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SECOND INTERAMERICAN SEMINAR ON CIVIL REGISTRATION

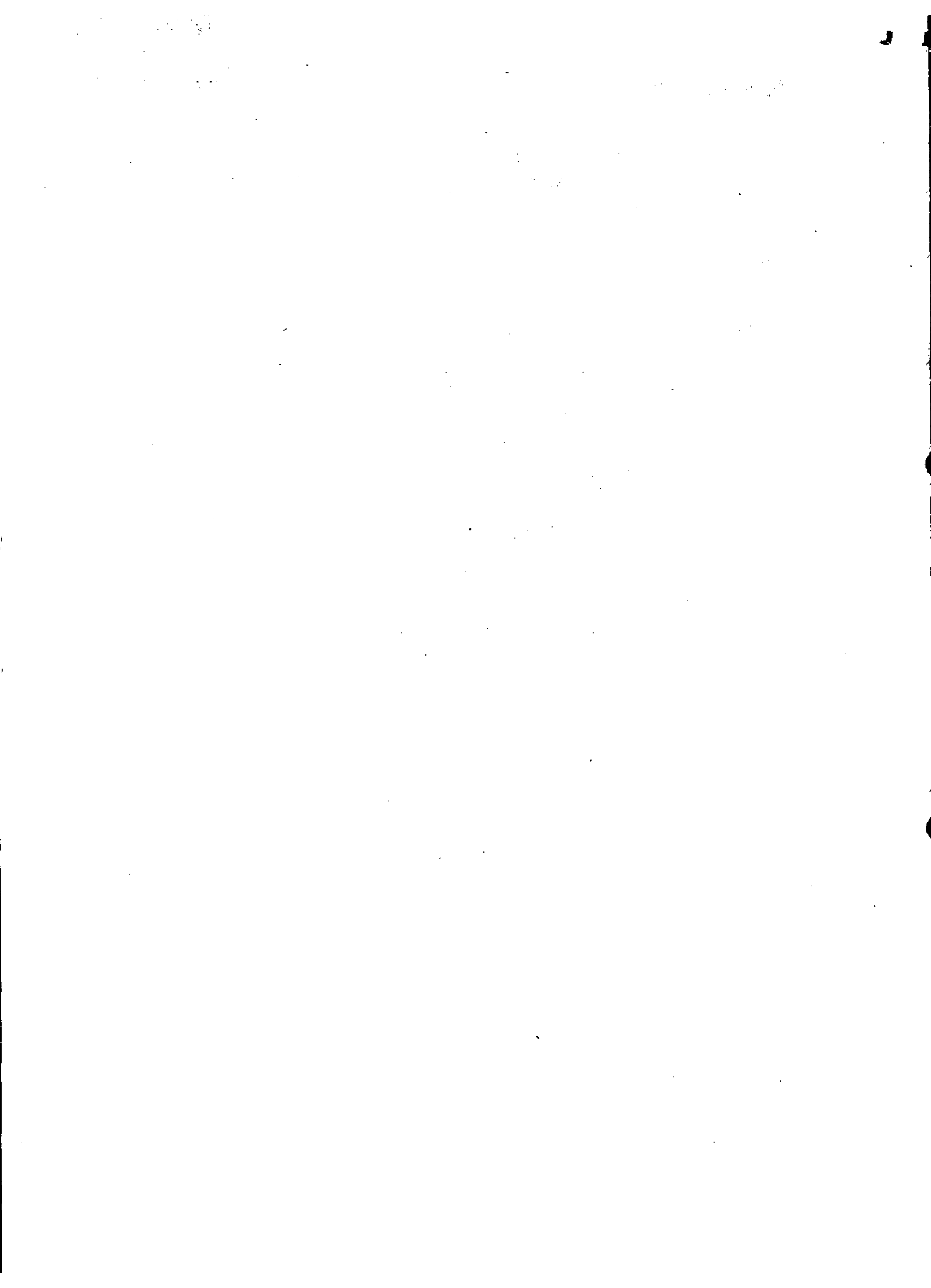
Organized by the United Nations, through the Statistical Office, the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Latin American Demographic Centre, in co-operation with the Government of Peru, the Inter-American Statistical Institute, the Inter-American Children's Institute, the Pan American Health Organization and the Inter-American Civil Registration Association.

Lima, Peru, 30 November to 11 December 1964.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT  
OF IMPROVEMENT IN CIVIL REGISTRATION: 1954-1964.

Presented by:

the Statistical Office of the United Nations



INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF IMPROVEMENT  
IN CIVIL REGISTRATION: 1954 - 1964

1. Civil registration of births, deaths and marriages is essentially a legal function, and as such, it is one for which provision must be made by the governmental authorities. Such provision has been made in most countries of the world. Civil registers have been established by law to serve as a repository for the legal documents. But these same registers have traditionally served as a means of counting the natural additions to the population (births) and the deletions from it (deaths). These are statistical activities within the purview of the statistical authorities. Hence, international activities aimed at promoting improvement in vital statistics have as their starting point improvement in civil registration but since the information is obtained in a governmental department separate from the statistical authorities, international activities in this area have been relatively scarce.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES (LEGAL INSTRUMENTS)

2. The First Inter-American Seminar on Civil Registration<sup>1/</sup> in 1954 was probably the first international attempt to improve a source of statistics outside the control of the national statistical services. With few exceptions statistics have had their source in records prepared specifically for statistical purposes. In the case of vital statistics from civil registers, the statistical use of the records is secondary and it is necessary therefore to go to the origin of the records to evaluate or improve their completeness and accuracy. In the case of civil registers, the origin lies with the public administration authorities of each country, that is, with the authorities in charge of local government.

Right to a Nationality (Birth Registration)

3. The primary concern of international organizations has traditionally been protective, that is, legal in character and involving the establishment of international standards, regulations and conventions which defined the obligation of Member States, in their treatment of specified groups (workers, women, children, etc.).<sup>2/</sup> The United Nations has maintained and extended this

1/ Final Report of the First Inter-American Seminar on Civil Registration, Santiago, Chile, 1954, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 55.XVII.7).

2/ Five-Year Perspective, 1960-1964, Consolidated Report on the Appraisals of the Scope, Trend and Costs of the Programmes of the United Nations, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, WMO and IAEA in the Economic, Social and Human Rights Fields, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 60.IV.14), para.314

interest in protection. It was not by chance, therefore, that the first efforts of the United Nations in civil registration was in the area of protecting populations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>3/</sup> adopted in 1948, proclaimed in Article 15, that (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

4. The right to a nationality and to change it is basic because nationality affects allegiance, as well as the political rights and duties of a citizen and his right to protection by the State of which he is a national. In some systems, nationality determines personal status and, in those systems where domicile is the determining factor for personal status, nationality may be the decisive factor in establishing domicile. Other matters which, in various legal systems, may be affected by nationality include marriage, divorce, apportionment of guardians, education of children, making a will, inheritance, owning or buying land, concluding labour contracts,<sup>4/</sup> determination of a conflict of laws and protection of rights in civil courts.<sup>5/</sup> The fundamental importance of establishing and proving "nationality" is beyond dispute.

5. The implications for civil registration of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in regard to nationality is also obvious. If the State has the obligation to guarantee a nationality, it must needs establish some proof of nationality. In the case of native-born citizens, that proof is the proof of birth in the State, as provided by an appropriate record in the official birth register; for nationalized citizens, a certificate of naturalization from the official register of naturalized citizens would provide proof. It is evident, therefore, that the Declaration of Human Rights implies that there should be in each country a register of births which could serve as a source of proof of nationality, and that this register must be complete if it is to serve the above-mentioned purpose.

#### Right to a Name (Birth Registration)

6. The basic right to a nationality provided by the Declaration of Human Rights was reinforced on 20 November 1959 when the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was unanimously adopted by The United Nations General Assembly.<sup>5/</sup>

<sup>3/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, Part I, Resolutions (A/810), Annex to Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>4/</sup> Nationality of Married Women, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 64.IV.1), p.5.

<sup>5/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourteenth Session. Supplement No. 16 (A/4354). Resolution 1386 (XIV).

Many of the rights and freedoms proclaimed were already mentioned in the Universal Declaration mentioned above, and among these was Principle 3 which stated that, "The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality." This Principle re-inforced the need of proof of birth not only to prove nationality but also to establish the legal name of the child. This need to prove identity and nationality is implicit in several of the other Principles in the Declaration, namely, in the child's right to enjoy the benefits of social security, adequate pre-natal and post-natal care, adequate housing, medical services, education and so forth. To participate in any of the States programmes designed to supply these Rights, would demand proof of name and nationality, a proof which can be provided only by a national civil register of birth.

7. It is interesting to note that the Preamble of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child "calls upon-.... local authorities and national governments to recognize these rights and to strive for their observance by legislative and other measures...." This would automatically imply that each country should take the steps necessary to register all births and provide proof of registration (and, incidentally, proof of name and nationality) upon request.

#### Registration of Marriage

8. In addition to the right to nationality, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 6/ dealt with the "Rights Relating to Marriage and the Family". From this beginning rose another international legal instrument which has a direct bearing on development of civil registers. That is the "Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage", (General Assembly Resolution 1763/A (XVII) adopted 7 November 1962), Article 3 of which states that "All marriages shall be registered in an appropriate official register by the competent authority". Adherence to this Convention, which was opened for signature and ratification on 10 December 1962, automatically obliges each participating country to provide an official register of marriage and to take such steps as are required to make registration complete. 7/ The implications of this Resolution were most recently brought out at the Seminar on Human Right in Developing Countries held in Kabul, Afghanistan, 12-25 May 1964. In discussing the rights related to marriage,

6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, op. cit., Art.16.

7/ This convention was foreshadowed by Article 2 of Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery adopted 4 September 1956 which, in the interests of bringing to an end certain institutions and practices similar to slavery, prescribed that in addition to a minimum age for marriage and consent to marriage, that registration of marriage be encouraged. (U.N. publication, Sales No. 57.XIV.2)

/several speakers

several speakers at the Seminar drew attention to the Convention and the Seminar indicated its agreement that "serious efforts should be made for marriages to be registered even in rural areas and among nomads since absence of such registration gave rise to numerous difficulties and lawsuits in which wives could hardly be expected to succeed." 8/

#### OPERATIONAL MEASURES

9. It will be clear from the above discussion of legal instruments that the United Nations has confirmed its direct interest in and obligation for promoting civil registration of birth and marriage at least as a protective measure. Furthermore, the drafting of legal instruments for protection is usually accompanied by studies which serve to focus the attention of governments and public opinion on violations and shortcomings. Moreover, since sustained efforts to achieve universal application of the existing Conventions is an essential part of furthering human rights, there is an indirect effect on completeness of registration of vital events, even from "protective" legal instruments. However, to meet the urgent economic and social problems, especially in the developing countries, there has come about a shift of emphasis from protection to development, with a parallel shift from setting standards and regulations and adopting Conventions, to operational activities, such as direct assistance to countries, advisory services of experts, fellowships, seminars, and so forth.

#### Public Administration

10. In the field of civil registration, operational activities have begun to be recognized as one aspect of public administration. For example, participants at the Seminar on Central Services to Local Authorities, held from 29 June - 10 July 1964 in Zaria, Northern Rhodesia, gave thought to the problem of civil status and concluded that although the registration of births, marriages and deaths could be discussed with reference to statistics, it is much more than a statistical problem because with increasing mobility it is vitally important for good administration that every person should be able to prove his or her civil status by an internationally accepted document. 9/

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8/ Seminar on Human Rights in Developing Countries (United Nations publication, ST/TAO/HR/21), para. 119.

9/ Seminar on Central Services to Local Authorities 29 June - 10 July 1964, Zaria, Northern Nigeria, Economic Commission for Africa, (United Nations document E/CN.14/UAP/37) 23 September 1964. para. 17.

/This recognition

This recognition of the obligation of Governments to provide for adequate registering of births, deaths and marriages as part of public administration in the countries of Africa is an important step in developing the kind of administration most likely to bring realization of economic and social development goals. The importance of civil registration was further emphasized in the Seminar recommendation that "guides on comparative studies, followed by meeting of officers with responsibilities in the fields concerned, be prepared on a number of subjects of immediate interest to many African countries among which was, Problems of registering births, marriages and deaths; especially the division of functions between central government and local authorities; action to fill gaps in the register and to replace missing registration certificates; international co-operation in this field." 10/

11. The Seminar also noted that associations of local authorities can be of great value by representing the interests of the group, in increasing the status of its members, and in improving their condition of service. (See para 31-34). An Asian Seminar on Central Services to Local Authorities held in New Delhi, India, 21 October to 6 November 1963, under the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme also emphasized the importance of establishing and strengthening of associations of local authorities. 11/

12. In Latin America, no similar seminar in public administration has yet been conducted but attention may be called to the Charter of Punta del Este Establishing an Alliance for Progress within the Framework of Operation Pan America 12/ by which the countries of the Hemisphere, in August 1961, adopted a programme which included inter alia the improvement of services and administration. 13/ This, together with the recommendation of the Meeting of the Task Force on Health 14/ that completeness of registration be determined

10/ Ibid., para. 126 (a) (VIII).

11/ Seminar on Central Services to Local Authorities, 21 October - 6 November 1963, New Delhi, India, United Nations Technical Assistance Programme, (United Nations document ST/TAO/M/23; E/CN.11/664/Rev.1), New York, 1964, paras. 83-91 and 157.

12/ Alliance for Progress, Official Documents Emanating from the Special Meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council at the Ministerial Level. Punta del Este, Uruguay, August 5-17, 1961. (OAS Official Records, OEA/Ser. H/XII.1.

13/ Ibid., Title II, Chapter III.

14/ Report of the Meeting of the Task Force on Health held at the Ministerial Level. Washington, D.C. April 1963.

in each country of Latin America and that programmes designed to obtain complete coverage by 1970 be undertaken serve to indicate that in Latin America also, civil registration of vital events is being recognized as a legitimate goal of public administration.

#### Statistical Indicators of Levels of Living

13. International developments which indirectly impinge on the advancement of civil registration of births, deaths and marriages in the countries of the world are those concerned with the statistical measurement or appraisal of levels of living and changes therein, and the establishment and improvement of basic demographic statistics.

14. According to the United Nations Secretary General's Committee of Experts on International Definition and Measurement of Standards and Levels of Living <sup>15/</sup>, the promotion of higher standards of living is set forth in the Charter of the United Nations as a general goal of international economic and social activity. It is also the stated goal of numerous operational programmes of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, such as the expanded programme of technical assistance for economic development and the concerted programme of practical action in the social field. The international organizations have for some time recognized the desirability of obtaining a clearer understanding of the concept of "standards of living" from an international point of view, and of the methods by which progress in raising standards of living is to be measured. Accordingly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations convened the small Committee of Experts in June 1953 to work out adequate statistical methods to best facilitate the gathering and use of data pertinent to measuring levels of living and changes therein. After studying the problem, the Committee agreed that the measurement of levels of living must be approached by analysis of various "components" representing internationally accepted values such as health, nutrition and education and by the use of various statistical "indicators" of these components. Some 40 indicators were selected, among which were life expectancy rates, infant mortality rates and the crude death rate for measuring demographic and health conditions.

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<sup>15/</sup> Report on International Definition and Measurement of Standards and Levels of Living, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 54.IV.5), p. iii.



15. These three indicators which were given high priority in the Committee's Report have long been used as measures of general levels of health, in addition to being closely related to other components of levels of living. Expectation of life at birth is considered theoretically the best indicator of levels of health. The infant mortality rate has traditionally been regarded as one of the best measures of environmental sanitation closely correlated with the general levels of economic and social development. The crude death rate is included in spite of its dependence on the age structure of the population, because it reflects the intensity of mortality in a given country or area and because of its greater availability.

16. The use of these indicators is, however, limited by lack of reliable data for many countries and territories of the world. The next round of censuses will make available current data on the age structure of population and should thereby increase the number of countries for which it will be possible to make estimates of the expectation of life. However, the real difficulty is that data involving fertility and mortality rates cannot be more reliable than the registration of births and deaths from which the data are derived. Since the completeness of registration is in turn related to the general level of social and economic development of the country concerned, the problem of obtaining reliable data for the less developed countries is a very real one.

17. The inability of many countries to produce the demographic statistics required led the Committee to propose the methods by which the measurement of levels of living might be improved; the strengthening of the statistical system, the design and tabulation of special tables from population censuses, and the utilization of sample surveys were the three methods suggested.

#### Principles for a Vital Statistics System

18. Improvement of the statistical system in general and of vital statistics in particular has been the concern of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations since its inception in 1946. The Principles for a Vital Statistics System <sup>16/</sup> including the organization of civil registration services, were adopted by the Commission in February 1953 <sup>17/</sup> and approved by the ECOSOC in April 1953 <sup>18/</sup> with the following Resolution:

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<sup>16/</sup> Principles for a Vital Statistics System, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 53.XVII.8).

<sup>17/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifteenth Session. Supplement No.5. Annex 3.

<sup>18/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifteenth Session. Supplement No. 1. Resolution 469 (XV).D.

The economic and Social Council

Recognizing the importance of adequate vital statistics for public health, demographic and social studies and for the economic development of each country, as well as their value for international purposes,

Taking note that the Statistical Commission had adopted a set of principles for a vital statistics system and that the Population Commission has expressed the view that these principles will serve an immediate and constructive purpose,

1. Recommends that governments give attention to the importance of developing vital statistics to meet demographic, economic, public health and social needs;
2. Suggests that, as facilities and resources permit, governments re-view and appraise their procedures for registering vital events and compiling vital statistics, taking into consideration the principles for a vital statistics system, and introduce such changes as are feasible to improve national statistics and their international comparability in this field;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to consult with governments and to give assistance as requested in the use of these principles;
4. Requests the Secretary-General, when forwarding the present resolution and the principles for a vital statistics system to governments, to draw their attention to the priorities suggested by the Population and Statistical Commissions for the collection of vital statistics and to emphasize that where a vital registration system is being introduced or extended the sound organization of the registration system should precede any attempt to obtain from it the full range of vital statistics.

Other Recommendations

19. Since that time, the improvement of civil registers and the vital statistics obtained from them has been the subject of resolutions at each session of the Statistical Commission and Population Commission of the United Nations. As concerns Latin America, these recommendations have been augmented by consideration of the incompleteness of vital registers as well as the lack of precision of the data in them at the Latin American Seminar on Population, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 5-16 December 1955, 19/ and at the Seminar on Evaluation and Utilization of Population Census Data in Latin America, 30 November-18 December 1959. 20/ The need for improvement in the civil

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19/ Latin American Seminar on Population, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 5-16 December 1955, (United Nations document ST/TAA/Ser.C/33; ST/SOA/36), pp.62-64.

20/ Seminar on Evaluation and Utilization of Population Census Data in Latin America, Santiago, Chile, 30 November - 18 December 1959, (United Nations document, ST/TAO/Ser.C/46; E/CN.9/CON.1/1/Rev.1). Chapter II, para 4; Chapter III, para. 12.

/registers has

registers has also been the subject of discussion at other regional meetings, namely, the Third Inter-American Conference on Statistics <sup>21/</sup> in 1958; the Subcommittee on Vital Statistics of the Committee on the Improvement of National Statistics (COINS) which adapted the UN Principles for a Vital Statistics System to Latin American use in 1961 <sup>22/</sup>; and the inter-agency Committee on the Improvement of Civil Registration Services in the Americas, under the auspices of the Inter American Children's Institute which also met in 1961. Finally, the Charter of Punta del Este also in 1961 <sup>23/</sup> cited improvement of basic statistics as an intermediate and short-term action measure designed to achieve economic and social development and the "Ten-Year Public Health Program of the Alliance for Progress" further recommended to Governments that measures be taken "to improve the collection and study of vital and health statistics as a basis for formulation and evaluation of national health programs." <sup>24/</sup> Since two of the goals of the program are the reduction of the present mortality rate in children under 5 years of age by one-half, and an increase of five years in the life expectancy at birth of every person, both of which are measurable only by vital statistics, it is abundantly clear that here is a clear directive to improve civil registers of birth and death.

20. The United Nations and the specialized agencies are also taking steps designed to bring countries up to a level of statistical development where they will possess the basic quantitative data without which any development plan can be little more than a qualitative conjecture. <sup>25/</sup> Among the "health targets for development" is ascertainment of the present level of the infant mortality rate in countries and initiation of efforts to lower it <sup>26/</sup>, --another goal, achievement of which will be measured by vital statistics.

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<sup>21/</sup> Third Inter-American Statistical Conference, Final Act, Petrópolis, Brazil, June 9-23, 1955, Pan American Union, Washington, D.C. 1958.

<sup>22/</sup> Report of the Vital Statistics Subcommittee to the Committee on the Improvement of National Statistics, Washington, D.C. Pan American Union, 1961 (Inter American Statistical Institute, doc. 4358a).

<sup>23/</sup> Alliance for Progress, op. cit., title II, Chapter III, 2.C (3).

<sup>24/</sup> Ibid., Resolution. A. 2.1.c.

<sup>25/</sup> The United Nations Development Decade, Proposals for Action, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 62.II.B.2), p. 113.

<sup>26/</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

21. There is a growing recognition that the ultimate objective of economic development is a social objective: higher levels of living and the well-being of the community and the individuals who compose it. 27/ The development of the statistics required to evaluate these levels statistically and to trace changes in the components of levels of living becomes, therefore, a major goal.

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

22. This paper has two purposes; firstly, to inform Seminar participants how the United Nations helps Governments to improve their systems of local government and local administration; and secondly, to stimulate discussion of the types of technical co-operation and related activities that would be most helpful to participants and their Governments in the future.

23. Technical assistance in local government and administration forms part of a larger programme of United Nations technical co-operation in public administration. Good local administration is usually dependent on sound organization and operation of government at the national level; and improvements at the local level are likely to be more successful if they are part of a general programme of improvement in public administration. The United Nations assists Governments in formulating such a general programme and in establishing the agencies and institutions needed to make continuing improvements in the organization and operations of government, in personnel administration and training, and in financial policies and administration. Moreover, the various technical offices and the specialized agencies of the United Nations assist Governments in improving administration in their respective fields: planning, civil registration, housing, health, educational organization and other activities of special interest to local government.

24. Within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at United Nations Headquarters the Division for Public Administration has substantive responsibility for global programmes of technical assistance in the field of public administration;

25. There are also other sources of technical assistance in public administration which are available to Governments. Non-governmental international organizations such as the International Institute of Administrative Sciences and the International Union of Local Authorities also have an important role to play in the professionalization of the public service and stimulate improvements in governmental administration. The United Nations

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27/ Five-Years Perspective: 1960-1964, op. cit., para. 329.

seeks to collaborate with all such other sources of assistance and professional support for improvements in public administration.

26. With particular reference to local government, the United Nations offers various types of assistance to Governments. It assists in the conduct of surveys to define local government areas, to improve relationships between central government and local authorities, and to establish the organization, powers, functions, and method of financing such authorities.

27. The United Nations may also assist in the implementation of local government surveys, including the establishment and strengthening of ministries or departments of local government and other central agencies for improvement of local government. Special emphasis is placed on these central agencies because, through them, the Governments themselves can render assistance to local authorities. The United Nations has provided advisory assistance to capital cities and other municipalities at government request; as noted later, it is also collaborating in a programme of inter-municipal technical assistance. But the resources of the United Nations are not adequate to provide significant direct help to cities. It is better in any case to help Governments to organize and staff their own central agencies for the purpose. These central agencies may include a ministry or department of local government, a local government public service commission, arrangements for on-the-job training and institutional training, and a loan agency for local authorities, all of which the United Nations could help to establish if requested by the Governments concerned.

28. In addition to these agencies, a union of local authorities and one or more professional or staff associations of local government personnel can contribute in a special way toward improving local administration. In some parts of the world, the unions of local authorities are important sources of assistance to local units. International non-governmental organizations, such as the International Union of Local Authorities, can advise on the organization of these bodies.

29. All requests for assistance from the United Nations must be initiated or approved by the Government concerned. In most countries a special national office has been designated to co-ordinate all forms of technical assistance and to serve as a channel for external assistance. In most Latin American countries there are resident representatives of the Technical Assistance Board (UNTAB) who are accredited either to single countries or to two or more countries or territories. They assist Governments in programming and co-ordinating the technical assistance of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The office of the UNTAB resident representative can provide additional information on technical and financial assistance available

/through the

through the United Nations and the specialized agencies. If technical advice is needed in order to formulate a request for assistance, arrangements can usually be made for the regional adviser in local government or one of the other advisers in public administration at the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America to visit the country.

30. It is suggested that the Seminar discuss the types of technical assistance in local government - world-wide research, regional studies and meetings, and country projects - that would be most useful to their Governments. Some developments in these areas over the past 10 years are set forth below.

#### Associations

31. As noted above, one of the best ways to improve public administration is to organize the staff into an association. Such associations work to increase the status of its members as well as to improve their conditions of work. They also serve as a means for dissemination and exchange of information.

32. In the United States, improvement in civil registration which is carried out at the State and local level has been due, in large part, to the activities of the American Association for Vital Records and Public Health Statistics 28/, an association of representatives from both the vital records and the public health statistics interest of the registration areas, whose aim is improvement in the vital records and statistics system of the United States.

33. In Europe, an association of civil registrars has been organized with Headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands. It is the "Commission internationale de l'état civil" (CIEC) which prints, collects and makes available legislative material in the field of civil registration.

34. To improve civil registration in Latin America, the First Inter-American Seminar on Civil Registration in 1954 resolved to organize the participants into the Inter American Civil Registration Association (AIRC). The objectives of the Association are set forth in the Report of the First Seminar. 29/ The present (Second) Seminar is also the second meeting of the Association. It is hoped that one outcome of the Seminar will be to give

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28/ Reconstituted in March 1958 from the "American Association of Registration Executives", the first Conference of which was held in 1940.

29/ Final Report of the First Inter-American Seminar on Civil Registration, op. cit., para 39.

/stimulation to

stimulation to the Association as an effective regional organization.

#### Training Centres and Seminars

35. Regional training and research centres and seminars are indirect but nevertheless useful forms of technical assistance. They facilitate the synthesis and exchange of information among countries on common problems and also provide a means of contact among officers of different countries who have similar responsibilities.

36. The 1954 First Inter-American Seminar on Civil Registration 30/ was the first Seminar devoted to civil registration problems in Latin America.

37. A related training activity which was in existence at the same time was the Inter-American Centre for Biostatistics (ICB) 31/ which, inter alia, sponsored the Civil Registration Seminar. This Centre which was a joint project of the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the Government of Chile, with headquarters in Santiago, carried out courses of training in civil registration and vital statistics from 1952 to 1955 and, as such, acted as a catalyst for development in this area. A total of 142 technicians from 17 countries participated. The Centre was taken over by Chile in December 1955 and continued, with the assistance of grants from the Pan American Health Organization, to give courses in the School of Public Health of the University of Chile.

38. A more related successor of the ICB was another longer term training activity, the Latin American Demographic Research and Training Centre (CELADE) which was organized in Santiago in 1958. This Centre in the process of its training and research has given indirect impetus to improvement in civil registration.

39. In 1957, a Technical Conference on the Demographic Problems of the Area served by the Caribbean Commission 32/ was held in Trinidad, under United Nations auspices, and in the course of the discussions, the need for improvement

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30/ Ibid.

31/ Report of the Inter-American Centre of Biostatistics, Santiago, Chile, 1952-1955, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 57.XVII.5)

32/ Report of the Conference on the Demographic Problems of the Area Served by The Caribbean Commission, Trinidad, 25 July-August 2, 1957, Caribbean Commission, Central Secretariat.

/in civil

in civil registration was stressed.

40. The 1959 Seminar on the Evaluation and Utilization of Census Results 33/ was also indirectly effective in high-lighting the deficiencies of the civil registration systems in Latin America.

#### Expert Advice

41. The provision of expert advisers, both regional and national, is another effective means of technical assistance. These experts are normally attached to the ministry or department of government having primary responsibility for the task for which advisory assistance is requested, (e.g., the ministry of the interior or local government). United Nations advisers in civil registration and vital statistics in Latin America have been persons attached to the Economic Commission for Latin America as "regional advisers in demographic statistics". During the years under review, advice has been given, *inter alia*, to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Paraguay. It is anticipated that this type of assistance will be extended to other countries upon request, in the future.

#### Fellowships

42. Another important type of technical assistance is the provision of fellowships under either the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance or the Regular Programme of the United Nations, to enable officers to undertake study to observe systems in other countries or to have other forms of training abroad. Since 1954, 29 fellowships have been awarded in the fields of civil registration and vital statistics. These are not all in Latin America nor do they include those awarded for study at the Demographic Training and Research Training Centre in Santiago, mentioned above; for 1963 these alone numbered 33.

#### Technical Manuals

43. The publication in 1955 of the United Nations Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods 34/ provided for the first time world-wide information

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33/ Seminar on Evaluation and Utilization of Population Census Data in Latin America, op. cit.

34/ Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 55.XVII.1).

/in comparable



in comparable form of national practices and recommended vital events and their use for deriving vital statistics as of 1950. The Handbook presents these national practices in tabular form including, inter alia, chapters on: (1) the registrar and informant; (2) the registration process; (3) the register and the registration record; (4) definitions of events to be registered; (5) governmental provision for registration, (6) the use of vital records and (7) the history of the present systems. The Handbook thus provides a guide or a standard against which country practices can be evaluated.

44. Information on corresponding aspects of the national systems in 1964 has been collected by the United Nations Statistical Office with the object of revising the Handbook in 1965-1966.

