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From the Editor

Following an established tradition, the first quarter 2003 issue of the *Statistical Newsletter* devotes pride of place to the highlights of the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. As the apex international body for official statistics, the decisions of the Commission will have significant impact in the Asian and Pacific region.

We also report on a number of workshops and meetings in which the Statistics Division had an organizing role. In the field of economic statistics, two workshops took place this quarter: one on Composite Leading Indicators and Business Tendency Surveys; and the other on trade statistics for Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing Countries.

Also, two workshops were held on gender statistics, trying to bring an integrated perspective to the issue and to promote the use of gender statistics for policy advocacy.

Finally the, SIAP/UNESCAP management seminar for the heads of National Statistical Offices was an opportunity to bring together a high level of representation from national statistical offices of the region in an effort to strengthen statistical capability in the area of leadership and management.

As always, we wish you good reading.

The 2001-2002 edition of *Foreign Trade Statistics of Asia and the Pacific, 1996-2000* has been recently published by UNESCAP Statistics Division. The publication, covering 38 countries in the Asian and Pacific region, provides import and export statistics tables by sections and groups of SITC Rev.2 for the period 1996 to 2000. United Nations publication Sales No. E.03.II.F.9

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Economic and
Social Commission
for Asia and
the Pacific

Thirty-fourth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, New York, 4-7 March 2003: Major decisions and actions.

The apex body in the field of official statistics, the United Nations Statistical Commission, held its thirty-fourth session in New York from 4 to 7 March. As observed in the last few years, the duration of 4 days proved to be barely adequate to discuss the wide range of topics on the Commission's agenda, to the extent that it could not adopt the entire report during the session itself. The present article, based on the draft report as approved by the rapporteur of the session, highlights selected major decisions and actions taken by the Commission.

Documentation for the thirty-fourth session is available from the United Nations Statistics Division web site at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2003.htm>. The final report of the Commission, not available at the time of printing, will be published at the same web site address in the coming weeks.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

Population and housing censuses: The Commission endorsed a number of activities proposed by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in support of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. Firstly, an expert group will be convened in 2003 to review the handbook on household demographic and social surveys.

Similarly, the *Demographic Yearbook* is being extensively reviewed for appraisal by an expert group meeting to be held in 2003. The review will also assess the level of reporting on the census topics covered in the census data compilation for the *Demographic Yearbook*. This review will serve as input to UNSD's work on a minimum and essential list of census topics to be examined by an expert group meeting in 2006. UNSD will incorporate this issue in workshops and meetings planned for the year 2003.

The Commission endorsed a Symposium to be held in 2004 on the theme "World Population and Housing Census Programme: Current Needs and Future Prospects" as a follow-up the 2001 "Symposium on Global Review of 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses: Mid-decade Assessment and Future Prospects". It also supported the UNSD programme of work to include activities covering:

- Producing reports on the use of censuses for monitoring human settlements, slums particularly;
- Carrying out training workshops using the *Handbook on Geographical Information Systems and Digital Mapping*;
- Assisting the exchange of information and

experiences in using the Internet for census dissemination.

Health statistics: The item attracted great attention from the Commission as it expressed serious concerns about the World Health Organization's continued lack of coordination with both international agencies and national statistical offices. The Commission emphasized that the responsibility for primary data collection lies with the countries, who report aggregate statistics to international organizations, while international organizations assist in the development of statistical standards and provide technical support to countries.

Reiterating the need for transparency and openness in the methods used to compile health statistics, the Commission requested the creation of a "Friends of the Chair" group to examine coordination issues among international organizations and national statistical offices in the production and dissemination of health statistics. The Friends of the Chair will also recommend actions and report back to the Commission at its next session in 2004.

Social statistics: The Commission endorsed the proposal by UNSD to hold an expert group meeting in May 2003 in collaboration with the Siena Group on Social Statistics. The expert group meeting will review current mechanisms for coordinating activities in social statistics.

Concerning **disability statistics**, the Commission supported the collection of statistics through the *Demographic Yearbook* system and emphasized the need to ensure the collection of internationally comparable disability statistics. In that regard, it encouraged UNSD to work in collaboration with the Washington Group on Disability Measurement to identify items for which statistical information was comparable.

With respect to **poverty statistics**, the Commission supported the proposal by UNSD to prepare a compendium on best practices in poverty statistics. Echoing the views expressed by the UNESCAP Committee on Statistics, the Commission urged that the compendium address practical needs of developing countries, and stressed the importance of a timely and progressive release of the compendium.

ECONOMIC STATISTICS

Measuring the new economy: The Commission examined this item on the basis of a report from the 2002 conference of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) on the theme "Official Statistics and the New Economy". The Commission welcomed the report that comprehensively summarizes the many topical issues related to the new economy. It recognized that the phenomenon known as the 'new

economy' involved advanced levels of knowledge and information and communication technology and led to rapid changes on a global scale. The Commission noted that the new economy affects many statistical domains, especially services statistics, and entails complex conceptual issues, notably measurement of changes in comparative advantages and how wealth was created.

To address that complexity, the Commission urged international organizations to set clear priorities for research on important issues related to the new economy and stressed the importance of close collaboration between international bodies and national statistical offices.

National accounts: The Commission endorsed the scope of the updating process of the current System of National Accounts (SNA) with a view to maintain the fundamentals of the current 1993 SNA and its consistency with related manuals such as the *Balance of Payments Manual*, the *Government Finance Statistics Manual* and the *Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual*.

The Commission supported the managing and coordinating role of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) with the assistance of the Advisory Group on National Accounts (AGNA). It requested the ISWGNA to prepare a detailed project document to describe the updating of the 1993 SNA including its agenda, work programme, timetable, governance, resource implications and decision-making process. The Commission advised that the project document should be circulated to member countries for inputs.

The Commission endorsed the list of issues to be updated and advised that it should be an open-ended list to include additional items like consumer durables, and treatment of military equipment. The publication of the updated SNA is planned for 2008.

The Commission noted the concerns of developing countries and international and regional agencies about the challenges met in the implementation of the 1993 SNA and emphasized the need to widen participation of countries in the updating process.

Agriculture statistics: The Commission noted with satisfaction the progress in agriculture statistics, in particular, the modernization of the FAOSTAT system, the promotion of the decennial programme of the World Census of Agriculture and the renewed activities in relation to agricultural producer price statistics. It also welcomed FAO's involvement in monitoring two of the Millennium Development Goals: Prevalence of under nourishment (MDG 1, target 2) and Percentage of forest cover (MDG 7, target 9).

International Comparison Programme (ICP): The Commission endorsed the composition of the newly

established Executive Board and welcomed the progress made by the new Global Office in playing a central coordination role in the worldwide purchasing power parities (PPP) work. See *Statistical Newsletter No. 125, April 2002* for an overview of the ICP governance structure.

The Commission stressed the importance of ownership of the programme by countries and in that regard emphasized that continuous communication with national statistical offices was essential. It also noted the ICP's capacity-building potential in national accounts statistics as well as in price and household consumption surveys.

Recognizing that scope, coverage and funding issues were interrelated, the Commission encouraged additional funding and in-kind support for the programme both at regional and global levels.

The Commission welcomed the preparation of the draft handbook on the ICP. The handbook will establish a set of principles to guide data collection and processing and will document best practices. It will serve as comprehensive reference material and a step-by-step PPP compilation guidebook. Being revised and enlarged over time, the first chapters will be made available during the second quarter of 2003 and will be disseminated ahead of regional workshops planned to take place from mid-2003.

International merchandise trade statistics: Taking note of the work of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics, the Commission welcomed the IMF's intention to develop a manual on import and export price indices.

Finance statistics: The Commission congratulated the Task Force on Finance Statistics for the completion of *External Debt Statistics: Guide for Compilers and Users* and welcomed the IMF's regional training seminars programme for managers and external debt data compilers. One such seminar will be held at the IMF Regional Training Institute in Singapore in 2003.

Following the completion of the *Guide*, the Commission supported the Task Force in its role as a forum to address issues pertaining to external debt statistics. It also encouraged the Task Force to undertake further research on vulnerability assessment and supported its effort, in collaboration with the IMF, to develop a centralized database on external debt statistics based on data compiled by countries to complement the joint BIS-IMF-OECD-World Bank database.

Price statistics: Considering the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics, the Commission noted that the *Manual on Consumer Price Indexes* was nearing completion and that the improved structure of the manual reflected a stronger emphasis

on practical issues of CPI compilation. Following a final meeting of the CPI technical expert group in October 2002, the finalized draft is expected to be available in the near future. Draft chapters are available at www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/guides/cpi/.

The Commission also acknowledged the work of the Task Force on the *Producer Price Index Manual*. The final meeting of the technical group on PPI is scheduled to be held in June 2003. The final publication of the PPI Manual is anticipated for autumn 2003.

Statistics of services: The Commission discussed the topic on the basis of a comprehensive programme review prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Noting the wide variety of activities related to services statistics, carried out by a large number of city groups and expert groups, the Commission emphasized that participation of developing countries in these groups needed to be facilitated.

The Commission noted the strong need for coordination of work in services statistics. While existing city groups' work should remain focused on methodological issues, it suggested that OECD take a coordination function in that area. Such a function would cover provision of an overview of activities, ensuring and facilitating communication between the different groups, and identification of overlaps, as well as setting priorities on services statistics. The Commission encouraged the preparation of a single annual report on the work undertaken by the various expert and city groups and requested that the report be submitted to the Statistical Commission.

ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

The Commission discussed the issue of environment statistics on the basis of a report from UNSD summarizing the results of the two international collections of environmental data carried out in 1999 and 2001. Drawing conclusions from these surveys, the report outlines the future UNSD work programme for the improvement of the regular collection, compilation and dissemination of international environment statistics.

The Commission, acknowledging methodological and institutional difficulties, stressed the need to intensify efforts in the development of standards, concepts and methods for environment statistics. It also stressed the role of training and national capacity building in that domain.

Underlining the necessity to link the development of environment statistics with statistics on sustainable development, the Commission took note of the joint proposal by OECD, Eurostat and UNECE to establish a steering group on statistics of sustainable development. The Commission also agreed with the UNSD proposal

to set up an inter-agency working group on environment statistics with a special focus on the development and harmonization of methods, concepts and standards, coordination of data collection, and training.

ACTIVITIES NOT CLASSIFIED BY FIELD

International economic and social classifications: Examining this issue on the basis of a document entitled "The 2007 revision of ISIC and CPC – A Draft Concepts Paper" prepared by the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications, the Commission supported the need for the concepts paper to provide a sound theoretical base for the revised activity (ISIC) and product (CPC) classifications scheduled for the year 2007. The concepts paper being still at a draft stage, the Commission noted that consultations with countries would facilitate further refinement of the paper. It also reiterated its expectations for a positive outcome of the convergence process between the General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities within the European Communities (NACE) and the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The outcome of this convergence process will have to be evaluated against current recommendations.

The Commission also supported the continuation of the consultation process, involving countries through questionnaires and regional/sub-regional meetings and workshops. In this connection, UNESCAP will be participating in the organization of two workshops on classifications issues in 2003.

Harmonization of indicators and reporting on progress towards the millennium development goals: The Commission reviewed the draft report on indicators requested by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and refined the report taking into account comments expressed during the session. It requested that the report to be transmitted to ECOSOC should particularly emphasize the need for international support to statistical capacity-building in developing countries to meet the range of needs for development indicators on a sustainable basis.

In relation to these means of implementation, the Commission stressed the need to pay particular attention to indicators monitoring the millennium development goal 8: "Develop a global partnership for development". It requested that developed countries prepare country level reports with regard to progress on commitments made by them on the assistance to be provided to developing countries for the achievement of the MDGs. It further recommended that one such report should be prepared by each developed country by 2004, in time for the comprehensive review of the MDGs progress to be held in 2005.

The Commission agreed that further harmonization and prioritization was needed in the field of development indicators, in particular MDG indicators. It emphasized that any international list of recommended indicators should be adapted in each country to its economic and social circumstances and priorities.

The Commission also approved the draft terms of reference for the Advisory Committee on Indicators, requesting it to adopt transparent working procedures that allow for inputs by member countries. It requested the advisory committee to submit its recommendations to the Commission.

Statistical capacity building: Endorsing the technical cooperation programme of the UNSD, the Commission reiterated the importance of statistical capacity building and stressed that statistical capacity building efforts needed to be an integral part of development programmes.

The Commission took note of the Paris21 (Partnership in Statistics Development in the twenty-first century) indicator framework for statistical capacity building and

encouraged Paris21 to conduct further testing of the indicators in member countries.

The Commission endorsed the technical cooperation programme of Paris21 which includes a number of sub-regional workshops in the UNESCAP region: one such workshop for Central Asian countries is scheduled for July 2003 in Bishkek and a further workshop for South Asian countries for later in the year 2003.

Coordination and integration of statistical programmes: On this topic, the Commission welcomed the establishment of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA). The Commission requested the CCSA to work on a common approach to the assessment of data quality. It endorsed the approach taken by the UNSD and the CCSA to resolve specific examples of data collection duplication and encouraged it to continue working on this issue. The Commission also encouraged member countries to bring instances of duplication of data collection at the international level to the attention of UNSD.

SIAP/UNESCAP Management Seminar for the Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 12-14 February 2003

The United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and the Statistics Division of UNESCAP co-organized a Management Seminar for the Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific.



First row: Ms Patricia Alexander (UNESCAP), Ms Oraphin Mathew (Thailand), Ms Li Chol Hui, (DPRK), Ms Fatimah Abdul Hamid (Brunei Darussalam), Mr Andrew J. Flatt (UNESCAP), Ms Keiko Okaido (DES, UNESCAP), Mr Tomas P. Africa (SIAP), Ms Carmelita N. Ericta (Philippines), Ms Phonesaly Souksavath (Lao PDR), Ms Penelope Judith Price (UNESCAP); **Second row:** Ms Phunvadee Pornpatimakorn (Thailand), Mr Timoci Bainimarama (Fiji), Ms Song Gum Sun (DPRK), Mr Huang Jianhua (China), Mr Kuenga Tshering (Bhutan), Mr Abdur Rasid Sikder (Bangladesh), Mr Le Manh Hung (Viet Nam), Mr Seng Soeurn (Cambodia), Mr Frederick Wing Huen Ho (Hong Kong, China), Mr Taik-HwanJyoung (Republic of Korea), Mr S.M.N. Subhani (Nepal), Mr Batmunkh Batsukh (Mongolia), Mr Soung Tin (Myanmar), Mr Fuwad Thowfeek (Maldives); **Third row:** Mr Ha Bong-Chae (Republic of Korea), Mr Eric Hermouet (UNESCAP), Mr Jonathan Palmer (Observer from ABS), Mr Blaise Ehou (UNESCAP), Mr Maarten Boon (SIAP), Mr Akhilesh Chandra Kulshreshtha (India), Ms Lene Mikkelsen (UNESCAP), Mr Yao Jingyuan (China), Mr Paul Cheung (Singapore), Mr A.G.W. Nanayakkara (Sri Lanka), Mr Chol O. Han (UNESCAP), Mr Suhandono Gurdi (Indonesia), Mr Sugito Suwito (consultant from Indonesia), Mr Ilpo Survo (UNESCAP), Mr Joel Jere (UNESCAP), Mr Jeong Meng Chao (Macao, China), Mr William McLennan (Resource Person), Mr Ali Hajmalek Zanjani (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr Bhakta Gubhaju (UNESCAP), Mr Raymond Vuti (Vanuatu), Mr Toto E. Sastrasuanda (Indonesia), Mr Raj Kumar (UNESCAP).

Bringing together a high level of representation from national statistical offices of 26 countries and areas in the region, the meeting revived a series of management seminars designed to strengthen statistical capability in the area of leadership and management in support of economic and social development. The seminar aimed to bring the heads of NSOs in the UNESCAP region to a forum to discuss recent experiences and current issues facing them and their organizations as they carry out their mandates in an environment of economic, social, political, and technological changes.

The seminar was organized around 3 modules, each module consisting of an introductory paper followed by a group discussion, the conclusions of which were presented in plenary sessions.

The first module covered "Advocating a higher priority for statistical capacity building in the national government budget". The introductory paper identified the main elements to support that objective as: developing a user-oriented national statistical programme and priorities; promoting evidence-based policy making in government and business and industry sectors; and improving statistical awareness in media, schools and among the general public.

The second module, entitled "Shaping the environment in the NSO for managing information", centred on issues of how to adopt and adapt information and communication technologies (ICT) for capturing and sharing data within and outside the NSO.

The discussion on the last module, "Monitoring the production of statistical indicators for the development agenda", was introduced by a presentation of the results from a survey of regional NSOs undertaken by the Statistics Division. The survey questionnaire covered the following topics:

- Role of statistics in monitoring development programmes
- The use of international standards; advantages and disadvantages
- Role of NSOs in national and international coordination and standards development
- Participation in the upcoming round of the International Comparison Programme (ICP)
- Implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA)
- Impact of the Millennium Development Goals on demand for statistical data and coincidence of MDGs with national development priorities
- Level of priority accorded by governments to poverty measurement.

The format of the seminar, especially the group discussion sessions, facilitated the exchange of country

experiences. Conclusions from the discussion groups and other meeting documents are available from the Statistics Division web site at: <http://www.unescap.org/stat/meet/mgm/mgm.htm>

UNIFEM/ESCAP Training Workshop on an Integrated Approach to Gender Statistics, Bangkok, 8-10 January 2003

The Training Workshop on an Integrated Approach to Gender Statistics was organized by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in cooperation with the UNESCAP Statistics Division. It brought together participants from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, and Nepal and Timor-Leste. To reinforce the integrated approach of the workshop, participants from each country included statisticians from national statistical offices as well as officials from national women's machineries.

The Workshop provided an introduction to gender statistics from an integrated perspective, covering both the socio-demographic and economic dimensions of national statistical systems and providing basic skills in the use of gender statistics for policy advocacy.

As a follow-up to the workshop, national training workshops will be organized with appropriate technical and other support from UNIFEM and UNESCAP.

Workshop training documents are available at <http://www.unescap.org/stat/meet/iags/iags.htm>

UNESCAP/UNIFEM Workshop on Using Statistics for Gender-Responsive Policy Analysis and Advocacy, Bangkok, 17-26 March 2003

The Workshop on Using Statistics for Gender-Responsive Policy Analysis and Advocacy was the second of the year to be jointly organized by the Statistics Division of UNESCAP and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Prior to the workshop, each participating country (Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Philippines and the Republic of Korea) had been requested to set up a country team made up of a statistician, a policy analyst and a gender expert working in the national women's machinery. Country teams were asked to undertake

jointly a study on a specific gender issue of concern to their respective country and to prepare a national report. These reports were extensively discussed during the workshop with resource persons specializing in statistics, gender analysis and mainstreaming acting as facilitators to share their expertise and to stimulate the dialogue between producers and users of gender statistics.

Other workshop objectives included helping train policy advisers in using gender statistics to facilitate effective and gender sensitive policy-making and to assist them to formulate their needs for gender indicators. The workshop also covered issues of effective presentation of gender data to promote their usage.

It is expected that the participants from each country will be able to assist in national training planned to be carried out by UNIFEM in a second phase.

Workshop documents, including participants' national reports, are available from the Division web site at <http://www.unescap.org/stat/meet/grpaa/grpaa.htm>

UNSD/UNESCAP Workshop on Trade Statistics for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing Countries (SIDs), Bangkok, 25-28 March 2003

The main objective of the workshop, co-organized by UNSD and UNESCAP, was to improve the quality of

trade statistics in selected Asian, Pacific and African LDCs and SIDs. Participating countries were: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Comoros, Fiji, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Thailand and Vanuatu.

The workshop was part of UNESCAP's efforts to strengthen the position of developing countries in the perspective of globalizing economies where accurate foreign trade statistics, especially for developing countries, are essential when conducting negotiations with trade partners.

The training activities of the workshop were largely based on the *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers' Manual* recently published by the UNSD. The primary purpose of the Manual is to assist countries in the implementation of the methodological guidelines, as adopted by the Statistical Commission, contained in the publication *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions (IMTS, Rev.2)*. The Manual clarifies basic concepts and identifies practices in relation to the implementation of IMTS Rev.2. It builds upon a number of international conventions and agreements regarding customs procedures and trade policy matters, primarily those worked out by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

Based on the conceptual framework represented by the IMTS, Rev.2, the workshop followed the structure of the *Manual* in covering the following issues: customs

declaration and non-customs source of data, commodity classification, valuation of goods, data quality control, data processing and dissemination.

The last part of the workshop was dedicated to presentations by participants of methods and procedures in use in their respective countries in relation to the compilation of trade statistics.

Meeting documents and country papers are available from the Statistics Division web site.



Second Row: Mr Aly Mohamed Said (Comoros), Mr Azarias Marcos Nhanzimo (Mozambique), Mr Hor Darith (Cambodia), Mr Rudra Suwal (Nepal), Mr Tauvaga Eti (Samoa), Mr Ashutosh Tarafder (Bangladesh), Mr Joel Jere (UNESCAP), Mr Esmatullah Ramzi (Afghanistan), Mr Eric Hermouet (UNESCAP), Mr Md. Abdus Sattar (Bangladesh), Mr Maarten Boon (SIAP), Mr Sonchai Sukajuta (Thailand), Mr Dechen Wangdi (Bhutan), Mr Pita Toa (Vanuatu), Mr Andrew J. Flatt (UNESCAP), Mr Dharsing Pothegadoo, (Mauritius);

First Row: Ms Kwanjai Konggaroon (Thailand), Ms Nantachavee Hongnusun (Thailand), Ms Luckana Yuvapakorn (Thailand), Ms Ruamporn Siriratrakul (Thailand), Mr Vladimir Markhonko (UNSD), Mr Richard Roberts (UNSD), Ms Yin Yin Mya (Myanmar), Ms Hana Mansoor (Maldives), Ms Seruwaia Sikivou (Fiji), Mr Sounthala Srithirath (Lao PDR)

OECD/ESCAP Workshop on Composite Leading Indicators and Business Tendency Surveys, 24-26 February 2003

The Workshop was held from 24 to 26 February at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok. It was jointly sponsored by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). It was the latest in a series of workshops organised by the OECD, UNESCAP and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The following countries and areas participated: China; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Lao PDR; Malaysia; Pakistan; Philippines; Singapore; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

The workshop represented an opportunity to review the progress in the implementation of Harmonized Business Tendency Surveys (HBTS) introduced by the OECD during the first meeting of the series in Manila in 1999. Implementation efforts were strengthened through an Asian Development Bank (ADB) regional technical assistance project (RETA) which provided funds for 5 countries to introduce HBTS on a pilot basis. A few other countries, not covered by the ADB project, also decided to move towards the harmonized BTS format. As a result of these efforts, there has been significant progress towards harmonized surveys with a number of countries in the region starting using fully OECD-EU harmonized questionnaires.

As most of these initiatives are recent, the workshop allowed participants to exchange experiences on such issues as sample selection, relations with respondents, improving response rates, and collection methods.

Two days of the workshop were spent on training in Composite Leading Indicators (CLIs) developed by the OECD secretariat. The OECD system of CLIs makes use of qualitative information from Business Tendency Surveys as well as monetary and financial variables

and statistics on trade, employment, transport etc.

The indicator for each country is made up by combining several statistical series that have, in the past, shown cyclical patterns that predate cycles in industrial production by about six months. Because movements in industrial production are highly correlated with movements in Gross Domestic Product, the CLIs can predict turning points in GDP, as well as in industrial production, with a lead of approximately 6 months.



Fourth Row: Mr Abdul Faheem (Pakistan), Mr Abdul Rahman Hasan (Malaysia), Mr Olivier Brunet (OECD), Mr Lin Tao (China), Mr Bounmy Vilaychith (Lao PDR), Mr Ahmad Avenzora (Indonesia), Mr Soukanh Sykayphach (Lao PDR), Mr Maurids H. Damanik (Indonesia), Mr Fida Hussain (Pakistan); **Third Row:** Mr Pascal Pong Kwan Tung (Singapore), Mr Shi Faqi (China), Mr Trinh Quang Long (Viet Nam), Mr Nuntawat Sunglaw, (Thailand), Mr Ly Minh Khai (Viet Nam), Mr Don Nakornthab (Thailand), Mr Chatwaruth Musigchai (Thailand); **Second Row:** Ms Chatchanee Chantacharoonpong, (Thailand), Ms Wendy Siu-man Hung (Hong Kong), Mr Joel Jere (UNESCAP), Mr Andrew J. Flatt (UNESCAP), Mr Ronny Nilsson (OECD), Mr Chiranji Lal Agarwal (India); **First Row:** Ms Belinda S. Villasin (Philippines), Ms Arnunchanog Sakondhavat (Thailand), Ms Siyanee Chaipiriyasak (Thailand), Ms Ludivinia D. Gador (Philippines), Ms Lia Emalia (ASEAN), Ms Chalermkwun Chiemprachanarakorn (Thailand), Ms Davaasuren Chultemjamts (SIAP), Ms Dinh Hien Minh (Viet Nam), Ms Pham Thi Hong Trang (Viet Nam), Ms Josephine Penaflor (Philippines), Ms Norzalelawati Ahmad (Malaysia), Ms Warisa Pongnurug (Thailand)

The training programme was organized around two software packages - *Demetra* which is used for seasonal adjustment of sub-annual statistics and which has been developed by Eurostat, and the *Composite Indicator* software developed by the OECD. For the training sessions, all participants were provided with PCs, the two software packages and user manuals. The training covered:

- ?? Introduction to the theory of seasonal adjustment and description of X12-RegARIMA, and TRAMO-SEATS;
- ?? Practical application of *Demetra* for seasonal adjustment and relative merits of the two seasonal adjustment methods;

?? Introduction to the theory of composite indicators (leading indicators in particular) and description of the OECD system;

?? Use of the OECD *Composite Indicator* programme for:

- Selection of the reference series - GDP, industrial production, or coincident indicators,
- Definition of the reference cycle by establishing turning points in reference series,
- Selection of potential leading indicator series and estimation of turning points,
- Criteria for identifying stable leading indicator series,
- Standardization of amplitudes for selected leading indicator series,
- Aggregation (weighted or unweighted) to obtain a composite leading indicator.

In response to the request by participants for a further meeting, the secretariats of UNESCAP and OECD agreed to investigate the possibilities of holding a follow-up workshop on Business Tendency Surveys and Composite Leading Indicators towards the end of 2004. UNESCAP and OECD will also investigate the possibility of publishing business tendency survey results on their respective web sites.

Coordination of Statistical Activities, 3 March 2003.

Ms Lene Mikkelsen, Chief, Statistics Development Section, undertook missions to:

Canberra (5-7 February): To participate in discussions on the implementation of the ICP in the Asian and Pacific region, held at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Canberra

Seoul (27-28 February): To participate and present a paper on UNESCAP's work on time use and unpaid work at the Expert Group Meeting on Integrating the Value of Household Production into National Accounts hosted by the Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI).

Mr Ipo Survo, Programme officer, undertook a mission to:

New York (17-19 March): To participate in the Interagency Technical Meeting on Indicators and Trends in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Eric Hermouet, Associate Statistician, undertook a mission to:

Chiba (31 March – 4 April): To provide training and technical assistance to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) in relation to the Institute's web site improvement project.

Mr. Nuri M. Ozsever, Specialist on Population Data Processing and Database Management with the UNFPA/CST in Bangkok, visited:

Myanmar (18-28 February): To organize training on the Integrated System for Survey Analysis (ISSA) for the personnel of the Department of Health Planning (DHP), Ministry of Health; to assist the department in developing a data entry system for the household sub-survey of the baseline survey carried out by the DHP; and to assist the Department of Population, Ministry of Migration and Population in developing further a tabulation system for the Fertility and Reproductive Health Survey 2001.

Ms. Luisa T. Engracia, Specialist on Population Statistics with the UNFPA/CST in Kathmandu, visited:

Afghanistan (21 January – 1 February): To provide assistance in the development of the UNFPA first country programme for Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan (17 – 21 February): To develop a project proposal for UNFPA under the Population and Development sub-programme.

Publications released by the Statistics Division

?? *Asia-Pacific in Figures 2002*

?? *Foreign Trade Statistics of Asia and the Pacific, 1996-2000*

?? *Statistical Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, Volume XXXII, No.4, December 2002*

?? *Statistical Newsletter, No. 128, January 2003*

Missions of UNESCAP Statistics Staff

Mr. Andrew J. Flatt, Director, Statistics Division undertook a mission to:

New York (13-14 January): To attend, as a panel member, the fourth session of the Statistical Advisory Panel for the Human Development Report commissioned by UNDP.

New York (3-7 March): To represent ESCAP at the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, 4-7 March; and to chair the inaugural session of the Committee for the

Visitors to the Statistics Division

1. **Mr Alan Tryde**, Assistant Director, National Accounts and Research Section, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.
2. **Mr. S.S. Srivastava**, Consultant, New Delhi.
3. **Mr. Tim Skinner**, Consultant, Canberra.
4. **Mr. Frederic Baker**, Senior Statistician, FAO, Bangkok.
5. **Mr. Hiek Som**, Chief, Statistical Development Service, FAO, Rome.

Staff Movements

Ms Malinee Ruangrongwanna: Took a much deserved retirement on 31 March after serving various United Nations offices for 35 years. Malinee had been

working with the Statistics Division as secretary since 1987.

Mr Nuri Ozsever: Took retirement on 31 March after a long career in the area of census and survey data processing. His career began with the State Institute of Statistics of Turkey before he joined international organizations: as Scientific Associate in the World Fertility Survey (WFS) from 1976-84, and as Data Processing Coordinator at the International Statistical Institute Research Centre (ISIRC) from 1985-86.

Nuri joined UNESCAP Statistics Division in 1986 as Regional Adviser on Data Preparation and Processing of Population Censuses and Surveys, and since 1992 has been the Adviser on Population Data Processing and Database Management, with UNFPA/CST for East and South-East Asia. He has been the longest serving regional advisor of UNESCAP and undertook 127 missions to developing countries in the region.

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News items, articles and viewpoints on statistical matters from readers who wish to contribute to the *Statistical Newsletter* are most welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit and publish manuscripts in accordance with the editorial requirements of this publication. All correspondence should be addressed to:

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