

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

ACTIVITIES OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICS

(Note by the Secretariat)

(The following note is circulated for the information of Delegations. It has been prepared by the Commission Secretariat in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the United Nations).

The terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Latin America permit it to "undertake or sponsor the collection, evaluation and dissemination of such economic, technological and statistical information as the Commission deems appropriate". In view of the fact that there is already in existence a Statistical Commission created by the Economic and Social Council and a Statistical Office charged with certain responsibilities by the Council, it is desirable that the Commission should have before it the necessary background information concerning the functions which the Secretariat can undertake. This is presented below.

Collection of basic statistics

In order to avoid or minimize duplication of requests for statistics to Member Governments, the collection of all general series of basic statistics, such as those provided, or to be provided, in the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics or other publications of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, are the primary responsibilities of the Statistical Office of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies. These statistics now include, for example, such series as those on population and vital statistics, national income, employment and unemployment, production (including fuel, power, food, raw materials and manufactured goods), internal and external trade, finance, prices, and transport.

It may be noted that definitive arrangements respecting the statistics to be collected by each Specialized Agency and by the United Nations have already been worked out and are in effect.

Statistics for detailed and ad hoc studies

In the case of statistics required for special studies or reports beyond the detail presented in the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, and equivalent publications, it is appropriate for the Secretariat of a Regional Commission to collect such statistics directly from the Member Governments within the geographic scope of the Commission. The activities of the regional Secretariats in regard to the collection of such statistics would be co-ordinated with the activities of the Statistical Office of the United Nations and of the Specialized Agencies, especially as regards definitions and other matters of statistical comparability. The Regional Commission is free, if it desires, to instruct its Secretariat to undertake general economic surveys of the region or special studies of particular problems which involve the use of statistical data. Such surveys or studies may be conducted periodically or at irregular intervals of time.

Particular statistical functions of regional secretariats

In order that the Regional Commission may be adequately serviced in regard to its statistical requirements, the following particular functions will be undertaken, as required by the Secretariat.

1. Maintenance of lists of statistical information sources, such as government departments collecting statistical data, other agencies collecting statistical data, official and non-official statistical publications.
2. Collection of all official statistical publications, and as many other statistical publications as possible, comprising all statistical information available on the region.
3. Maintenance of current information on countries of the region, with respect to those series carried in the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and other current publications. The Statistical

Office will, on request, provide as rapidly as possible all such data when ready for publication.

4. Publication as required by the needs of the Commission of specialized or detailed information on countries of the region, except in the case of information supplied by member governments on a confidential basis. Such publications should be submitted to the Statistical Office of the United Nations for approval in respect of the statistical standards used and consistency of data.



