

October 1991

OPENING SPEECH BY MR OLAVI E. NIITAMO

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of myself and my colleagues at Statistics Finland, I wish you all heartily welcome to this Sixth Meeting of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics. We are proud to have been granted the privilege of hosting this meeting.

International appreciation of the work of the Voorburg Group has been increasing year by year. The Group is a unique phenomenon within international statistical co-operation, a phenomenon one would like to see spreading to other statistics as well. Nearly five years have passed since the Group's first meeting in Voorburg. Your determined work on the development of service statistics and on the establishment of international statistical standards has produced significant results. As your first achievement, you contributed to the development of the latest version of the UN activity classification. Earlier this year, you submitted a Model Survey on Computer Services to the UN Statistical Commission. According to the agenda of the meeting, you will this week be discussing the experience that has been gained from the application of this model.

There has been plenty of discussion about the growing economic importance of services and the relation of services to other industries. Economists seem to agree that productivity tends to be lower in services than in industry. At the same time, they admit that the methods and the body of basic knowledge used for measuring the productivity of services are still quite elementary. As a key topic for your meeting, you have chosen the issue of the "holy trinity" of national accounting; that is, the issue of output, employment and productivity. The fifteen contributions prepared for the meeting indicate that the members of the Group are determined to make a concerted effort to solve the challenging problems that relate to the calculation of prices and volumes.

Statistical classifications are also the corner-stones of service statistics. The differences between goods and services do not, however, ease the development of the classifications. Forming of homogeneous product groups in a way that will enable the identification and measurement of suitable price and volume components is not easy. The Voorburg Group has fruitfully dealt with these topics at several meetings already. The operation of classifications has been tested in both theory and practice. Linking theoretical work with practical experience is extremely important for the elaboration of a uniform international standard.

According to the agenda of the meeting, you are going to devote a whole day to the questions of data collection on services. Direct surveys and the use of administrative records for compiling service statistics will be discussed. This will require the kind of work the Voorburg Group has been doing. Earlier, I referred to the Model Survey on Computer Services. Some countries have already been testing it in practice. For this meeting, many countries have submitted papers describing the experience they have gained from the use of administrative records. Within EUROSTAT, methodological guidelines have been prepared for conducting pilot surveys on the business service sector. I believe that exchanging experiences from these surveys will help in finding uniform guidelines for data collection as well.

Compiling statistics on international trade in services has been a standard topic on the agendas of Voorburg Group meetings. And with good reason. In Finland, too, the internationalization of service enterprises and the expansion of foreign trade in services, has entailed the transfer of services from the protected closed sector to the open sector. This means that the service sector

is facing mounting competition. The need for reliable, comparable statistics is ever more urgent. A basic requirement of statistical compilation is that there exist a standard classification of trade in services. Collaboration between international organisations is extremely important in this field. I note with pleasure that such key organisations as the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Statistical Office, the OECD, EUROSTAT, GATT and UNCTAD have contributed papers to this meeting.

A total of thirty-nine papers have been prepared for this meeting. For them, thanks are due to the authors and their background organisations. At last year's meeting in Paris, the Group adopted a set of internal guidelines for stepping up its activities. At the same time, the Group elected a Bureau for itself, the members of which are, in addition to Ms Jeskanen-Sundström, Mr Beekman, Mr Picard and Mr Rytén. I take this opportunity to thank them for their help in preparing this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you have a busy week ahead of you. I am convinced that with the help of fruitful discussions your meeting will significantly advance the development work on service statistics within both national statistical offices and international organisations. I wish the meeting every success and hope that your visit to Helsinki will be an enjoyable one.

VOORBURG GROUP ON SERVICES STATISTICS  
Sixth Meeting  
Helsinki, 7-11 October 1991

SESSION 1 (Monday, 7 October)

Opening of the meeting by Mr Niitamo, General  
Director of Statistics Finland  
Election of officers  
Adoption of the agenda

THE USE OF THE CPC AND OTHER CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

Introducer: S. Nijhowne  
Leading discussant: M. Beekman

28. S. Nijhowne and D. April (CANADA):  
Engineering Services and the CPC

24. E. Veil (OECD): Proposal for the  
elaboration of a glossary of service terms

18. A. Heinonen and S. Rikama (FINLAND):  
Application of the CPC to business services:  
Finnish experiences and comments

21. M. Lancetti (EUROSTAT): Services  
Classification System: Classification of services  
functions

25. E. Veil (OECD): Defining services: An  
enumerative approach (Revised version)

35. A. Chadeau (OECD): ISIC Revision 3 and  
Service Classifications in OECD Countries:  
A Tentative Comparison

40. EUROSTAT: Ref.: "Proposal for the  
elaboration of a glossary of service terms" by Mr  
Erwin Veil, OECD

SESSION 2 (Monday, 7 October)

PRICES AND QUANTITIES IN SERVICES  
- GENERAL FRAMEWORK

Introducer: S. Guckes  
Leading discussant: H. Picard

17. S. Guckes (GERMANY): Measurement of tariff bound prices for services

2. H. Picard (FRANCE): Calculating service price indexes? It is possible!

31. A. Meguerditchian (CANADA): Comments on 'Volume Measures for Services and Service Industries. Draft International Guidelines. Erling J. Flottum, Central Bureau of Statistics, Norway'

26. C. McSween (UNSO): Volume Measures in ISIC 8 and 9 Services Industries: Country practices as a Basis for International Guidelines

13. O. Crocicchi (EUROSTAT): Annotated Outline of a Methodological Manual for Price and Volume Statistics in services

41. a. and b. OECD: Questionnaire on the measurement of value added at constant prices in service activities/industries

SESSION 3 (Tuesday, 8 October)

PRICES AND QUANTITIES IN SERVICES  
- DISTRIBUTIVE TRADE

Introducer: H. Picard  
Leading discussant: S. Varjonen

12. F. Amand (FRANCE): Price indexes for commercial services. The French experience

14. J. Albert (EUROSTAT): Statistical requirements for assessing volume and price changes for commercial services

39. S. Varjonen (FINLAND): Volume measures of railway transportation

SESSION 4 (Tuesday, 8 October)

PRICES AND QUANTITIES IN SERVICES  
- BUSINESS AND INSURANCE SERVICES

Introducer: A. Meguerditchian  
Leading discussant: H. Picard

27. R. Lowe (CANADA): Pricing Services of Consulting Engineers

3. H. Picard (FRANCE): Towards time-to-time price indexes for business services

6. G. Isacsson (SWEDEN): Price index computation for (business) services

15. J. Walton (EUROSTAT): Price and volume statistics: Insurance and pension funding

37. T. Rothovius and S. Varjonen (FINLAND): Volume measures for insurance and pension funding

SESSION 5 (Wednesday, 9 October)

PRICES AND QUANTITIES IN SERVICES  
- GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Introducer: A. Bloem  
Leading discussant: J. Köll

1. B. Kazemier (NETHERLANDS): Volume measurement of government output in the Netherlands: some alternatives

5. J. Köll (SWEDEN): Prices and quantities in productivity measurements for the government sector in Sweden

SESSION 6 (Thursday, 10 October)

STATISTICAL SURVEYS OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Introducer: S. Nijhowne  
Leading discussant: R. Norton

29. C. Gaston and D. April (CANADA): The Model Survey of Computer Services. Statistics Canada's Experience

11. P. Trogan (FRANCE): Computer services in France. Results for 1989 presented within the framework of the standard survey of Statistics Canada

22. Department of Statistics (NEW ZEALAND): Development of services statistics. Report on the pilot test of the computer services industry survey

32. R. Norton (UNITED KINGDOM): Statistical survey for selected non-financial service trades

4. B. Olsson (SWEDEN): Swedish experiences of statistical surveys on the service sector

16. E. A. Fisher (EUROSTAT): Development of Methodological Guidelines for conducting Pilot Surveys on the Business Services Sector

34. A. Takami (JAPAN): Outline of the 1989 Survey on Service Industries

38. W. Pattinson (AUSTRALIA): Development of Service Industry Statistics in Australia

SESSION 7 (Thursday, 10 October)

#### USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS IN COMPILING SERVICE STATISTICS

Introducer: P. Boegh Nielsen  
Leading discussant: A. Laihonon

30. P. Boegh Nielsen and K. Stetkaer (DENMARK):  
Use of administrative registers in the production of service statistics - The Danish case

10. P. Trogan (FRANCE): Statistical processing of administrative files. The French experience

9. A. Laihonon (FINLAND): Use of register-based employment statistics to provide data for service statistics

19. H. Hamilton, P. Hanczaryk, B. Greenberg, C. Konschnik (U.S.A.): Census Bureau uses of administrative data for service statistics

SESSION 8 (Friday, 11 October)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SERVICES

Introducer: J. Bame

Leading discussant: E. Veil

7. International Monetary Fund: Draft  
Classification of International Transactions in  
Services

36. OECD-EUROSTAT: Proposals for a Joint  
OECD-EUROSTAT Trade-in-Services Classification

20. W. Tislenkoff (GATT): International  
Trade in Services

8. M. Dunavölgyi (UNSO): Statistics on trade  
in services in Asia

33. Z. E. Kenessey (UNCTAD): Statistics on  
Trade in Services in Asia

23. F. W. H. Ho (HONG KONG): An account of  
statistics on trade in services compiled by Hong  
Kong

SESSION 9 (Friday, 11 October)

Future work of the Voorburg Group  
Closing of the meeting