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**FINAL REPORT OF THE MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF
STATISTICS OF THE AMERICAS**

(Madrid, Spain, 11-13 November 1992)

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I. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date

1. The meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas was held at the headquarters of the National Institute of Industry (INI) of Spain in Madrid from 11 to 13 November 1992.
2. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Inter-American Statistical Conference (CIE) have alternated in organizing the meetings of the Directors of Statistics of the Americas. On this occasion ECLAC accepted the Spanish Government's generous offer to host the meeting and to facilitate its fullest possible attendance by Directors of Statistics of the region. The fact that Madrid is the site of the Spanish branch of the European Training Centre for Economic Statisticians of Developing Countries (CESD-Madrid) was an additional consideration in this regard.

2. Attendance*

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries members of ECLAC: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.
4. Representatives of the following bodies attended the meeting by special invitation: European Community, Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and United Nations Statistical Division (UNSTAT).

3. Officers

5. The attending delegations agreed to designate a chairperson for each session of the meeting. Accordingly, the various sessions were chaired by representatives of Spain, Brazil, Uruguay, Canada, Venezuela and Costa Rica.

* See annex 1 for the list of participants.

4. Agenda and documentation

6. The participants adopted the following agenda:
 1. Experiences of countries of the region that have conducted censuses in the 1990s round. Activities of the Project for the Development and Application of Sampling Frames and Sample Designs for Household Survey Programmes.
 2. Activities report of the Latin American and Caribbean delegation to the United Nations Statistical Commission. Proposed agenda items for the forthcoming session of the Commission (February 1993).
 3. Introduction of the latest revision of the System of National Accounts. Main features of the revision. Report of the sixth meeting of the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Statistical Conference (COM/CIE) held at Aguascalientes, Mexico. Needs associated with the new system: availability of basic statistics, selection and priorities for the introduction of the new revision, training and technical cooperation.
 4. Evaluation of the main cooperation activities currently being pursued in the field of statistics under agreements reached by the statistical bureaus of the countries of the region.
 - a) Informal sector
 - b) Social and poverty indicators
 - c) Short-term indicators and statistics
 - d) Foreign trade statistics
 - e) Environment
 - f) Regularization of title to ejidos in Mexico
 5. International cooperation in the field of statistics. The work of the National Statistical Institute (INE) of Spain and the present and future activities of CESD-Madrid. Training activities involving the United States Bureau of the Census. Activities of the Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information Sciences (INEGI) of Mexico.
 6. Special topics:
 - a) Administrative records: current status and future outlook
 - b) Architecture of statistical data banks of the region and geographical information systems.
7. The participants had before them the documents listed in annex 2 to this report.

5. Opening session

8. Messrs. Pedro Pérez, Secretary of State for Economic Affairs of the host country, and Pedro Sáinz, Chief of the ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division, addressed the participants during the opening session of the meeting.

9. After extending a warm welcome to all the participants, the Secretary of State for Economic Affairs of Spain thanked Mr. Gert Rosenthal, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, for having accepted Spain's offer to host the meeting. The present meeting was being held on the tenth anniversary of the first Conference of Directors General of Statistics of Latin America and Spain, which had also taken place in Madrid, and on the quincentennial of the meeting of the old and new worlds, as well as at a time when cooperation with Latin America was being consolidated through the inauguration of CESD-Madrid.
10. Reliable, up-to-date, comparable, comprehensive statistics were needed in order to provide a clear picture of the countries' economic —and, in some cases, political— integration processes. In the past, Latin America had undertaken large-scale initiatives to promote economic integration, and many of those programmes had been under way ever since or were being pursued with renewed vigour; examples included the Andean Group, the Central America Common Market (CACM), the Caribbean Common Market, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
11. The European Community had a wealth of experience in the area of integration, and that process had been further strengthened by the new demands associated with the start-up of the single market and the vast undertaking called for by the Treaty of European Union. In that context, and in keeping with the spirit of cooperation existing between Spain and the Latin American and Caribbean region, great opportunities were opening up for closer cooperation in the field of statistics. He underscored the importance of the meeting's work in those respects and formally declared the meeting open.
12. The Chief of the ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division thanked the Government of Spain for having invited the Directors of Statistics of the Americas to hold their meeting in Madrid, which he viewed as a sign of the heights reached by cooperation between Spain and the countries of the region.
13. During the 1980s the region had found itself in the midst of a severe crisis which had affected the countries' public sectors in general and their statistical offices and agencies in particular. As a result, those bodies had sustained deep budget cuts, and many of them had also lost significant numbers of their most highly skilled personnel. Meanwhile, the demand for information was growing as a consequence of that very same crisis, and statistical agencies had therefore had to find a way to "do more with less". The fact that they were, in many cases, successful in doing so should not mislead policy-makers, however, who needed to understand that the deterioration of the region's statistical agencies would sooner or later be reflected in a decline in the quality of the basic information they produced.
14. In reference to the agenda for the meeting, he explained that three broad subject categories were to be examined: a) the vast operational tasks that would have to be, or had already been, undertaken by statistical bureaus in order to conduct population and housing censuses and to compile the basic information required for the implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA) to be approved in early 1993; b) the main areas in which regional cooperation would be required in connection with the evaluation and review of the international statistical system proposed by the United Nations Statistical Commission, and the training activities (including the creation of CESD-Madrid, which served as an example of concerted support efforts on the part of the EEC and INE/Spain and the Directors of Statistics of the Americas) and cooperation projects then being carried out by statistical bureaus and international organizations; and c) two pioneering efforts: an analysis of the potential uses of administrative records made possible by institutional reforms in Latin America and the Caribbean, and an examination of technological advances in the field of computer sciences.

15. In closing, he recounted the benefits derived from the system of cooperation initiated in recent years by the Directors of Statistics of the region with the help of ECLAC and of other countries and international bodies. Within that framework, the programme of action to be agreed upon in Madrid would surely be fulfilled with equal or even greater efficacy than the present programme.

II. SUMMARY OF THE DEBATES

Experiences of countries of the region that have conducted censuses in the 1990s round. Activities of the Project for the Development and Application of Sampling Frames and Sample Designs for Household Survey Programmes

16. In order to organize the debates, it was proposed that the analysis of the above agenda item should be divided into four subtopics: a) management-related aspects of the census, b) decentralization of census activities, c) technological aspects, and d) post-census activities.

17. The representative of Chile informed the participants about a number of legal provisions which facilitated census operations in his country. One of the most significant activities undertaken in Chile had been the updating of census maps and a housing count, which had paved the way for the immediate completion of two tasks: the planning of census operations in the field, and the preparation of an updated sampling frame for permanent household surveys. He also reported that the decision to contract outside consultants or companies to carry out a number of tasks relating to the census had worked out well in terms of both cost and quality.

18. The pre-census had taken the entire year prior to the census itself and had been conducted by permanent staff members of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile throughout the country, in both rural and urban areas, with block-by-block coverage being achieved in the latter. The REDATAM+ (retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer) computer system had been used for the maintenance of the sampling frame, and the preparatory activities had provided INE staff with training in census-related tasks and had facilitated the establishment of a direct link with the municipalities. The pre-census had cost a significant amount, but in his opinion had been well worth it.

19. The representative of Brazil said that when his country had conducted its census in 1991, it had been able to draw upon a pool of very useful information. In early 1990 sampling tests of the census form had been run which had led to the early detection of various administrative problems stemming from the nature of the technical facilities available to the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute (IBGE) and of certain difficulties connected with the establishment of wage ceilings for interviewers. Many of those problems had been solved through collaboration with various institutions; for example, some computer hardware manufacturers had furnished information on diskettes for the states' use in preparing their critiques. Nevertheless, he emphasized the importance of putting together a good team of administrators, which was what made the management process operate smoothly and effectively; otherwise, even an excellent technical staff in other fields could not guarantee the proper execution of the census.

20. The representative of Panama said that the census recently taken in her country had been successful, thanks in large part to the fact that an effective, broad-based campaign had been carried out to provide

information about the aims of the census and to make the public aware of the importance of participating in it. Another highly important factor had been the timely preparation of reliable, up-to-date maps. In addition, the use of microcomputers had made it possible to process the census data efficiently and, as a result, the entire tabulation schedule had been published in just two years. In closing, she observed that the undercount rate of only 2.7% was tangible evidence of just how successful the census had been.

21. The representative of Bolivia said that his country's lack of experience in census-taking had been one of the chief obstacles to its successful completion. Another adverse factor had been some trade unions' opposition to certain stages of the census; the problem had finally been resolved, however, with the help of a well-conceived public awareness and information programme headed by renowned Bolivians. Although the initial problems had made it appear as though the census would end in failure, it had ultimately been completed with satisfactory results thanks to the very effective quality control system devised at the management level. To date, tabulations of the returns from three of the country's departments had been completed and published.

22. A member of the Mexican delegation said that surveys had been conducted in order to measure the public's expectations regarding the size of Mexico's population and to gauge people's receptiveness to the census. The results had reflected a great many opposing views and indicated that estimates of the size of the total population covered a wide range of variation. Since a comparison of population projections with the census results revealed a poor fit, questions as to reliability had been raised. The presentation of figures by block groupings provided readily acceptable proof to anyone of the census data's accuracy, however. Accordingly, where necessary, staff from the Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information Sciences (INEGI) worked with the parties objecting to the results in carrying out field checks which proved the validity of the numbers generated by the census. Finally, he informed the participants that a recount was scheduled for 1995 for the purpose of updating the results.

23. The representative of El Salvador began by referring to the innovations made in her country's census form. In view of the fact that it had been 21 years since the preceding census and taking into consideration the problems caused by the military conflict in El Salvador, she felt that the latest census had proceeded satisfactorily. The population's exemplary support of the objectives of the census had permitted many of the problems encountered as a result of incomplete coverage and miscounts to be resolved by means of direct telephone calls or other recount procedures. In any event, a survey was to be taken in November to measure the census' coverage more precisely.

24. The representative of Guatemala said that his country had embarked upon the preparatory activities for its tenth population census and fifth housing census. Although the current staff of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) lacked experience, the work was going very well thanks to the staff's dedication to the objectives of the census. For the first time, the Government had also shown a keen interest in the undertaking, which had made it possible to obtain funding for 90% of the census budget; the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) would cover the other 10%. An exchange of views between census-takers and users would generate useful information suited to the needs of the country rather than data that would only serve academic purposes. Guatemala was also carrying out a pre-census similar to the one conducted by Chile, and the resulting flow of current information was being used to make significant adjustments in census operations. It was also important to mount a greater national effort in order to lessen the country's dependence upon international bodies.

25. The representative of Argentina said that the census in his country had encountered neither resistance nor distrust on the part of the population. Because Argentina had a federal system of

government, policy-making activities relating to the census were centralized while operational activities were decentralized. Approximately half a million people had taken part in the 1991 census programme. Optical readers had again been used to facilitate data input, and the people who had worked on the 1991 census had received payment for their services. The final results would be available by March 1993. The survey conducted to measure the coverage of the census had yielded a figure of 98%. Three main courses of action were planned for disseminating the census data: a) the use of magnetic media for the dissemination of information, b) the formulation of social indicators to meet specific public and private demands, and c) the coordination of a joint initiative with educational institutions to disseminate census information in that sector (particularly primary and secondary education) using teaching aids that would permit a greater use of census data and an intensification of statistical activities.

26. The representative of Peru said that his country's population and housing census had initially been scheduled for 1991 (ten years after the last census) but had then been postponed until 1993 due to budgetary problems. At the present time a considerable portion of the necessary funds were available, including a 7% contribution from UNFPA. Peru's need for census information was especially great owing to the large-scale migratory movements that had taken place during the past ten years in response to economic factors and political violence; in that respect, the pre-census count had revealed significant changes. In a different context, he emphasized the participatory approach which had guided the work of the various stages of the pre-census, noting that all the country's mayors had pledged their active cooperation under the terms of agreements with the Government. The speaker also called for increased financial assistance from international agencies for the execution of census-related tasks.

27. In closing, he drew attention to the disquieting differences observed between population projections and census results, recalling that such discrepancies had arisen in various countries of the region. The representative of Chile shared his concern and added that the subject should be analysed in terms of the size of the ranges involved and the problems caused by those differences, while bearing in mind, in the latter respect, the possible existence of inaccuracies in the census itself.

28. The representative of Venezuela spoke about the length of time required to complete all the stages of the census process in his country, which had begun in 1987 and ended in 1992 with the publication and dissemination of the results. The main stages and most outstanding features of the census operation were discussed in a document prepared for the present meeting. In that report, particular attention was devoted to the main difficulties encountered during the census process, which had included problems relating to funding, the use of optical readers, sampling and publicity.

29. The representative of Cuba said that it had been necessary to postpone the population and housing census that had been scheduled for 1990 due to constraints generated by the country's external economic relations, which had seriously affected its national economy. The State Statistical Committee (CEE) continued to work on the problem, however, and had developed an alternative census plan. The prime objective of that plan would be to avoid any negative impacts in respect of the scope and quality of the information obtained from the preceding census, taken in 1981. The plan provided for the use of sampling techniques in certain subject areas based on a sample of around 25% of the population; it also called for the extension of the enumeration period so that a smaller number of interviewers would be needed (although their training period would then be extended) and the introduction of microcomputers to process the information (eventually on a decentralized basis). In order for Cuba to achieve those objectives, a greater amount of financial assistance would be needed from international agencies, which had provided a significant level of support for the execution of the 1981 census.

30. The representative of the Dominican Republic said that his country hoped to complete the preparatory activities for its next population and housing census by May 1993, whereupon the actual census date would be set. The necessary steps were being taken to ensure that the results would become available within a fairly short period of time, thus averting a repetition of what had occurred with the 1981 census data, whose processing had taken nearly ten years. He also stressed the substantial cost reductions that had been achieved, as well as the good quality of the mapping and pre-census work.
31. The representative of Costa Rica said that her country's next population and housing census had been scheduled for April or June 1994. Thanks to the assistance provided by the Government of Japan, aerial photography was being employed for the first time, and its use was saving the country a considerable amount of time and money.
32. A representative of the United States said that planning and pre-census activities in his country had been initiated in 1984 and completed in 1990; the census had been taken on 1 April 1990. The interviews were conducted by mail and via personal contact; the final figure on the census' coverage had been 98.6%. The questionnaire had included some aspects of demographic significance, and demographic surveys were carried out to update annual population estimates during the inter-censal period. Expectations regarding the census results had been quite high, since those results were used for allocating federal funds and setting the number of congressional seats in the House of Representatives. Tapes, CD-ROM and publications were used to disseminate census data.
33. A representative of Spain said that, in view of the discrepancies that usually existed between population projections and actual census returns, it was essential that reliable post-census evaluations should be conducted and that their findings should be made known in order to ensure widespread acceptance of census results. Another reason why the accuracy of census data was so important was that those data were used as a basis for surveys on such fundamental matters as the labour force, income and expenditure, etc. The shortcomings detected in those surveys as a result of refusals to cooperate, absences or other factors made it necessary to reformulate the estimators that had traditionally been used to extrapolate sampling data, and the utilization of the information obtained on characteristics examined in the censuses was therefore of pivotal importance.
34. The representative of El Salvador commented upon problems caused by irresponsible behaviour on the part of some of the enumerators who had worked on the census, despite the fact that they had attended a three-day training course; furthermore, a portion of the population feared that the information would be misused. One of the steps taken to deal with that situation had been to make the notation of the interviewee's first and last names optional. In a different connection, she said that although no more than a moderate degree of undercounting had occurred, attempts had been made to reduce it as much as possible by making another "sweep" through areas where the most serious problems had arisen. The post-census survey was to include a special module on the economic activity of children and women and another on the documentation used to identify the population.
35. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago reported that the results of the population and housing census conducted in Trinidad and Tobago in April 1990 were to be published in late 1992. UNFPA had furnished a great deal of support for the 1990 census, and that assistance had been reflected, *inter alia*, in high-quality mapping and the use of adequate computer equipment.
36. A representative of Mexico felt that the possibility of relating the characteristics of the physical environment to statistical information constituted a significant step forward in the utilization of the data

generated by national statistical systems. The use of a geographical information system (GIS) provided a bridge between statistical information and the natural resources of a given area or zone within a country.

37. When setting up a GIS, statistical bodies should incorporate data generated from basic mapping activities, aerial photography, satellite imaging and the results of laboratory processes. Perhaps the most important component of a GIS was the database and the mechanisms used for inquiries and for information management and processing. Therefore, it was advisable to work with relational bases in order to facilitate that management. It was also very important to choose computer equipment wisely in view of the very large memory required to store all the information.
38. In discussing the 1990s census round, another member of the Mexican delegation explained that the 1990s round included the economic censuses of 1989, the general population and housing census of 1990 and the 1991 agricultural census. Those three operations had been conducted within an integral framework based, in each case, on past experience. Special mention was made of three aspects: decentralization, the updating of census maps and the development of new outputs and media.
39. With regard to decentralization, he told the participants that the central office of INEGI established the procedures and mechanisms to be used in taking each census. The regional offices were in charge of the operational aspects of the census, which included everything from its detailed planning to handing in the returns; the central office obtained the national total by means of teleprocessing.
40. The three censuses had shared a common cartographic database, which had been digitized to facilitate the presentation of statistical data at highly disaggregated geographic levels. Its updating had been based on satellite photographs, aerial photographs and numerous field tours. The digital format made it possible to channel queries and handle the data via microcomputer.
41. The new outputs generated by activities relating to the 1990s census round included the provision of the information on compact disks and through computer systems as well as the preparation of thematic maps.
42. In summing up the discussion of the first agenda item, the representative of the meeting's technical secretariat drew the participants' attention to some of the similarities to be observed among the experiences described. The nature of the census operations of the 1990s round had been determined by domestic policy decisions to a much greater extent than in past rounds, since most of the financing for censuses in the 1990s round was coming from national sources; that had required large budgetary allocations, which in turn were a function of high-level political decisions. For the same reason, greater emphasis had been placed on the role of users, since it had to be demonstrated that population and housing censuses were both necessary and useful. In many cases the inclusion of new topics on the census form, such as the environment or the status of indigenous groups, attested to a closer relationship with national users.
43. The uses to which census information could be put were most clearly illustrated in the cases of countries such as Colombia and Mexico, where the data were being used as a basis for policy decisions. Considered in that light, efforts to move towards the use of geographical information systems (GIS) represented highly significant advances.

44. The inevitable link between a census and the surrounding political situation had been underscored in the cases of countries that were in the throes of serious internal political conflicts. In such instances it had been necessary to seek the help of local authorities, especially in rural areas, in order to carry out the census. In that respect statistical agencies had displayed considerable flexibility and imagination.
45. Mapping was mentioned as an area in which progress had certainly been made, but in which a number of tasks still lay ahead. The utilization of sophisticated media involving the use of satellites or aerial photography had been combined, in some cases, with experiments in mounting joint efforts with electricity companies in zones where electrification was widespread. A great deal remained to be done, however, before digitized cartography came into widespread use.
46. Major discrepancies between population projections and census results had been found in a number of countries. Although in most cases post-census evaluations had attested to the high quality of census results, such discrepancies damaged the figures' credibility in the eyes of users. Hence the need to review and improve population projection methods. In addition, the public should be forewarned, in the course of pre-census operations, about the differences that often existed between generally accepted views and the actual facts. Another measure of interest was the mechanism introduced by Mexico, at a highly disaggregated spatial level, for the execution of joint exercises with local authorities in order to demonstrate the figures' reliability.
47. The issues raised by decentralization varied from country to country, since they depended upon the geographic features and political organization of each country. It therefore seemed clear that the subject was of greatest importance in countries with large territories and populations. In such countries, the determination of what kinds of tasks needed to be dealt with on a centralized or decentralized basis was linked to budgetary factors, management considerations, training needs and electronic data processing capacity.
48. The suspension of census activities for too long a period occasioned a decrease in operational capacity as teams were disbanded and past experience was lost. When, on the other hand, censuses were taken regularly and were linked up with current statistics, substantive improvements in both areas were observed.
49. The introduction of new technologies usually entailed problems of another sort. For example, the widespread use of computer systems created a demand for ongoing technical support. The compatibility of hardware and other materials was also important, as in the case of optical readers and the type of paper that was used.
50. Based on the statements made by the participants and the technical secretariat, the following proposals were recapitulated: a) UNFPA would be requested to collaborate with the countries in evaluating the results of the 1990s census round with a view to identifying high-priority areas for international cooperation; b) CESD-Madrid would be requested to include the subject of inter-censal population projections among its activities; and c) in view of the fact that those countries which had already conducted their censuses were in a position to cooperate with countries that had not yet done so, ECLAC and UNSTAT would be requested to explore sources of funding for possible cooperation activities of that nature.

Activities report of the Latin American and Caribbean delegation to the United Nations Statistical Commission. Proposed agenda items for the forthcoming session of the Commission (February 1993)

51. The representative of the technical secretariat for the meeting introduced the topic by highlighting some of the features of the evaluation exercises being carried out by the relevant working group of the United Nations Statistical Commission.
52. In conceptual terms, the international statistical system was defined as the existing national and international statistical bodies taken as a whole. Consequently, the quality of regional and international statistics depended on the quality, currency and coverage of national figures. Given the marked heterogeneity of regions and countries, it was necessary for the international statistical system to accord special attention to the countries that faced the greatest difficulties.
53. At the operational level, the working group had recommended that regional forums should be assigned a greater role and should be made responsible for carrying out an initial evaluation of the quality of national statistics and for transmitting proposals to the Statistical Commission of the United Nations.
54. Finally, he observed that international organizations placed emphasis on the need to provide single figures for each standardized category. When, due to the need to respond to various sorts of analytical objectives, it was not possible to come up with a single figure, the adjustments subsequently made to the data by international organizations should be properly documented in order to avoid confusing the users.
55. The representative of Argentina reviewed the functions performed by the United Nations Statistical Commission and its working group. The Commission made recommendations to the Economic and Social Council, which, if it found them to be relevant, then presented those proposals to the United Nations General Assembly. The Statistical Commission was composed of 25 States Members of the United Nations representing the various regions. Four of those States served as representatives of Latin America; countries were assigned seats on the Commission by rotation.
56. The various regions were also represented in the working group responsible for the coordination of international statistics. It functioned in a more flexible fashion than the Commission, inasmuch as it could meet on a number of occasions between sessions. It was empowered to recommend changes and to submit to the Commission proposals for the inclusion of subjects of special interest to the countries. An example of such a subject was the revised System of National Accounts (SNA), which had been discussed by each region. The Latin American deliberations on that topic had led to a decision to draw up a manual on the preparation of national accounts for moderate- and high-inflation countries.
57. Other working groups had been created to study specific problems (e.g., the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics and the working group formed to examine environmental statistics), and Latin America needed to know how it might participate in their activities.
58. Since the last session of the Commission, its working group had met on two occasions in order to draft a status report on the international statistical system. It had prepared a document containing recommendations to be presented to the Commission on the following topics, each of which was the responsibility of a specified international body: a) statistics on manufacturing and construction (OECD), b) financial statistics (IMF), c) price statistics (Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT)), d) environmental statistics (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) and e) international trade statistics (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)).

59. The working group had also recommended that the Directors of Statistics should hold meetings at the regional level in order to gain first-hand information as to the problems of greatest interest to the regions. The regional commissions of the United Nations should provide all possible assistance to national statistical offices. Furthermore, a system should be implemented for monitoring adherence to international statistical classifications so that greater international comparability might be achieved.

60. The Director of the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSTAT) said that some of the most noteworthy recommendations made by the Commission's working group related to operational aspects of the regional commissions and the participation of national statistical offices. His statement focused on an analysis of the relationship between national statistical systems and international activities in the field of statistics. He felt that the working group attributed particular importance to the meetings of Directors of Statistics which were oriented towards active participation in the working groups, and agreed with the technical secretariat of the meeting that the international statistical system started with the countries themselves; therefore, the topic of regional meetings had been considered in the working group as a focal point for the coordination of its recommendations at the regional level.

61. He went on to give a brief overview of the reforms made in UNSTAT following the appointment of the new Secretary-General of the United Nations. Based on the experience gained during the first phase of the restructuring process, functional groupings had been established (economic, social and environmental). Within that framework, the processing of statistics and the collection of data were essential inputs for economic and social analysis, and their systematization was one of the assets which the United Nations had at its command. That collective resource should be preserved, strengthened and adapted to newly emerging needs, and access to it should be provided especially to countries with fewer economic resources to draw upon. By the same token, technical cooperation should be channeled to disadvantaged regions and countries through special assistance programmes. Striking a healthy balance between the responsibilities of the principal offices of the United Nations and the regional headquarters was a key factor in that regard, and it appeared that the time had come to revitalize the regional commissions so that they might act as true representatives of the United Nations.

62. The representative of Canada reminded the participants that his country was a member of both the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and ECLAC. The ECE had managed to improve the coordination of the international bodies that were working in contact with a group of Governments representing the countries of the region as a whole. The working group of the Statistical Commission had recommended that a similar operational approach should be undertaken in regions which had not already done so. He therefore felt that, in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the corresponding regional commission should assume the same responsibilities as those already being discharged by the other regional commissions of the United Nations. The Organization of American States (OAS) had performed that type of function during the postwar period, but was not currently in a position to continue to do so. It was also his view that the relevant ministries of foreign affairs should take part in setting up the above-mentioned type of organizational framework for regional efforts.

63. In response to the Canadian representative's statement, other delegations informed the meeting that the OAS secretariat was currently engaged in negotiations, in accordance with resolution CIE/RES.1 of the OAS Inter-American Economic and Social Council, with a view to reaching an agreement with ECLAC concerning an operational approach that would, in essence, provide the region with a forum such as that envisioned by the Statistical Commission's working group.

64. The representatives expressed the support of the Governments of the region for the proposals to reinforce the activities of the international statistical system at the regional level. In order to do so, the Directors of Statistics should participate fully in those activities and the statistical divisions of the United Nations regional commissions needed to be strengthened.

65. In order for the relevant functions to become truly decentralized, it was essential for UNSTAT and the bodies of the United Nations system to take part in the meetings of Directors of Statistics of the Americas and present their cooperation programmes to the Directors. The Directors and those bodies should also undertake a joint analysis of coordination and evaluation activities relating to the five topics selected for the first stage of work.

Problems related to the introduction of Revision 4 of the System of National Accounts. Report of the sixth meeting of the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Statistical Conference (COM/CIE) held at Aguascalientes, Mexico

66. The representative of OECD described the main features of the work involved in revising the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the conclusions that had been reached. As part of that process, an inter-secretariat working group had been formed by five international organizations: the World Bank, European Community (EC), IMF, United Nations (including its regional commissions) and OECD; advisory services were also provided by experts on national accounts, who were acting in a personal capacity regardless of the organizations to which they might belong. National statistical bureaus were not represented as such, but many experts on the staffs of those bureaus participated in the discussion of various topics.

67. At the start of the project, a seminar had been held for experts from developing countries. At that seminar it had been concluded that there should be only one system of national accounts and that an approach differing from that used by developed countries would not be proposed, since all the economic variables were measured in the same way. The group of experts from developing countries attending that seminar had included representatives of such a wide variety of nations that the differences among them might well be greater than those existing between some developed and developing countries. The seminar had been held in Geneva in 1986, one week before the meeting of experts on the SNA review.

68. One of the main general characteristics of the new SNA was that, without requiring any additional data, it had more detailed accounts than the preceding version. For example, rather than having just one account for income and expenditure totals, it grouped the information on the generation and distribution of rents. That change did not call for any more information than the preceding version of the SNA; it was just a more efficient way of presenting the data. Another feature was a clearer delimitation of the headings in the new national accounts. The various accounts had been defined more precisely, and their underlying rationales were explained in order to make it easier for the relevant authorities to resolve debatable cases. It was impossible to define all the categories merely by setting them out on a list, and it was therefore essential to have a full understanding of the basic concept behind each heading, especially in the present-day context of evolving economic systems and sweeping institutional change. Yet another factor was the new mercantile instruments (e.g., financial leasing) which had come into use. Although those instruments had actually been in existence as far back as the 1960s, it was not until more recently that they had begun to play a major role in gross capital formation. Although the treatment of such instruments was quite complicated, at least they were not simply ignored, as they had been in the past.

69. The representative then spoke about the extent to which the new SNA had been harmonized with other information systems, such as the balance of payments. Their harmonization had always been one of the goals of national accounts authorities, and the working group had facilitated cooperation among international bodies in taking that aspect into account. Accordingly, the IMF had collaborated in revising the SNA by refining those aspects falling within its sphere of activity. It was impossible to harmonize different statistical systems without at the same time revising the corresponding methodologies.

70. In reference to the changes made in the SNA between 1968 and 1992, he said that, since the inclusion of the balances calculated for the five major areas of the economy and for the economy as a whole, it was no longer a "revised system" but rather an integrated system of accounts on production and rents. More attention was devoted to assets than in the past, and a new assets account had been included which registered changes brought about by factors other than transactions between economic agents, although some imputations of that type had, of course, been made before the addition of the new account. Changes could occur in assets for a variety of reasons: destruction of assets by natural causes or warfare, the discovery of deposits, etc. The fact that such changes would now be taken explicitly into consideration was a response to the increased concern about the environment and the need to discover the reason for the changes that occurred. It was important for assets to be precisely defined so that they could be delimited and it could be determined whether or not they were productive. A general definition entailed the existence of an owner and of economic or social benefits generated by the asset; accordingly, forests and deposits would be included only if they had an owner (which could be the State or another party). Environmental assets such as the air and the oceans would not be included, however.

71. Another factor that warranted special consideration was inflation, which had occurred in all the countries in the world at one time or another. In that regard, it was necessary to distinguish between nugatory and real gains; the former were produced by inflation, while the latter stemmed from changes in the relative prices of fixed assets and stocks. In order to deal with that subject properly, it had been proposed that a manual should be prepared for use by high-inflation countries.

72. The speaker outlined the main changes that would be made with the introduction of the new SNA. The first such change had to do with the distinction between real consumption and consumption expenditure. The term "real consumption" referred to the goods and services acquired by households, whether they were purchased or received free of charge from the public sector and non-profit institutions. In practice, real household consumption was greater than household expenditure; the other side of the coin was that grants and donations reduced the public sector's level of real consumption, and its real consumption was therefore lower than its level of expenditure. It was important to differentiate between consumption (utilization) and expenditure while limiting the public sector's real consumption to the consumption level of the general government as a unit. In cases where goods or services were furnished free of charge (and therefore had no price), their value for accounting purposes would be set at their production cost—as had been done under the preceding system—whereas goods and services that were sold would be valued at their market price. In situations of heavy subsidization, a paradox would arise in that the recorded value of donated goods and services would be greater than that of the same goods and services when they were acquired by households at below-market prices. In such cases, a cutoff point should be set for their valuation. That was a decision which the new SNA left up to the officials responsible for national accounts, and it was therefore still an open question.

73. Another significant change in the revised SNA was its treatment of military expenditure on construction and equipment, which had previously been regarded as consumption. Under the new system, it had been proposed that they were to be categorized as capital formation. Indeed, one school of thought

had suggested that all such military expenditures should be recorded under gross fixed capital formation. Progress had also been made in dealing with the concept of goods which were assigned especially high values (such as precious metals and works of art) and which were not used in production or for consumption but were none the less regarded as corporate and household assets.

74. Finally, it had also been decided that illegal activities would be included in the revised SNA despite the problems entailed in their measurement. Although many practical difficulties existed in that respect, estimates of such activity were necessary to avoid errors. Income flows associated with drug use were one example, since their exclusion would affect calculations of saving rates.

75. A representative of Mexico provided an overview of the activities of the Interregional Seminar on the SNA Review held on 5-9 October 1992 in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Special emphasis was placed on the need to increase international cooperation in order to help national statistical offices overcome the problems they were having in generating the basic statistics required for the implementation of the new SNA, which were thus far unavailable.

76. The Director of UNSTAT said that the implementation of the new SNA was of fundamental importance. The Division would therefore provide all possible assistance to the working group and to the regional commissions, which had also been involved in the system's revision, with a view to ensuring the introduction of the new SNA in the countries. As one way of doing so, manuals and practical handbooks were to be published in the near future which the countries could put to immediate use; those publications would address such subjects as the preparation of environmental and household accounts, human resources development and other fields of research. In the interest of increasing the efficiency of efforts to implement the new SNA, he suggested that the Directors should apprise ECLAC of which areas of endeavour they regarded as being of the highest priority, bearing in mind the need to develop techniques for generating basic statistics that would fit the new SNA's headings.

77. The representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) underscored the importance of adopting the new SNA and observed that it would permit the countries to surmount some of their present shortcomings in the field of statistics. By way of example he mentioned the fact that international capital movements --regardless of whether they were of a legal or illegal nature-- affected developed and developing countries alike, especially after the economic liberalization programmes undertaken by developing countries.

78. One of the reasons for the review of the international statistical system being carried out by the working group of the Statistical Commission, in addition to those already mentioned during the discussion, was to overcome the rigidities of the existing system, which had become more marked as time had passed. The work of the inter-secretariat group in the area of national accounts constituted an example of a new style of work in which regional participation had been a major factor. The IMF had made a great effort to adapt its Balance of Payments Manual and International Financial Statistics to the new SNA. In addition, it would be very useful to establish committees in the countries to coordinate the work of statistical agencies, central banks and ministries of finance.

79. A member of the Spanish delegation related his country's experiences with the introduction of Revision 3 of the SNA. The work had begun in the early 1970s; later, progress had been made in implementing the system of the European Economic Community, initially through the use of a restricted version. The adoption of that system was not fully complete until 1992. Spain's experience illustrated the long-term nature of the task, which was something to be borne in mind by Latin American countries that

were still using Revision 2. In those cases, a determined effort should be made to implement Revision 4 of the SNA within somewhat less than half the 22-year period that had elapsed between the approval of the third and fourth revisions.

80. The representative of Panama reminded the participants that not all national statistical offices prepared national accounts. Nevertheless, since they were responsible for generating the basic statistics required for that purpose, it was essential that they should receive all the documentation on the subject and that their representatives should participate in regional meetings regarding the implementation of SNA, Revision 4. The representatives of Ecuador and Uruguay endorsed that opinion.

81. The representative of Bolivia said that 1970 had been the base year used for the calculation of his country's national accounts throughout much of the 1970s and 1980s. During that time, inflation had been very high, and in one year had reached a level of 25,000%. Given those circumstances, it had been absolutely necessary to update the base year, and the work required to do so had been completed in 1990. During that process, some of the procedures called for by Revision 4 of the SNA had been used. For example, problems associated with the cocaine trade had been studied, taking into consideration the entire chain of events from the drug's production to its export. That had made it possible to estimate a portion of the consumption of imports, since the earnings from illegal cocaine exports that were retained in the country were a source of foreign exchange used for that purpose.

82. The representative of Cuba said that since 1979 Cuba's State Statistical Committee (CEE) had been working on measuring the Cuban economy in terms of the SNA of the United Nations as well as the Material Product System (MPS). In that connection he recalled the international seminar held in Havana in 1982 on the topic, for which support had been received from Spain and ECLAC. In view of the change in the system of government that had occurred in the formerly socialist countries of Eastern Europe, the CEE had stepped up its efforts to carry out macroeconomic measurements oriented towards the creation of a Cuban system of national accounts. The objective was to create a system based on Revision 4 of the SNA while also maintaining the advantages accumulated through the country's experience with the application of the MPS so that Cuba's system of central planning could be further refined at the same time as the international comparability of its statistics was improved, especially in relation to Latin America. To accomplish that aim, Cuba needed a great deal of bilateral and multilateral technical and financial cooperation.

83. The representative of El Salvador directed a question regarding the inclusion of the informal economy in the new SNA to the representative of the OECD, who explained to her how it was being incorporated and spoke about the usefulness of taking that sector into consideration, both in developed and developing countries.

84. The representative of Chile said that, in countries with small, open economies such as that of Chile, experts should examine Revision 4 of the SNA with great care, since, as far as he could determine, no clear distinction seemed to be made between tradables- and non-tradables-producing sectors. The relationships between those two types of sectors were not always easy to define. It would therefore be very useful for his country to learn of experiences relating to that aspect of the application of the revised SNA in countries having similar characteristics.

85. The representative of Argentina remarked that the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) was among that group of institutions which produced basic statistics but did not prepare national accounts. That fact had led to other problems in addition to those already mentioned at the meeting, since

calculations for those accounts were being revised in a way which would raise the level of the gross domestic product considerably. For that reason, INDEC statistics had been the target of criticism despite the fact that it did not directly take part in preparing the new calculations.

86. The representative of Brazil proposed that ECLAC and other international bodies should concern themselves with the dissemination of the new SNA revision within the universities. Brazilian universities continued to distribute the preceding revision and were not using the documents produced in the course of the lengthy process of preparing the fourth revision of the SNA.

87. The representative of Peru said that the implementation of the SNA in Latin America was an uneven process. Technical and financial resources were in short supply, and the countries were therefore unequipped to carry out that type of activity entirely on their own; international cooperation was needed. He therefore suggested that an international cooperation programme —to be channeled through the regional commission— should be designed so that a series of activities might be undertaken to further the implementation of the new version of the SNA. As a complement to that effort, activities should be carried out in 1993 aimed at the analysis of subjects such as the informal sector and the environment, whose incorporation into national accounts was a complex matter.

88. The representative of the meeting's technical secretariat commented briefly on conference room paper No. 7, which dealt with aspects related to the implementation of the new System of National Accounts. A series of basic statistics required by the new SNA were described in that document, and some of the difficulties involved in the production of that information by the countries of the region were discussed. It also outlined features of the new SNA that related to the functional aspects of regional economies, with special emphasis on certain financial elements, such as the change in the value of assets and liabilities, including the external debt, and the growth of the informal sector of the economy. Efforts to evaluate and analyse such phenomena with a view to responding to the countries' economic and social policy needs were hampered by the absence of a conceptual framework for their integration which would permit cross-country comparability. Hence the advantages of implementing the new system.

89. The inclusion of that item on the agenda for the meeting was a way of addressing the Directors' need for a more detailed understanding of the system's characteristics so that they could programme the necessary activities in time to meet the system's new information requirements. The topic was also being discussed at the behest of the Directors, who had not been fully informed about such changes in the past.

90. The technical secretariat was pleased with the position adopted by the relevant agencies, and particularly with the views reflected in the presentation made by the IMF representative, since through the Fund's contacts with the countries' central banks and ministries of finance, it would be possible, in close cooperation with ECLAC, to help coordinate the actions of international bodies. They were working with members of the inter-agency group to increase the available supply of resources and to permit joint efforts to be mounted at the regional level, especially with UNSTAT.

91. In closing, he announced that in 1993 ECLAC would convene a meeting to assess the situation with respect to the basic statistics needed to implement Revision 4 of the SNA. One of the aims of that event would be to permit the selection of the priority areas in which cooperation should be initiated and to increase the efficiency of resource use. On the initiative of the University of Madrid and with the collaboration of INE/Spain and ECLAC, a document entitled "Las estadísticas oficiales en España y América Latina y el Caribe, en 1992" (official statistics in Spain and in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1992) had been prepared for the present meeting. That document, which contained articles written by

the national statistical offices of the Latin American countries and Spain, gave a status report on the countries' official statistics, as well as a summary list of the agencies in charge of preparing national accounts, the dates of the latest economic censuses, the current surveys conducted by the countries and other useful information for evaluating the current statistical capabilities of the countries of the region.

92. The representative of Spain emphasized the value of the publication mentioned by the meeting's technical secretariat representative. That document, for which the national statistical offices and ECLAC had provided input, was an indispensable guide for countries and international bodies working in the area of international cooperation.

Administrative records: current status and future outlook

93. A member of the Spanish delegation summarized the contents of the document entitled "Las fuentes administrativas de registros económicos y el Directorio Central de Empresas del INE (DIRCE)" (administrative sources of economic records and the INE central corporate directory), which his country was presenting on that subject. He spoke of the advantages and disadvantages of using administrative sources for statistical purposes, and then explained why it was advisable to include a module on such sources in feasibility studies undertaken in preparation for statistical research projects. An objectives-based approach should be used in determining the contents of such an analysis in order to ascertain what degrees of efficiency could be attained at a minimum cost. The main elements had to do with the original aim of obtaining administrative data and of defining the method of data sourcing to be used, the types of units, the scope of coverage and the nature of the information available from the source in question, along with its degree of legal and operational accessibility.

94. After describing a classification of the statistical uses to be made of administrative sources, the speaker listed the technical features which, in his opinion, a register or directory of statistical units should have. He also set forth the generally accepted objectives of statistical/economic registers and directories, which included the formation of statistical frames in a broad sense. Finally, he provided a general description of the central corporate directory issued by INE/Spain; most of the information for that directory was obtained from three administrative sources: the transaction tax roll, the Declaration of Withholding on Account form that was maintained for payroll tax purposes and the registry of social security payment centres.

95. The representative of Uruguay said that the wealth of information available from administrative records warranted top-priority attention from national statistical offices, which should allocate funds for an examination of the structure of those records while also supporting and improving their organization in such a way as to facilitate the extraction of statistical information. A number of the potential uses for such records had attractive cost/benefit ratios, such as the creation or updating of statistical frames, the cross-checking of information obtained from surveys, and the formulation of social and economic indicators. As an example, he noted that if the countries had an up-to-date record of business enterprises and their locations, economic censuses would not need to be conducted as frequently; similarly, reliable records of housing-unit electricity meters in geographical areas that had electricity service would permit housing frames to be updated and would avoid the cost of preparing primary-unit (block) printouts for sociodemographic surveys or pre-censuses.

96. One of the representatives of Argentina observed that the use of administrative records had not been as helpful as expected owing to methodological and technical problems. It was hoped, however, that the

situation could be improved by means of changes in public institutions and other steps that would contribute to a full utilization of the information contained in such records.

97. The representative of the meeting's technical secretariat expressed his satisfaction with the presentations made by the representatives of Spain and Uruguay, which showed that the subject had been explored in depth. Administrative records were an information source that offered good coverage and swift access at a fairly low cost. Everything seemed to indicate that, as more experience was gained, the shortcomings currently exhibited in various areas of statistics could be overcome.

98. The institutional reforms and macroeconomic changes currently under way in Latin America were giving rise to new forms of management. The introduction of computers on a mass scale was also, in some cases, helping to move events in that direction. The speaker then presented the document entitled, "Las estadísticas de base administrativa en los sectores sociales: situación actual y posibilidades de mejoramiento", which had been prepared by the ECLAC secretariat. The document examined the use of statistics obtained from administrative records in the crucial areas of health and education. As well as assessing the present situation in that regard, it also put forward some recommendations for broadening the coverage and raising the quality of the information and commented upon the possible implications of the modernization of such records in terms of their statistical potential.

99. The representatives of the countries then asked the technical secretariat to contact the United Nations organizations that dealt with social issues in order to learn more about their cooperation activities in the field of public administration and their achievements with regard to the improvement of statistics based on current administrative records.

International cooperation in the field of statistics

100. One of the members of the Spanish delegation referred to the report on the activities of CESD-Madrid in 1992. He explained that the centre's primary role was as a cooperation agency of the countries of the Community, which had joined forces with Spain. In accordance with the CESD-Madrid programme of activities, ten courses had been conducted; one of those courses was the fourteenth course on sampling as applied to household surveys. Such surveys were a basic element in building up the field of statistics owing to their fairly low cost in comparison to censuses and their usefulness in enabling national statistical offices to respond swiftly to governmental needs.

101. The national accounts course offered by INE/Spain embodied a long tradition and a great deal of experience; new subject areas had been incorporated into that course, including the topics of institutional sectors and financial accounts. The course was also given at INEGI headquarters in Aguascalientes, Mexico, where proposals had been made for the incorporation of the innovations contained in the new SNA into the next such course.

102. The speaker also reported on a seminar regarding external trade statistics in Central America held in Guatemala City in September 1992, where a presentation had been given on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (SA), and on a seminar on service statistics that had taken place in Montevideo, Uruguay, in October 1992. Another event that had taken place on that occasion was the presentation of the preliminary version of a manual on statistics relating to firms in the services sector, which had been prepared by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT)

and translated by INE. That publication included the surveys conducted in Spain which had served as the basis for the manual's preparation.

103. A representative of the United States of America stressed the importance attributed by the United States Bureau of the Census to cooperation activities over the past 45 years. Technical assistance was one of the focuses of its programme, and data processing software had been developed as part of that effort. Assistance was currently being provided to 17 Caribbean and 11 Latin American countries. In addition, five economic projects were being carried out in Central America and South America. In all, 30 experts were providing technical support in Latin America and other parts of the world.

104. A total of 4,000 hours of technical training were provided in its English-language programmes in the fields of statistics and informatics. There were plans to expand the programmes to 5,000 hours of instruction in those same fields as well as to develop a number of special topics. The Bureau had initiated a new activity in the field of informatics in which the University of Puerto Rico was taking part; as part of that undertaking, material would be prepared in Spanish and would then be translated into English; courses on special topics would also be offered. In conjunction with INEGI, a statistical training programme had been carried out, and other lines of cooperation had been also explored, such as the study of new technologies in the field of statistics; in addition, a programme for the harmonization of foreign trade data was being conducted by Mexico and the United States of America.

105. The representative of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor said that a seminar had been held on the measurement of consumer goods prices and prices indexes for exports and imports. Seminars were also being organized or conducted on wage and salary comparisons, collective agreements, labour studies, productivity, the labour market and corporate manpower demand. In the area of pure statistics, several seminars had been held for the purpose of analysing the status of labour statistics.

106. Some of the seminars conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics were specific responses to country requests. On occasion they were held outside the United States and dealt with procedures and methodologies in various statistical fields. Individual training programmes that might be anywhere from one week to one year in length were also carried out, and those programmes provided an opportunity for an instructive exchange of views with visiting experts. United States specialists had also gone abroad to carry out advisory missions as part of cooperation programmes of between a few weeks and two years in duration.

107. One of the representatives of INEGI said that cross-national and inter-agency cooperation was a mutually enriching undertaking. His country was prepared to continue assigning a high priority to its programme for international cooperation with the countries of the region in areas of common interest. The speaker also presented the first issue of the Gaceta Internacional, a publication issued by INEGI which dealt with the main international cooperation activities carried out by that agency in recent years. In closing, he noted that in 1991 and 1992 INEGI had conducted 13 international courses which were attended by 254 specialists from 20 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Architecture of statistical data banks of the region and related topics

108. An ECLAC representative began his presentation on the above topic by defining three types of databases: a) censuses and surveys, b) statistical series and tables, and c) statistical records. That

categorization permitted an optimum selection of strategies, systems and hardware for the computer processing of statistical data, taking into consideration the architecture of each of those three types of databases. He then described the three types of computer systems currently available: i) microcomputers integrated into LAN (local area network) systems, ii) open UNIX configurations, and iii) the classic type of mainframe computer. A variety of computer software was available for processing the above-mentioned databases.

109. With regard to the possibility of integrating the databases of the national statistical bureaus in the region, he was of the opinion that such a step would not be feasible until common standards were established as part of a regionwide meta-data system.

110. In reference to new applications that he regarded as being of a high priority for the national statistical bureaus of the region, the speaker said that the most recent census-related activities indicated a need for the design and installation of computer systems for administering, updating and processing existing frames; in that connection he mentioned the use of geographical information systems (GIS) for digital mapping and spatial analyses and for the planning of field work. Computerized data dissemination should be carried out with the help of a multimedia strategy based on: i) CD-ROMs, ii) telecommunications, and iii) the use of GIS for visual graphics dissemination.

111. The dissemination of data via computer should meet the needs of a broad spectrum of users who were not necessarily computer experts; simple, efficient means of processing and retrieving data should therefore be incorporated into data dissemination media. Various systems of that sort were available, including TEMPUS of INE/Spain, PC-AXIS of INE/Sweden and the World Bank's STARS.

112. On the question of linking up the national statistical bureaus of the region by electronic means, the speaker said that electronic mail systems and electronic conferencing systems needed to be set up. The not-for-profit INTERNET and BITNET networks were among the best services of that type. The conclusions reached at a number of regional seminars indicated a desire on the part of Latin American and Caribbean experts to establish a conference of statisticians of the Americas along the lines of the Conference of European Statisticians.

113. ECLAC would continue to perform its function as a regional centre for the design and dissemination of both hardware and software; it was also working on a meta-data system for the dissemination of regional statistics that could be used as a point of reference for a regional meta-data system. Meanwhile, CELADE would continue its development of the REDATAM+ system with a view to improving its functional aspects and incorporating interfaces with GIS and general systems of statistical analysis.

114. The representative of EUROSTAT spoke briefly about that office's role within the framework of the European Economic Community. He described its experiences with the regional integration of statistical data into a coherent statistical information system. He also expressed his views as to the best configuration for a statistical information system.

115. He then described the role which EUROSTAT had begun to play in connection with GIS. Its aim in that regard was to provide a complete statistical information system for Europe in association with national statistical institutes and in collaboration with other national or international organizations. The initial results of that effort had been very good, and EUROSTAT planned to continue meeting the

specialized needs of national bodies with a view to refining their technical advances and contributing to the harmonization of computer-based strategies.

116. A representative of Mexico explained that CODICE 90 was a data bank which furnished users with a dynamic system for consulting and retrieving information generated by Mexico's eleventh general population and housing census. The system's object was to provide users with easy access to such information by allowing them to direct their queries via a computer system that could be operated by persons who did not have any prior computer experience. The database contained information on 32 federal entities, 2,400 municipalities and 150,000 localities as well as for block groupings in urban areas. Access to maps at the same geographic/administrative level of detail and by blocks was also available.

117. The CODICE system's configuration entailed a geographic and statistic database and a tabulation retrieval mechanism that, with the use of an editor, permitted the manipulation, plotting and downloading of maps and data for subsequent processing and statistical analysis. The information stored in the system was equivalent to about 300,000 pages of printouts, was recorded in a CD-ROM and was available to users of all types.

118. The representative of Argentina said that INDEC was implementing a reorganization scheme involving what might be regarded as structural changes. As part of that initiative, it was re-working its manning table, reviewing its major programmes, overhauling its computer system and strengthening dissemination activities.

119. The modernization of INDEC's computer system played a crucial role in enabling it to upgrade its statistical production and dissemination capabilities. Starting from a decidedly makeshift arrangement in 1992, the following advances had been made:

- a) It had adopted an open configuration for the definition of the new system and the UNIX standard for its operational system. The first unit was already in place and two additional units were to be installed before the end of the year;
- b) INDEC had begun to implement a project for the Institute's interconnection via a system compatible with the one already in use in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. INDEC was already using that Ministry's communications node, which made both domestic and international link-ups feasible. Thus, it would be possible for it to establish interconnections with statistical offices in any country in the Americas.
- c) With regard to software, the evaluation of data processing and dissemination packages to complement the existing SAS and SPSS packages was nearing completion. It was anticipated that those programmes would be used by the entire national statistical system.
- d) A database had been designed and arrangements were being made to purchase the programmes needed for its use.
- e) A DOS computer system for handling time series had been designed. Work on the UNIX version was well advanced.
- f) Foreign trade data were being disseminated both in publications and through a data bank run by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce; that data bank had two chief modules: one contained

data on foreign trade and the other held additional information for INDEX (data on prices, occupational factors, wages, etc.).

120. The speaker brought his statement to a close by stressing the need to assign greater importance to statistical coordination, since much remained to be done in order to arrive at standardized guidelines, methodological approaches, nomenclatures, etc.

Administrative reform in national statistical agencies

121. A representative of INEGI explained that the Institute combined activities in the fields of statistics, geography and information sciences. The administrative branch of the Institute had been relocated outside Mexico City, and INEGI had been given complete administrative independence from the Ministry of Finance, in addition to its pre-existing autonomy in technical matters.

122. INEGI had designed a programme for the implementation of a system which was serving as an example for the rest of Mexico's public sector, inasmuch as Mexico's civil service was unlike those of other countries. The objectives of that programme included the provision of specialized training to meet the Institute's needs. Career development mechanisms had also been set up with a view to improved training and job security for workers. INEGI was seeking to enhance its staff's technical qualifications by conducting training programmes designed to meet its personnel's need for professional advancement and higher wages; in addition, those programmes were being complemented by sports and cultural activities. The Institute's policy provided for the following elements: a) the regulation of the system and the definition of generally applicable standards; b) the establishment of a system of exams and competitive situations to ensure high staff performance levels, c) the use of a wage scale that included job performance incentives, and d) the formation of a commission to evaluate how the system was working and to consider special cases within the framework of the regulations in force.

123. INEGI regarded cooperation among the countries as a contribution to the region's technical enrichment and had mounted a series of international activities for that purpose. The Institute stood ready and willing to exchange information on the subject, since it considered it to be of great importance in terms of both institution-building and the professional development of the members of national statistical bureaus of the region.

124. The representative of Colombia told the participants about a number of changes that had taken place in the National Bureau of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia, noting that, in accordance with the country's new Constitution, direct control over internal affairs had been transferred from the Office of the Comptroller to the relevant agencies. Changes had also been made in the statistical system's territorial divisions, in that the regions had been organized in accordance with the new apportionment proposed in the Constitution. Since the changeover DANE could also use outside consultants to provide the logistical services needed for monitoring certain types of statistical activities.

125. Training activities also provided an example of decentralization, since universities were now assuming the responsibility of providing professional statistical training; those training programmes were based on information supplied by DANE regarding the types of technical experts needed. To coordinate the relevant activities, the National Council on Statistics had been founded; the Council was chaired by the Director of DANE and included a number of Ministers and representative of government agencies.

126. On the subject of administrative reforms, the speaker made the following observations:

- a) Concrete policies were needed to govern the national statistical system; those policies should provide, for example, for the definition of a project's objectives and scope before the initial data collection tasks were begun;
- b) A comprehensive analysis should be made of the data available within the national statistical system and of the information that could be supplied to users; to that end, various programmes had been launched with the advisory assistance of the Government of Spain (database management), the Government of Canada (methods of dissemination) and the Government of Japan (communications systems);
- c) The information's degree of confidentiality should be analysed in the light of the changes brought about by reform programmes; a study on computer crime was currently being conducted, with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in an effort to bolster the confidence of agents which supplied statistical data to DANE; and
- d) An information contingency plan was essential in order to resolve unforeseen situations in time to stop them from preventing the completion of the Bureau's programmes of work.

Status reports on cooperation efforts in various areas of statistical activity

a) Informal sector

127. The representative of Peru drew attention to the economic, social and political importance of the informal sector in Latin America, noting that it was a consequence of the underdevelopment of modern sectors of the economy, which had not been able to respond adequately to demographic and rural-to-urban migratory pressures. The tenth Inter-American Statistical Conference had placed emphasis on the unreliability of the available information on the informal sector, which had prevented its contribution to the economy from being accurately measured or analysed and had hindered policy-making. On that occasion a working group had been formed to collect and disseminate information on experiments concerning the measurement of the informal sector in the region, to promote technical meetings for the discussion of methodological questions, and to support studies undertaken by the countries in that field. The working group had designed a regional project for strengthening informal-sector measurement and analysis capabilities, and an inter-American seminar on informal-sector measurement had been held in Lima, Peru.

128. A common definition of the informal sector was lacking; such a definition would make it possible to compare research findings while at the same time facilitating the coordination of the work undertaken in that area of statistics. There were a number of elements which provided a basis for, at the least, a roughly-drawn definition of the informal sector's sphere of activity; one such element was the limitation of the definition of that sector to non-agricultural economic activities.

129. The extent of women's and children's participation in the informal sector was known only by virtue of direct observation and the results of a few surveys that had been very limited in scope. Indicators

therefore should be designed that would make it possible to systematize the measurement of their participation in the sector and to determine what portion of household income they supplied.

130. During the above-mentioned meetings, the need to integrate the informal sector into the SNA had been underlined; the discussion of that subject had revolved around two aspects: the creation of a specific "informal sector" aggregate, and surveys. Importance was also placed on the introduction of new entries in input-output tables to show the origin and destination of informal-sector products and the added value generated by informal agents as a means of providing information on their contribution to the total flow of goods and services and on the informal sector's interrelations with the rest of the economy.

131. Technical and financial constraints had prevented the implementation of the most suitable data collection methods. That was why the working group had formulated the above-mentioned project on informal-sector measurement and analysis capabilities, whose objectives were to ascertain what basic characteristics should be included in studies on the informal sector, to develop instruments for its measurement and comparative analysis using sampling designs, to conduct training seminars/workshops, and to create a regional unit whose job it would be to maintain an ongoing exchange of information on the informal sector.

132. A representative of Mexico said that three surveys had been taken in order to measure the activities of the informal sector in his country: a) a pilot survey on the informal economy, b) a nationwide survey of the informal economy in 1989, and c) a nationwide survey of the informal economy in 1992. The results of the first survey were used in the formulation of a number of guidelines regarding such subjects as the selection of places of business, which was performed on the basis of the household survey. In that survey, the informal sector was defined as including activities that employed no more than five wage earners. The 1989 survey was conducted in seven urban areas and covered a total of 3,588 places of business. The 1992 survey, which encompassed 12,888 places of business in 34 urban areas, gave rise to a broader definition of informal economic activities according to which the informal sector was understood to include places of business that employed no more than six workers in extractive, commercial or services activities and those employing no more than 16 workers in manufacturing concerns.

133. In conclusion, the speaker observed that the informal sector was still of great importance for his country's economy despite its increasingly advanced level of development. The measurement of informal sectors was therefore of fundamental importance both for policy-making purposes and for the design of methodologies to assess their management. The surveys taken in those sectors had also brought to light significant social factors, such as the interest exhibited by the owners of informal businesses in seeing their children continue in the same activity.

134. The representative of Chile expressed interest in learning more about possible approaches to problems relating to the informal sector's dynamic and its linkages with the formal economy. Such information would permit specialists to analyse how the sector was evolving and to measure its participation in the general economy more accurately.

b) Social and poverty indicators

135. One of the ECLAC representatives said that, in accordance with the agreements and mandates formulated at the meetings of Directors of Statistics of the Americas in recent years, the Commission had

been working actively to further regional cooperation for the development of social statistics. The activities of ECLAC in that field had primarily been aimed at providing national institutions with technical support to help them broaden and improve their social development statistics and refine their methodologies for the identification of poor social groups and their principal needs.

136. The Commission's programme of work included a number of studies on the social situation in the countries of the region. One of those studies was the Panorama Social de América Latina, whose inaugural issue, published in late 1991, was to be the first in a regular series. He also spoke about the work carried out on a continuing basis in order to collect information and formulate social indicators for publication in the Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean. Those publications were widely distributed and served as a basis for users' requests for data on specific topics, to which ECLAC responded as part of its cooperation efforts with Governments, international agencies and research and educational institutions.

137. In the sphere of technical training, a regional seminar on social indicators had been held in 1992 in Bolivia with the sponsorship of CESD-Madrid and the collaboration of ECLAC. A workshop on definitions and concepts of poverty and on methodologies for its measurement had also been conducted at INEGI in Mexico with the collaboration of ECLAC, and, as had been the case with the preceding meeting as well, had been attended by numerous participants from various countries of the region.

138. In the near future, efforts to organize and conduct such activities were to be intensified, particularly in the areas of training and technical assistance for the generation of basic statistics, social indicators and methodologies for measuring poverty and living conditions. To that end, ECLAC was coordinating new training activities for the Ibero-American area with INEGI and INE/Spain; in addition, it was working with the statistical bureaus of Uruguay and Honduras to conduct surveys on household income and expenditure and with Brazil and Bolivia on baseline studies and analyses of poverty conditions.

139. The representative of Guatemala noted how important it was for national statistical offices to encourage their Governments to make use of such information in their decision-making processes, and specifically in connection with social policy-making, in order to ensure that assistance was concentrated in underprivileged groups of the population. The representative of UNSTAT observed that the work of ECLAC in that field served as an example for other regional commissions of the United Nations.

c) Foreign trade statistics

140. The representative of Guatemala informed the participants about the seminar on foreign trade statistics in Central America which had been held in Guatemala City in September 1992 with the sponsorship of INE/Spain and the collaboration of INE/Guatemala and ECLAC. The seminar's objectives were: a) to evaluate the status of the Central American countries in that area of statistics, and b) to analyse what steps needed to be taken to improve the collection and processing of foreign trade statistics. After outlining the seminar's contents, identifying the participating countries and commenting upon the programme that had been followed, the speaker stressed that one of the seminar's most clearly-delineated conclusions was that customs facilities lacked the necessary capacity for speedy processing of customhouse permits and that computational constraints were a factor in that regard.

141. The principal recommendations of the seminar's participants had been: a) to ensure the continuity of the technical groups' work, b) to publish foreign trade data as from January 1993 on a provisional

basis, c) to adopt the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (SA) starting in January 1993 and to reach an agreement with customshouses to ensure the prompt issuance of permits, and d) to standardize the criteria used by the Central American countries for national SA entries as well as for a regional permit and for f.o.b. and c.i.f. valuations.

142. An ECLAC representative said that the Commission's cooperation with member countries had two facets. One was the provision of detailed information on the Latin American and Caribbean countries' foreign trade to Governments, international organizations, research institutions and the private sector. The second took the form of the dissemination of international statistical classifications and the promotion and support of training courses and seminars on the subject.

143. Since the creation of the External Trade Data Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean (BADECEL), it had been supplying statistics on a very large scale. BADECEL had on-line data for a number of different international statistical classifications at their most disaggregated levels. Of those classifications, the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) and the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC, Rev.2) were in the greatest demand, but in order to assist national statistical bureaus, ECLAC had designed two equivalency tables to show how various other international statistical classifications matched up with the SA and with SITC, Rev.3. ECLAC would send that information, in diskette form, to the countries; it was also providing it at the present meeting in background paper No. 2, on the international statistical classifications incorporated into BADECEL.

144. In the area of inter-agency cooperation, the speaker emphasized the close ties that ECLAC maintained with the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), the Board of the Cartagena Agreement (JUNAC), the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) and UNSTAT. Those organizations collected and forwarded to ECLAC much of the basic information that was then reprocessed and fed into BADECEL. In the rare cases that the results of the above-mentioned procedure were insufficient, ECLAC would turn to the countries directly, while taking care not to duplicate information requests. In that connection, the representative thanked the Directors of Statistics of the Central American countries for their recent assistance in updating the BADECEL database.

145. In the field of training, ECLAC had provided support for two seminars sponsored by INE/Spain: one, which was held in 1987 at the ECLAC office in Mexico, was attended by representatives of all the Ibero-American countries, while the other, in September 1992 in Guatemala City, had been held especially for technicians from the Central American countries to assist them with their plans to implement the SA in early 1993. ECLAC would also support two projects to be executed by ALADI; an IDB/ALADI project aimed at upgrading the ALADI foreign trade information system, and a project devised at a ministerial-level meeting of ALADI held in Cartagena, Colombia, in late 1991 whose objective was to promote the formation of a comprehensive information system to support the region's foreign trade.

146. In reference to cooperation among international organizations, the speaker said that there was concern within the international community about the following: practices with respect to the use and compilation of foreign trade statistics in international organizations; discrepancies between the statistics collected and published by different international agencies; adjustments made to the data reported by the countries and the methods employed by international agencies to do so; and the role which UNSTAT should play in that field as the leading statistical body of the United Nations system. In June 1992 a

seminar on the subject had been held in Washington, D.C., and concrete steps were being taken to solve the problems that had been identified; those steps included the assignment of responsibilities at the agency level and by critical statistical region. Detailed information on the topic could be found in background paper No. 3 for the present meeting, which concerned foreign trade statistics in the United Nations system.

147. The representative of Spain said that during the seminar on foreign trade statistics in Central America (Guatemala City, September 1992), a report had been drafted setting forth a baseline analysis of the situation with respect to foreign trade statistics in the Central American countries and Panama. It also outlined the steps that would have to be taken, in the opinion of the experts conducting the seminar, to obtain foreign trade statistics promptly on a regular basis.

148. The participants in the seminar had pledged to bring that report to the attention of their superiors in customs administrations, national statistical bureaus or central banks, as the case might be. They had also agreed to request that the Directors of those bodies should make ECLAC aware of their interest in seeing the series of seminars continued, since only then could they contribute to the implementation of the SA by generating reliable statistics for use by customs administrations (and, as a by-product, for purposes of economic analysis).

149. The Director of UNSTAT said that foreign trade statistics laid the foundations for policy-making in an integrated world. The United Nations' International Commodity Trade Data Base (COMTRADE) had been expanded and currently included figures compiled in accordance with the SA; however, time series had continued to be prepared in accordance with the SITC in order to maintain their comparability across time. In closing, the Director thanked ECLAC and the countries for their contributions to COMTRADE and expressed satisfaction at the updating of the figures on Latin America contained in the ECLAC foreign trade database.

d) Environmental statistics

150. One of the representatives of Mexico said that, in conjunction with the World Bank and UNSTAT, INEGI had carried out a pilot project aimed at incorporating the ecological dimension into the SNA by broadening the concept of assets and dividing them into produced and unproduced assets. The net ecological domestic product was then obtained by subtracting the cost of environmental deterioration and natural-resource depletion from the net domestic product according to the SNA and then adding expenditures on environmental upgrading.

151. The development and implementation of a economic/ecological accounting system posed a great many theoretical and practical problems. The theoretical issues had to do with the methods to be used for quantifying the relevant variables; at a practical level, there was a lack of systematized information on the environment and natural resources. Additional efforts would therefore have to be made by national statistical bureaus to resolve the situation.

152. The Director of UNSTAT explained that in the United Nations, "environmental accounting" was understood to refer to a form of accounting that combined natural-resource balances with the economic aspects of production; hence its inclusion in SNA, Rev.4 as a satellite account. In reference to regional activities conducted by the United Nations in that field, he reported to the participants on a meeting held recently in Costa Rica at which representatives of various countries announced their decision to begin

compiling environmental information on a regular basis. He also gave a rundown of the technical and financial cooperation activities of the United Nations system in which interested countries could participate.

e) Regularization of title to ejidos in Mexico

153. A Mexican representative said that the restructuring of agricultural activity was one of the top-priority components of his country's modernization programme. Within that framework, the programme to award proper legal title to ejidos had as its main objective the registration of deeds to 29,000 ejidos located throughout Mexican territory; those ejidos covered approximately 100 million hectares, or about one half the country's total area.

154. That programme was being executed by the Federal agencies involved in agricultural management. However, in view of INEGI's experience in carrying out nationwide programmes and its widespread reputation for high-quality work, it had been asked to take charge of surveying both rural properties and urban lots for the technical phase of the work. During the programme's execution the most modern methodology available would be used to survey and map the ejidos; to that end, the programme would make use of the satellite-based Global Positioning System (GPS) and planes outfitted with high-resolution cameras capable of producing extremely high-quality photographs.

f) Short-term indicators and statistics

155. The representative of the technical secretariat for the meeting gave a progress report on the work being done to set up a data bank of current indicators. Eight countries of the region had charged ECLAC with the task of creating such a data bank, and representatives of those countries had met in Santiago, Chile, in December 1991 to decide how the data bank should be structured and how it should operate. ECLAC was receiving information from the participating countries for analysis and, over the past 12 months, had completed the installation of a computer system that allowed the information on each country to be stored on diskettes so that it could be made available to the other countries.

156. During the above-mentioned meeting, one of the ECLAC representatives had given a demonstration of how that computer system worked and subsequently had provided a diskette containing the information compiled to date to each of the Directors of the eight countries involved in the project. The countries were to examine that information and then give their reactions with a view to putting the data bank on current indicators into operation in 1993.

157. The representative of Chile noted that his country had consistently responded to requests made by ECLAC, but he was none the less concerned by the size of the task, the difficulties inherent in updating the information on all the countries, and the use which the Directors might be able to make of the information.

158. The representative of ECLAC agreed that it was a huge undertaking, but also observed that most of the ECLAC data banks that were functioning efficiently at present had faced similar difficulties in the beginning. However, if a point were reached where the creation of the data bank of current indicators was demanding an unreasonable amount of effort, the Directors would be so advised promptly so that the possibilities of continuing with that activity might be evaluated.

159. The representative of Panama referred to the activities being carried out by the countries of the Central American isthmus as part of the project entitled "System of Short-Term Economic Indicators" (SIEC). Those activities represented an important step forward in the development of short-term indicators and statistics, and she therefore requested that the Central American Monetary Council should be contacted so that ECLAC might utilize the SIEC database and thereby benefit from the work being done by the six countries of that subregion.

Adoption of the report

160. The draft report on the meeting was submitted to the participants for their consideration. The technical secretariat took note of the observations made and the modifications proposed by the delegations for inclusion in the final report.

Closing session

161. Messrs. Fidel Vascós, Minister and Chairman of the State Statistical Committee (CEE) of Cuba; José Quevedo, Chairman of the National Statistical Institute (INE) of Spain; Pedro Sáinz, Chief of the ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division; and Alfonso Carbajo, Chairman of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), addressed the participants during the closing session of the meeting.

162. The Minister and Chairman of the CEE of Cuba, speaking on behalf of the Directors of Statistics of the Americas, described the meeting as well timed and well organized, noting that in addition to promoting an exchange of ideas of great interest to all, it had also served as a form of preparation for participation in future activities of international statistical organizations, such as the forthcoming session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (February 1993). He also spoke of the region's spirit of determination to intensify its statistical activities with a view to promoting greater economic cooperation and integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

163. He concluded his remarks by drawing attention to the work carried out by CESD and thanking UNSTAT, ECLAC and INE/Spain for the support they had provided for the meeting.

164. The Chairman of the National Statistical Institute of Spain began by speaking of the Institute's long tradition of collaboration with the national statistical bureaus of the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

165. In his view, the directors of government statistical offices were faced with two major challenges. The first was to plot out the main lines of statistical work in the near future. Those lines of action should be based on an awareness of future needs: adapting to new international classifications, revising the System of National Accounts, designing periodic or current sample surveys, utilizing statistics drawn from administrative sources, and strengthening the credibility of official statistics. Another area of endeavour to be borne in mind was the integration of national statistical systems into regional systems that would, in turn, form part of an international statistical system, as well as the need to set statistical priorities using a system of medium-term programming that allowed for yearly reviews of its contents.

166. The second challenge to be faced by the directors of such institutions was the intensification of cooperation and technical assistance among the countries. In that context, he referred to the activities

conducted by CESD-Madrid which had strengthened such cooperation; valuable work had been accomplished, and a cooperation programme was to be implemented about which the Directors General of Statistics and ECLAC would be consulted. The authorities responsible for issuing official statistics had been asked to provide specific information as to their training needs. In closing, he expressed his gratitude to the participants and to the secretariats of ECLAC and INE for their collaboration in organizing and conducting the meeting.

167. The Chief of the ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division reviewed the progress made in the areas of population and housing censuses and mapping activities oriented towards the establishment of GIS. Some major problems remained to be dealt with, however, including some aspects of management, discrepancies between inter-censal population projections and census results, and the difficulty of gaining access to areas beset by political violence.

168. The establishment of mechanisms for carrying forward the implementation of the new System of National Accounts (SNA) was a very promising development, and the assistance received by ECLAC from CESD-Madrid, UNSTAT, IMF and other bodies gave reason to believe that the revised System could be implemented in a coordinated and efficient fashion.

169. One of the meeting's positive aspects was that it had attested to the quality of the statistical work being done in the region, thanks in large measure to the cooperation and training activities made possible by Spain, the United States of America, the European Economic Community, France and INEGI of Mexico. In view of the level of cooperation already attained, future cooperative efforts might be focused primarily on the solution of specific problems. He thanked the host country and the Directors of Statistics of the Americas and said that ECLAC would do everything within its power to maintain the pace of progress in evidence at the meeting.

170. The Chairman of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), speaking on behalf of the Secretary of State for International and Ibero-American Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, congratulated the participants for the high quality of the cooperation activities discussed during the meeting and noted the importance attributed to such activities by the Government of Spain. In that context, he described his country's position as a member of the European Community and the close collaboration it provided to the community of Ibero-American nations through the cooperation and goodwill agreements it had signed with various countries, the establishment of a fund for the quinquennial, and the provision of official development assistance, for which a percentage of Spain's gross domestic product was set aside.

171. At a time when international economic policy was oriented towards the privatization of many State assets and functions, a market economy needed a sturdy State in order to function properly; the AECI therefore placed great importance on strengthening the various institutions of the Ibero-American countries. That was the framework for the support provided to statistical institutions, inasmuch as the information they supplied fell within the public domain and was an asset to which only the State could provide access on a reliable basis; that information contributed to the public welfare by helping both public institutions and private agents to improve their performance. In conclusion, he stated that the productive cooperation taking place among the AECI, INE/Spain and ECLAC, channelled through CESD-Madrid, had the full support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Annex 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Anexo 2

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Conference room papers

No.	Title	Author
1	Actividades realizadas en el marco del proyecto "Desarrollo y ejecución de marcos muestrales y diseños de muestras para programas de encuestas de hogares en América Latina y el Caribe"	ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division
2	Actividades de cooperación en estadísticas del comercio exterior	ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division
3	Actividades de la Comisión de Estadística de las Naciones Unidas	ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division
4	Actividades de cooperación para el desarrollo de indicadores sociales y de pobreza	ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division
5	Actividades realizadas en el marco del proyecto "Apoyo al diseño y preparación de la ronda de censos del 90"	ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division
6	Impacto de las nuevas tecnologías computacionales sobre las actividades de los organismos nacionales de estadística (ONEs)	ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division
7	Aspectos relacionados con la implantación del nuevo Sistema de Cuentas Nacionales (SCN)	ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division

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| 8 | Sugerencias de temas para discutir la evaluación de las actividades censales realizadas en los Censos de los años 90 | ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division |
| 9 | Actividades realizadas para la creación del Banco de Datos de Coyuntura (BADECOY) | ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division |
| 10 | Comisión de Estadística de las Naciones Unidas | Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, Argentina |
| 11 | Seminario Interregional sobre la Revisión del Sistema de Cuentas Nacionales | Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, Mexico |
| 12 | Medición del sector informal | Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, Peru |
| 13 | Informe del Seminario de Estadísticas del Comercio Exterior en Centroamérica | Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Guatemala |
| 14 | Sistema de Cuentas Económicas y Ecológicas de México | Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, Mexico |
| 15 | Las estadísticas de base administrativa en los sectores sociales: situación actual y posibilidades de mejoramiento | ECLAC Statistics and Projections Division |
| 16 | Note on environment statistics | United Nations Statistical Division (UNSTAT) |
| 17 | Programa de titulación de tierras ejidales | Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, Mexico |
| 18 | Informe sobre las actividades realizadas por el CESD-Madrid en 1992 | Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Spain |
| 19 | Capacitación y formación de recursos humanos en materia estadística y geográfica: la experiencia del INEGI | Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, Mexico |

20	Programa Interamericano de Capacitación	Centro Interamericano de Enseñanza de Estadística (CIENES)
21	Tópicos sobre la utilidad estadística de los registros administrativos	Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, Uruguay
22	Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 1991: aspectos operativos y metodológicos	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, Argentina
23	La ronda censal de los 90	Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, Mexico
24	Las fuentes administrativas de registros económicos y el Directorio Central de Empresas del INE (DIRCE)	Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Spain
25	Conceptos y aplicaciones de los Sistemas de Información Geográfica	Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, Mexico
26	Informe sobre cooperación internacional	Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, Mexico
27	El servicio civil en el Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI)	Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, Mexico
28	XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 1990	Oficina Central de Estadística e Informática, Venezuela
29	Censo y comunicación: la otra batalla necesaria	Oficina Central de Estadística e Informática, Venezuela
30	Censo de Población y Vivienda de Bolivia	Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Bolivia
31	Los Censos de Población y Vivienda de 1990	Dirección de Estadística y Censo, Panama
32	Censo Demográfico de 1991. Aspectos metodológicos	Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estadística, Brasil

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| 33 | XVI Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda.
Abril 1992 | Instituto Nacional de
Estadística, Chile |
| 34 | Evaluación de las actividades censales realizadas
en los años 90 | Instituto Nacional de
Estadística e Informática,
Peru |

Background papers

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| 1 | Informes de los seminarios realizados en el
marco del Proyecto de Apoyo al Diseño y
Preparación de la Ronda de Censos del 90 | ECLAC Statistics and
Projections Division |
| 2 | Clasificaciones estadísticas internacionales
incorporadas en el Banco de Datos del
Comercio Exterior de América Latina y el
Caribe de la CEPAL | ECLAC Statistics and
Projections Division |
| 3 | Las estadísticas del comercio exterior en el
Sistema de las Naciones Unidas | ECLAC Statistics and
Projections Division |
| 4 | Data for the productive transformation with
social equity: making census data accessible to
local and regional users in the public and
private sectors | Latin American
Demographic Centre
(CELADE) |
| 5 | Revised System of National Accounts. Annex
II. Changes from the 1968 SNA | United Nations Statistical
Division (UNSTAT) |
| 6 | Informe del Grupo de Trabajo de la Comisión
de Estadística de las Naciones Unidas,
"Coordination and Integration of International
Statistical Programmes" | United Nations Statistical
Division (UNSTAT) |
| 7 | Estadísticas del medio ambiente | ECLAC Environment
and Human Settlements
Division |
| 8 | El sector informal en México | Instituto Nacional de
Estadística, Geografía e
Informática, Mexico |
| 9 | El Instituto Interamericano de Estadística y las
estadísticas oficiales | Inter-American Statistical
Institute (IASI) |

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| 10 | Statistical information systems: into the 21st Century | Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) |
| 11 | The role of EUROSTAT in GIS | Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) |
| 12 | Breve descripción de la planificación y realización del V curso de población y IV de vivienda de El Salvador | Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, El Salvador |
| 13 | Comentarios sobre el Censo del 90 en Ecuador: pros y contras | Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, Ecuador |
| 14 | International program for LAC Region | United States |