with co-ordination of technical assistance, and should cover all such activities in the international field which were relevant to African statistical development.

181. The need for African statistical offices to develop techniques for computing the implications of new schemes such as the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order was stressed; such tools were invaluable in negotiations.

182. The Conference stressed once again the need for exchanges of publications among African statistical offices and between them and ECA. ECA was asked to prepare a list of statistical publications for circulation to African statistical offices. A member of the secretariat pointed out that a similar ECA project had been suspended because of the need to computerize the procedure.

183. The distribution of country reports at the Conference, which appeared to have been discontinued, should be reactivated. However, such reports should not be discussed at the Conference; that would make it unnecessary for participants to make long references to country experience in the discussions at the Conference.

184. ECA was urged to explore the possibility of using experts on a non reimbursable basis, as was done in Asia. Direct approaches could be made to donor agencies to obtain the services of regional advisers under such a scheme.

185. The representative of the United Nations Statistical Office then informed the meeting of the deliberations of the nineteenth session of the Statistical Commission. In particular, he mentioned the fact that the Commission had considered the question of the financing training of statisticians, and had submitted a draft resolution on "Financing of training of statisticians especially through regional funds of the United Nations Development Programme" for adoption by the Economic and Social Council. After minor amendments, the resolution had subsequently been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council at its last April/May session 1977. The representative of the Statistical Office also indicated that the following publications had either been published by the Statistical Office or were under preparation:

(a) Report on Welfare-Oriented Measures (already published)

(b) Guidelines on Income Distribution (already published)

(c) Distributive Trade (already published)

(d) Guidelines on Price and Quantity Statistics (already published)

(e) The Organization of National Statistical Services (already published)

(f) Provisional Guidelines on International Tourism Statistics (not yet published)

(g) Statistics of Internal Migration, including National Practices (not yet published)

(h) Promoting the Improvement of Social Statistics in Developing Countries (not yet published)

(i) Recommendations on International Migration Statistics (not yet published).

Consideration of the draft provisional agenda for the eleventh session of the Conference (agenda item 11)

186. The draft provisional agenda presented by the secretariat was modified slightly. The Conference approved the following draft provisional agenda:

1. Opening address

2. Election of officers

3. Adoption of the agenda

4. Matters arising from the tenth session of the Conference
   (a) Report on ECA statistical activities
   (b) Progress report on the reorganization of the Conference
   (c) Progress report on the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA)
   (d) Co-ordination of technical assistance for African statistical development
   (e) Statistical organization
   (f) Data processing
5. The Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order and related statistics
6. Economic statistics
   (a) Report on the status and uses of SNA in Africa
   (b) Report of the Working Group on Price Statistics
   (c) External trade statistics
   (d) Distributive trade
   (e) Industry and construction statistics
   (f) Other economic statistics
   (g) Methodological problems relating to index numbers
7. African Household Survey Capability Programme
8. Demographic and social statistics
   (a) 1980 population and housing censuses
   (b) Social indicators of relevance to Africa
   (c) Other demographic and social statistics
9. Programme of work and priorities
10. Other business
11. Consideration of the draft provisional agenda for the twelfth session of the Conference
12. Report of the Conference to the ECA Executive Committee and Conference of Ministers.

187. In addition to the items shown, it was proposed that financial statistics should be discussed under item 6. However, the Conference agreed that a status report on the subject should be prepared by the secretariat in co-operation with IMF. If, after that paper had been prepared, the secretariat felt that it should be discussed separately under item 6, then provision could be made for it on the agenda; otherwise the report would be considered under item 6(f).

Adoption of the report of the Conference (agenda item 12)

188. On 22 October 1977 the Conference unanimously adopted the present report to the ECA Conference of Ministers on the work of its tenth session.

Annex I: Revised programme of work and priorities as approved by the Conference

9.540.00 STATISTICS

Origin: General Assembly resolution 2211 (XXI); Economic and Social Council resolutions 37 (LVII), 2054 (LXII) and 2055 (LXII); ECA Conference of Ministers, Executive Committee and Technical Committee of Experts; Conference of African Statisticians.

Project aim: To develop and co-ordinate statistical services in the African region to meet the growing data requirements for administration, industry, policy formulation and planning for economic and social development;

To develop a regional framework of statistical information, supported by detailed studies, providing a reasonably comprehensive account of the African economic and social situation.

9.541.00 General aspects of co-ordination and development

01 Servicing the eleventh (1979), twelfth (1981) and thirteenth (1983) sessions of the Conference of African Statisticians; technical support to projects undertaken directly by the Conference;

02 Continuing review of statistical organization problems in the region, preparation of periodic reports, with supporting action as necessary;

03 Biennial publication of the Directory of African Statisticians and the Bibliography of African Statistical Publications, and periodic publication of the Statistical Newsletter;

04 Maintenance of an inventory of electronic data processing equipment, related staff resources and applications for the region, and circulation of periodic summaries and evaluations. Working group on data processing (1982);

05 Co-ordination of data bank activities; the data bank is expected to include an extensive documentation reference service.

9.542.00 Training

01 Support to national and regional statistical training centres and provision of biennial reports on African statistical training;

02 Follow-up action on the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) in co-operation with the United Nations Statistical Office, UNDP, etc.;

9.543.00 National accounts, finance and prices

01 Assistance to countries in applying the revised United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA) and in developing related basic series; provision of regional advisory services in national accounts;

02 Report on the status of SNA and uses of the data (1979);

03 Development of a data base in national accounts including finance statistics, using secretariat estimates where necessary (in co-ordination with other relevant activities of the United Nations data system);

04 Development of a co-ordinated system of African price statistics at producer, wholesale, local purchaser, expert and world market levels (in co-operation with the United Nations Statistical Office). Inputs will be price data regularly available from African countries, plus more detailed information on selected primary commodities. Purchasing power parities of African currencies (in co-operation with the International Comparison Study). Establishment of current sectoral deflators for African national accounts and other series. Report on producers' prices of principal African commodities (1979). Working group on price statistics (1979);

05 External transactions statistics: development of data base and supporting methodology;

06 Public sector statistics: development of a data base and supporting methodology; reports on public debt in African countries (1978); and analysis of public sector statistics (1980);

07 Examination of statistical relationships between economic aggregates for the improvement of national accounts estimates: second periodic report (1979);

08 Analysis of input-output tables for selected countries (1980).

9.544.00 External trade statistics

01 Assistance in improving the coverage, timeliness and methodology of national trade statistics;

02 Compilation of quarterly data for the periodical publication of "Foreign Trade Statistics for Africa, series A: Direction of total trade";

03 Processing of annual commodity trade statistics for individual countries in standardized value and quantity units (in co-operation with the United Nations Statistical Office); utilization of these records in developing an external trade data base; publication twice a year of "Foreign Trade Statistics for Africa, series B, Trade by Commodity and by Country";

04 Preparation of special tabulations, etc. to assist the development African trade, with particular reference to intra-African trade and terms of trade; periodic publication of "Foreign Trade Statistics for Africa, series C, Summary tables".

9.545.00 Industrial statistics

01 Assistance to individual countries in applying the international recommendations for industrial statistics and improving the coverage and timeliness of these data; working group of industrial statistics (1981);

02 Development of a data base for general annual industrial statistics and annual and monthly commodity production statistics in the fields of mining, manufacturing, construction, electricity, gas and water; the data base will include energy balance sheets;

03 Continuing statistical studies on productivity, the structure and development of manufacturing in Africa, capital output ratios, local processing of raw materials for export, and the relatioship between production and trade in African manufactured products.

9.546.00 Other economic statistics

01 Agriculture: development of a data base incorporating FAO and other material; statistical study on production and trade in agricultural commodities (1978);

02 Transport and communications: development of a data base and provision of methodological assistance to countries (in co-operation with the United Nations Statistical Office and other agencies); working group on transport statistics (1980); methodological study on measurement of road transport movements (1980); statistical studies on air transport (1980) and African merchant shipping fleets (1981);

03 Tourism: development of a data base and supporting methodology (continuing project); training seminar on tourism statistics (1983);

04 Distribution: initial seminar on development prospects (1978)

05 Preparation of the African Statistical Yearbook, the annual "African Economic Indicators" and the periodic "Statistical and Economic Information Bulletin for Africa".

9.547.00 Demographic and social statistics

01 Support to population census advisory services and to the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP), which will cover employment, other productive activity, income, consumption and expenditure and related social and demographic data; provision of other advisory services in demographic and social statistics;

02 Methodological studies: civil registration (1978), scope and quality of demographic and social statistics in Africa (1980), concepts, definitions and classifications for selected demographic and social statistics fields (1981);

03 Working groups and training workshops: civil registration (1980), framework of the integration of social and demographic statistics (1981), migration statistics (1982);

04 Development of an African demographic and social statistics data base;

05 Selected social indicators of relevance to Africa (1979).

9.548.00 Census advisory services

01 Advisory services in the planning and conduct of national censuses of population and housing (in co-operation with United Nations Headquarters); in-service training of local technicians by regional advisers;

02 Methodological studies: evaluation of collected data (1979), evaluation of coverage and content errors of censuses (1980), review of African census and survey methodology (1981);

03 Working groups: methodology for the 1980 round of population and housing censuses in Africa (1978); training workshop on population censuses (English language group) (1978); coverage and content error evaluation of censuses (1980); training workshop on population censuses (French language group) (1982).

9.549.00 African Household Survey Capability Programme

01 Advisory services in the planning and conduct of integrated national household survey programmes (in co-operation with the United Nations Statistical Office);

02 Development of methodology for the continuing collection of integrated economic, social and demographic statistics from households;

03 Participation in the co-ordination of international and bilateral assistance to participating countries;

04 Working group on the organization and methodology of household survey programmes (1979).