

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

SEVENTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATISTICIANS
(Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 16-22 June 1987)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Participants from fourteen countries and territories of the South Pacific Commission region attended the Seventh Regional Conference of Statisticians organised by the South Pacific Commission from 16-22 June 1987. The Conference followed on from a working group jointly organised by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the South Pacific Commission (SPC) to discuss proposals for the 1990 Round of Censuses of Population and Housing. Representation at the Conference of Statisticians benefited from following the ESCAP/SPC Meeting which had sponsored many of the participants. Fourteen countries were represented at the Seventh Regional Conference compared with the twelve countries at the Sixth Regional Conference.

2. The countries and territories represented from the South Pacific Commission region were: Cook Islands (host), Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Western Samoa. Representatives from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom also attended. An observer from the Government of the Maldives attended the Conference. Observers were also present from the ESCAP (Bangkok) and the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC, Vanuatu), from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and from the World Bank (Washington D.C).

3. Mr Andrew Turua, Statistician, Cook Islands, welcomed participants and invited Mr Brian Doyle, Statistician, South Pacific Commission, to address the meeting. In his address, Mr Doyle stressed that the main purpose of the meeting was to provide a forum for discussion amongst participants so that each would learn from the experience of the others. Appreciation was expressed for the co-operation between SPC and other regional organisations, such as EPOC and ESCAP, and for the benefit this had brought to statistical offices in the Pacific.

4. The Prime Minister and Minister for Statistics for the Cook Islands, the Honourable Sir Thomas Davis, then addressed the Conference. He emphasised the difficulties and costs of producing accurate and timely statistics. The ability to adapt to changing circumstances was characteristic of a good statistics office. This included adopting new forms of technology. After welcoming participants and wishing them a successful meeting, the Prime Minister formally declared the meeting open.

5. A message from Mr Palauni Tuiasosopo, Secretary-General of the South Pacific Commission, was read to the Conference by Mr Doyle. In his message, Mr Tuiasosopo stressed that, although demand for statistics was increasing, this increased demand would probably not be met by a corresponding increase in resources. Effective priority setting and co-operation between countries and organisations would become more important. He indicated to the meeting how the previous six conferences had been very important in determining the SPC's work programme and hoped that this Conference would set an appropriate framework for the remainder of the 1980s.

6. Mr Andrew Turua (Cook Islands) was elected Chairman of the Conference. Mr Mussolini Crawley (Western Samoa) and Ms Moe Tiute (Tuvalu) were elected Vice-Chairpersons, and Mr Charles MacFadden (Kiribati) was elected as Rapporteur.

II. AGENDA

7. The following agenda was adopted by the Conference:

1. Opening of the Conference
2. Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Review of statistical developments during 1983-86 in countries of the region
5. SPC Work Programme (1983-86)
6. Services provided by other agencies
7. Discussion of matters raised at the 24th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission
8. Computer systems and requirements
9. Plans for adoption of Harmonised Commodity Description and Classification System (HCDCS)
10. Priorities for development of statistics for the next three years
11. Prospects for the Eighth Regional Conference of Statisticians
12. Other business
13. Adoption of the report of the Conference

III. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

A. REVIEW OF STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING 1983-86 IN COUNTRIES OF THE REGION

8. Country Papers were presented by representatives from Guam, French Polynesia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Papua New Guinea (oral report), Western Samoa, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu (oral report) and Cook Islands.

9. The SPC Statistician summed up the trends in the Pacific region as shown in the Country Papers.

- (i) Very significant progress has been made in the area of localisation in recent years. The trend is not evenly spread and there is still room for development, particularly at the senior staff level, but progress is nevertheless satisfactory;
- (ii) The role of graduates from universities, particularly regional universities, is now very noticeable in the statistical services of the region. Tonga was cited as a good example of this trend. There has been a choice to be made in some instances between sending a few persons for intensive, high level training, in the hope that they will remain in the service of statistical departments, and training at a lower level of a wider range of officers whose continuing attachment is more certain;
- (iii) The use of computers, particularly micro-computers, has expanded spectacularly in recent years;
- (iv) The statistical services in the French territories are very well supported by France. Those associated with the United States of America are less developed and have problems related to
 - . the decentralised nature of their operations
 - . the general lack of a legislative basis
 - . the relative lack of support given to their countries by the United States.

The new entities being formed from the Trust Territory are all having difficulty developing statistical services adequate to their needs. Statistical services in countries related to the British Commonwealth have been making extensive use of assistance available from various sources, and of external funding and training available in the regional universities.

- (v) Another noticeable development has been the increasing use of volunteers from the United Nations, Australia and New Zealand by statistical departments in the region, especially with training in micro-computers.

B. REVIEW OF THE SPC WORK PROGRAMME (1983-1986)

(i) Progress in implementing the recommendations of the Sixth Regional Conference of Statisticians in 1983

10. The Secretariat presented Working Paper 1, which detailed the recommendations made by the Sixth Conference of Statisticians and action taken in their regard. Recommendations 3 to 10 were directed to the South Pacific Commission and all but No. 9 had been addressed. This recommendation, the facilitation of the exchange of technical material, was still seen as important by the Conference, but this would largely be an archival role, with SPC making available listings of material rather than SPC adopting a central collection and redistribution role.

11. Recommendation 3, that intermediate courses be designed to meet the needs of individual countries, had been taken into account in recent courses in Vanuatu, American Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Marshall Islands. Concern was expressed that the standard of these courses should not suffer through course participants and trainers not being adequately prepared. It was noted that there was evidence of such problems, and SPC was requested to ensure that standards for participation in the courses were established and implemented.

12. A proposal to extend the UNFPA/SPC Project on Technical Assistance and Training in Census, Demography and Population Statistics (Recommendation 4) had been submitted to the UNFPA and was expected to be approved.

13. The need to investigate a possible examination scheme (Recommendation 5) had been largely met by available courses at Pacific universities. A review, based on country replies of all training courses attended and consultants used, was presented in Working Paper 4, and the Conference felt that a compendium of training opportunities and possible sources of funding (Recommendation 6) would be worthwhile even though it would become outdated quickly.

14. Information about statistical software (Recommendation 7) had been disseminated in 1985 and had recently been updated for discussion at the Conference. Plans are well in hand to provide training in computers and data processing in 1988 (Recommendation 8).

15. The Conference agreed that an interval of approximately three years would be appropriate between Regional Conferences of Statisticians (Recommendation 10). It was requested that efforts be made to try to meet all expenses of those Pacific Island representatives attending.

16. Recommendations 1 and 2 were directed at Governments and Administrations. Some countries had taken advantage of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (Recommendation 1) and other countries had improved capability through other means. Recommendation 2 had not resulted in any specific requests to SPC. The Conference proposed that the SPC become more directly involved in the development of household survey capabilities in Pacific Island countries.

RECOMMENDATION No.1

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission become more directly involved in the development of household survey capabilities in Pacific Island countries.

17. The Conference noted that an appointment had been made to the newly created and more advisory post of SPC Assistant Statistician, but that this had been at the expense of the Statistical Training Officer post. Lack of continuity due to lengthy and simultaneous post vacancies was also noted, as were problems in recruiting and retaining suitable staff. It was requested that SPC make every effort to minimise the delays that occur, to ensure continuity in the Statistics programme.

18. It was noted that delays in obtaining assistance were often due to the need to communicate requests through official channels.

(ii) Statistical information services, co-ordination and advisory services

19. The Secretariat presented Working Paper 2 on the statistics work programme of the SPC. The SPC provides statistical information in the form of publications which incorporate data from all the Pacific Island countries. There have been some problems in timeliness but efforts had been made to improve this situation. Countries were urged to provide data as early as possible. The potential advantages of transferring data on magnetic media were raised by participants. The Conference emphasised the value of the "South Pacific Economies: Statistical Summary" which has recently undergone major modification.

20. In the area of co-ordination, the SPC has worked in close co-operation with other international organisations active in the South Pacific. This has included contact with EPOC, attendance at ESCAP meetings, representation on the SIAP (Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific) Council and collaboration with both ADB and SIAP in training programmes. The consecutive timing of the ESCAP/SPC meeting on Population and Housing Censuses and the Seventh Regional Conference of Statisticians was also the result of inter-organisational co-operation.

21. The Conference noted that requests for information from international organisations entailed a heavy response burden on small statistical offices, particularly when the data required are not published. It would save a great deal of time if data could be shared between international agencies. This, however, can be very difficult to arrange. Furthermore, different organisations often want data on different conceptual bases. The SPC expressed willingness to provide published data to international agencies on behalf of Pacific Island statistical offices.

22. Since the Sixth Regional Conference of Statisticians, there have been few requests to the SPC for statistical assistance because of a perception that the SPC was not in a position to meet such requests. With the filling of all three statistical programme officer positions and the re-classification of the Statistical Training Officer to Assistant Statistician, the SPC is in a better position to meet requests for assistance.

(iii) Training programmes

23. The Secretariat presented Working Paper 3 which contained details of the two types of statistical training courses that it conducts - generalised statistical operations and procedures (SOAP) courses, and specialised courses.

24. There have been eighteen Basic-level SOAP courses since 1981. The course materials had been rewritten during 1986 and 1987 and were largely finalised. It is intended that they be a self-standing set of documents, including course notes, assignments and solutions, administrative check list, and, eventually, visual aids. Participants from larger countries agreed that once provided with a complete set of course materials, the larger statistical offices should be able to run the Basic SOAP course without assistance from external consultants. A project is carried out as an integral part of the course, not only to develop the skills of participants, but also as an opportunity for the statistical office to pilot test a new collection.

25. The Sixth Regional Conference of Statisticians recommended that the SPC also provide more training at an intermediate level and since that time four such courses have been run. The Intermediate notes, which have been substantially revised since the Sixth Regional Conference, are intended to serve as a reference guide as well as a teaching manual. Some work remains to be done on these.

26. Recent courses have usually been directed by consultants from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the New Zealand Department of Statistics rather than by SPC staff. The SPC expressed its appreciation for these services.

27. The SOAP courses have a broader audience than just statistical offices and also serve to increase the statistical awareness of government officers in general. Noting that the courses aimed to fulfil a training requirement not otherwise met in the Pacific, the Conference urged that the courses be kept simple and non-technical. The SPC confirmed that this was the intention in both Basic- and Intermediate-level courses. Countries indicated that demand for the Basic SOAP course was expected to remain at the high level experienced in 1987, rather than decrease.

RECOMMENDATION No. 2

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission continue to put emphasis on the Basic Statistical Operations and Procedures (SOAP) course.

28. The Conference noted that the candidates selected should have sufficient background to benefit from the courses, particularly at intermediate level. Selection of suitable candidates was the joint responsibility of the nominating department and the SPC.

RECOMMENDATION No. 3

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission develop criteria to assist countries in their selection of candidates for courses, and to apply these criteria, with care.

29. Results from the arithmetic test administered during the courses indicate a widespread numeracy problem. The Conference considered that there was merit in appropriate numeracy tests being conducted before participants were admitted to courses. The Conference urged that adequate emphasis be placed on numeracy including the use of calculators prior to and during the courses. It was further noted that the problem is not confined to Pacific Island countries and that material being developed in other countries might be useful.

RECOMMENDATION No. 4

The Conference recommended that statistical offices take steps to improve the level of numeracy of the staff.

30. Discussing the content of the Intermediate SOAP course, the Conference agreed that Module 6 (Statistical Organisations and Official Statistics) could probably be dealt with as a separate course. It was also suggested that not all topics in a module need be dealt with in a course. In view of the target audience, material on management of resources and administration of a statistics office might usefully be included in the Intermediate SOAP course.

31. The Conference noted that evaluation is an important part of assessing the success of the courses. Evaluation is currently sought from participants, lecturers and statistical offices.

RECOMMENDATION No. 5

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission incorporate a post-course evaluation after six months to be completed by each participant and his/her supervisor, similar to the pattern followed by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific.

32. Working Papers 16 and 27 were presented by Papua New Guinea and EPOC respectively. The Conference then discussed training media, other classroom materials and notes. In view of the production costs, the SPC does not envisage producing videos, although material produced by other agencies may be useful.

33. As regards specialised courses, there seems little demand for an SPC training course in agricultural statistics as needs in this area are already being met by existing United Nations and local programmes. Country national accounting needs seemed best met by a consultant working with local staff to compile the accounts rather than an overview lecture course. Some participants requested courses in Balance of Payments. Courses on Overseas Trade Statistics, Price Indexes and Household Surveys, particularly operational aspects, would also be of value.

(iv) Demography Programme and socio-economic statistics on women

34. The Conference discussed Working Paper 6 outlining the SPC Demography Programme. It was noted that the SPC population databank fulfilled a very useful function and that confidentiality was being maintained. Where concern was expressed about individual record data, with identification already removed, being passed to the SPC, the Conference noted the solution used by one country where household records had been re-numbered at random and re-ordered.

35. The Conference noted that there was an urgent need within the region to improve basic migration data, to meet a variety of demands. Mention was made of the work being done in this area by other agencies. It was also noted that though the SPC migration project had recently been terminated, the population project would take over this responsibility and welcomed requests for assistance.

RECOMMENDATION No. 6

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission continue the demography programme and that the United Nations Fund for Population Activities continue to support it.

36. The Conference noted that in-country training courses in data utilisation were available on request, and that these could involve practical work on the analysis and interpretation of census data.

37. The Conference noted that computing assistance in population work was of particular importance at the present time.

RECOMMENDATION No. 7

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission demography programme pay particular attention to assistance to statistical offices in developing their computing capability.

38. It was noted that the ESCAP/SPC Working Group on the 1990 round of housing and population censuses had recommended that SPC and ESCAP set up a group to provide guidelines to countries for improving the collection of economic data in population censuses. The Conference supported this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION No. 8

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission provide assistance to countries to help them maximise the usefulness of census and migration data for the purposes of economic analysis.

39. The Conference then discussed Working Paper 10 on the Project on Socio-Economic Statistics on Women. Mention was made of recent developments in several countries to improve data on women, and it was noted that the project had been instrumental in facilitating discussion and co-operation between the users and producers of such data.

40. The Conference accepted the report of the Workshop on Socio-Economic Statistics on Women, and affirmed continued co-operation with women's representatives in the production of data. The list of recommendations in the report was long and no indication of priority was given, but statisticians were urged to implement as many of the recommendations as feasible.

C. SERVICES PROVIDED BY OTHER AGENCIES

41. Separate reports were presented to the Conference by each of the countries or agencies involved in statistical assistance in the South Pacific and represented at the Conference. Written reports were presented by ESCAP, EPOC, Australia and ADB (Working Papers 17, 11, 8, and 28 respectively). Oral reports were presented by the Overseas Development Administration (UK), New Zealand and the World Bank.

42. The meeting noted with satisfaction the assistance these agencies are providing to the South Pacific and expressed its deep appreciation for this effort.

D. DISCUSSION OF MATTERS RAISED AT THE 24TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION

43. The Conference discussed the paper (Working Paper 15) presented by the United Kingdom at the 24th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. The paper specifically addressed the problems of statistical development in small countries, defined in the paper as countries with population less than 300,000. Noting that small countries still require the same range of statistical data as larger countries, long-term problems facing statistical offices in small countries include:

- . technical statistical staff are not required on a permanent full-time basis;
- . the difficulty of providing long-term job satisfaction for technical staff within a small statistical office;
- . the severe impact of staff turnover on the operations of small statistical offices.

44. The Conference endorsed the paper's diagnosis of the situation. The Conference agreed that the formation of a new regional organisation was not a cost-effective solution. It was also the view of the Conference that tertiary institutions in the Pacific were not well equipped to assist with the specific problems faced by statistical offices. The Conference noted the value of sensitivity to local issues and knowledge of past statistical development and the need to avoid duplication of existing institutions.

RECOMMENDATION No. 9

The Conference recommended that regional organisations currently working in the Pacific be strengthened to better meet the needs of Pacific Island nations for statistical technical expertise which cannot be provided within individual country statistical offices.

E. COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND REQUIREMENTS

45. Working Paper 7 was presented by the Secretariat. Current usage of computers in the South Pacific region was compared with usage in 1985. The number of units has almost doubled, mostly owing to an increase in micro-computers. Of the latter two-thirds were IBM PC or IBM compatible with most of the remainder being Apple types, mainly Macintoshes.

46. Delegates were told of problems in purchasing so-called "compatible" computers. Some donor agencies restrict purchase of computers to those which have do not infringe international copyright. The problems of ensuring software compatibility and adequate service and support with some "compatible" models were also noted.

47. Multi-user terminal systems have caused problems to both mini-computer and micro-computer users. Slow speed and software problems were noted with these systems.

48. Because Island countries usually have inadequate service and support for computers, users were cautioned to purchase basic, well-tested systems. The use of computing policy committees, calling for tenders with stringent service and support requirements, was advisable.

49. Users were strongly urged to purchase UPS (uninterruptable power supply) units with their equipment, and to ensure that purchased units are designed to run on the power system used in the country.

50. The high costs involved in learning to use different software were noted and countries were urged, as far as possible to avoid proliferation of software purchases. The problems of linking some software packages were also noted and countries were advised on the need to examine the linking implications of proposed software purchases. Because of the confusing variety of packaged software currently used in statistical offices, and to assist countries in software purchase decisions, a request was made for distribution of a compendium of software (and hardware) suitable for South Pacific use.

RECOMMENDATION No. 10

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission compile and distribute a compendium of hardware and software suitable for use in the South Pacific.

RECOMMENDATION No. 11

The Conference further recommended that the South Pacific Commission evaluate key statistical packages and advise countries on their suitability.

51. Delegates also requested information on training opportunities for micro-computer hardware and software. SIAP training courses were suggested to supply some of these needs, and both ADB and SPC are considering offering courses in the near future.

RECOMMENDATION No. 12

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission in co-operation with other agencies develop and undertake training programmes in micro-computers and their application.

F. PLANS FOR ADOPTION OF HARMONISED COMMODITY DESCRIPTION AND CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

52. The Conference discussed Working Papers 13 and 21, and heard the experiences of Vanuatu, Kiribati, Cook Islands and Fiji, as well as those of New Zealand and Australia. The Harmonised System is due to be brought into use by 1 January 1988 by most developed countries, but many statistical offices in the Pacific were not prepared and problems in implementing the changeover were foreseen.

53. It was noted that very little information was available to statistical offices in the region to enable them to put this system into operation by the scheduled date, and that though every effort should be made to keep to the schedule, it was understandable that small island countries might not be able to implement the system on time.

54. On the other hand, the Conference agreed that the major problem for many of the Pacific countries was in coding imports rather than exports, since exports were few and imports were many and varied. As most imports should be already coded on import entry documents after 1 January 1988, the problems of changeover may not be as great as for countries requiring complex export commodity classifications.

55. Various problems associated with the Harmonised System were brought to the attention of the Conference. These included changes in the way that goods were to be quantified, leading to conversion problems and difficulties in measures derived from trade data; delays in the production of statistical series on trade; the need for extra resources to deal with the system's introduction; difficulties in providing a linkage between the former and new commodity coding systems; and the need to explain changes to various sectors of the public. In addition, the new system still did not provide exact compatibility at a particular level of coding with Standard International Trade Classification Revision 3 (SITC/Rev.3).

56. Considering the problems that were involved, the Conference requested that regional assistance be made available along the same lines as had been provided during the 1970s when an earlier change had taken place. An existing ESCAP manual on the compilation of international trade statistics was brought to the attention of the Conference.

RECOMMENDATION No. 13

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission collaborate with the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre to ensure that adequate support is given to the Pacific nations in respect of the introduction of the Harmonised System.

57. The meeting noted that training was needed to help countries make the transition to the Harmonised System. During discussion of Agenda Item 6 the ADB representative advised that funding had been approved for several training courses to be conducted over the next three years. A training course on the Harmonised System has been tentatively scheduled as part of the ADB technical assistance. As SPC will be the executing agency for these training courses, the meeting recommended that SPC develop a regional or sub-regional training course on this topic.

RECOMMENDATION No. 14

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission develop, with assistance from the Asian Development Bank as appropriate, suitable training on the Harmonised System.

58. It was noted that SPC had commenced discussion with countries well advanced with Harmonised System development, together with donor agencies, with the aim of developing an Harmonised System micro-computer system for Pacific countries. It was recommended that SPC provide training on how to use this new processing system as soon as it became available.

RECOMMENDATION No. 15

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission continue with negotiations on the development of a computerised processing system, and that it should also develop appropriate training on this system.

59. It was noted that difficulties existed in gaining co-operation with customs authorities in a number of countries who were taking a lead in adopting the system apparently without regard to the statistical implications. Concern was expressed that this would result in a system which does not meet statistical requirements or satisfy the various uses to which trade data are put.

60. Participants were strongly advised to investigate as soon as possible the situation in their own country regarding plans for the Harmonised System and to co-operate where possible with customs authorities to ensure that statistical requirements are met.

61. It was also recommended that statistical representation be secured at the Second Regional Customs Meeting to be held in Vanuatu, 24-28 August 1987, in order to put statistical concerns on the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION No. 16

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission and the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre take action to ensure that the concerns of the Conference were presented to the Second Regional Customs Meeting.

62. The Conference noted with regret that it appeared the United States of America had not yet ratified the agreement concerning the Harmonised System, and that this presented particular problems of dealing with two systems for those Pacific islands closely associated with the USA. It was hoped that the USA would ratify the agreement and implement the new system at the same time as the rest of the world.

G. PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

63. The Secretariat presented Working Paper 14 and participants identified priorities for future statistical development in their respective countries.

64. A common theme was the consolidation and improvement of existing services rather than significant expansion of the number of published series. Improved timeliness, partly through use of computers, was a major aim.

65. Methodological reviews of existing series to improve data quality and operational efficiency were envisaged. Participants also planned to further develop contacts with users to better assess user requirements and their existing usage. This would enable statistical offices both to rationalise output for provision of a more efficient service and to foster better use of existing data.

66. The Conference emphasised the importance of staff development and increased local statistical capability, including household surveys. It was noted that statistical education should involve not only data producers but also data users. Training in the efficient use of computers was highlighted as a means of improving operational efficiency.

67. Participants also envisaged an ongoing organisational review to make best use of resources and to adapt to changing technology and user requirements.

H. PROSPECTS FOR THE EIGHTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATISTICIANS

68. In discussing Working Paper 9, the Conference affirmed the value of the Regional Conference of Statisticians as a forum for Pacific Island statisticians and international agencies active in the Pacific. In view of the focus of the Conference, participants strongly preferred a Pacific Island as venue.

RECOMMENDATION No. 17

The Conference recommended that the Regional Conference of Statisticians continue to be held every three years, with the Eighth Conference in 1990, preferably in a Pacific Island.

69. The SPC encouraged greater involvement by country participants in determining agenda and in the preparation of subject papers. It was suggested by the Conference that a wide range of possible agenda items rather than a draft agenda might be circulated to participants to encourage greater involvement. Another suggestion was to request certain countries to present papers on particular agenda items as appropriate.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

70. The Conference noted the importance of ensuring that, in the development of demographic data resources in the South Pacific, the needs of both economic and social analysis be addressed. In particular, the meeting noted that the link between demographic data and the measurement of per capita GDP should be adjusted to take account of expatriate income, non-monetary production and workers' remittances from abroad.

J. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

71. The Conference formally adopted its report on 22 June 1987.

IV. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

B. REVIEW OF THE SPC WORK PROGRAMME (1983-1986)

- (i) Progress in implementing the recommendations of the Sixth Regional Conference of Statisticians in 1983

RECOMMENDATION No. 1

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission become more directly involved in the development of household survey capabilities in Pacific Island countries. ✓

- (iii) Training programmes

RECOMMENDATION No. 2

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission continue to put emphasis on the Basic Statistical Operations and Procedures (SOAP) course. ✓

RECOMMENDATION No. 3

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission develop criteria to assist countries in their selection of candidates for courses, and to apply these criteria, with care. ||

RECOMMENDATION No. 4

The Conference recommended that statistical offices take steps to improve the level of numeracy of the staff.] ✓

RECOMMENDATION No. 5

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission also incorporate a post-course evaluation after six months to be completed by each participant and his/her supervisor, similar to the pattern followed by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific.]

- (iv) Demography Programme and socio-economic statistics on women

RECOMMENDATION No. 6

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission continue the demography programme and that the United Nations Fund for Population Activities continue to support it. ✓

RECOMMENDATION No. 7

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission demography programme pay particular attention to assistance to statistical offices in developing their computing capability.

RECOMMENDATION No. 8

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission provide assistance to countries to help them maximise the usefulness of census and migration data for the purposes of economic analysis.

D. DISCUSSION OF MATTERS RAISED AT THE 24TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION

RECOMMENDATION No. 9

The Conference recommended that regional organisations currently working in the Pacific be strengthened to better meet the needs of Pacific Island nations for statistical technical expertise which cannot be provided within individual country statistical offices.

E. COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND REQUIREMENTS

RECOMMENDATION No. 10

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission compile and distribute a compendium of hardware and software suitable for use in the South Pacific.

RECOMMENDATION No. 11

The Conference further recommended that the South Pacific Commission evaluate key statistical packages and advise countries on their suitability.

RECOMMENDATION No. 12

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission in co-operation with other agencies develop and undertake training programmes in micro-computers and their application.

E. PLANS FOR ADOPTION OF HARMONISED COMMODITY DESCRIPTION AND CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

RECOMMENDATION No. 13

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission collaborate with the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre to ensure that adequate support is given to the Pacific nations in respect of the introduction of the Harmonised System.

RECOMMENDATION No. 14

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission develop, with assistance from the Asian Development Bank as appropriate, suitable training on the Harmonised System. ✓

RECOMMENDATION No. 15

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission continue with negotiations on the development of a computerised processing system, and that it should also develop appropriate training on this system. ✓

RECOMMENDATION No. 16

The Conference recommended that the South Pacific Commission and the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre take action to ensure that the concerns of the Conference were presented to the Second Regional Customs Meeting. ✓

(H.)

PROSPECTS FOR THE EIGHTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATISTICIANS

RECOMMENDATION No. 17

The Conference recommended that the Regional Conference of Statisticians continue to be held every three years, with the Eighth Conference in 1990, preferably in a Pacific Island. ✓

ANNEX I

LIST OF WORKING PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE

<u>No.</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
SPC/Statisticians 7/WP.1	Progress in implementing the recommendations of the Sixth Regional Conference of Statisticians	SPC
WP.2	Statistical programmes of the South Pacific Commission (1983-1987)	SPC
WP.3	Statistical training services provided by the South Pacific Commission	SPC
WP.4	Survey of training courses attended and consultants used	SPC
WP.5	Cooperation with international agencies	SPC
WP.6	The demography programme at the South Pacific Commission	SPC/DEMOG
WP.7	Computer usage for statistics in the South Pacific Region	SPC/PDPO
WP.8	Training opportunities provided by Australia	AUSTRALIA
WP.9	Prospects for the Eighth Regional Conference of Statisticians	SPC
WP.10	Report on "Socio-Economic Statistics on Women"	SPC/POPS
WP.11	Statistical services available from the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre	EPOC
WP.12	Statistical development on Guam - with emphasis on National Accounts	GUAM
WP.13	Introduction of the Harmonised Trade System	SPC
WP.14	Special problems of Island countries: UN Statistical Commission	SPC
WP.15	Letter from Mr A. Sahib (ESCAP) accompanying U.K. Paper to UNSC 24th Session	ESCAP
WP.16	Statistical education and training - a Pacific perspective	PNG

WP.17	Technical co-operation in statistics: activities of ESCAP in the Pacific	ESCAP
WP.18	The Federated States of Micronesia and its statistical development	FSM
WP.19	Country report presented by French Polynesia	FP
WP.20	Country paper presented by Fiji	FIJI
WP.21	Computerisation of trade statistics and the introduction of the Harmonised System	KIRIBATI
WP.22	Country report presented by Kiribati	KIRIBATI
WP.23	Country statement presented by Western Samoa	WEST.SAMOA
WP.24	Review of statistical developments and programmes during 1984/1987 in the Cook Islands	COOK ISL.
WP.25	Country report presented by Niue	NIUE
WP.26	Summary of statistical developments in Tonga, 1984-1987	TONGA
WP.27	Providing statistical training for government staff in the Pacific - some comments	EPOC
WP.28	Report on Asian Development Bank statistical assistance in the South Pacific	ADB
WP.29	Review of statistical developments in Vanuatu	VANUATU

ANNEX II

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