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The Moser Report on Italian Statistics: 10 Years On

SISTEMA STATISTICO NAZIONALE

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PREFACE

This issue of the "Annali" is based on the Seminar held in June 1993 at Istat, 10 years after the publication of the so-called "Moser Report on Italian Official Statistics".

The Commission responsible for the Report was set up by Mr. B. Andreatta, then Minister of European Community Policies, with the mandate of reviewing the status of Italian Statistics in relation to development taking place elsewhere in Europe and issuing suggestions and proposals for enhancing the Government activities in the field of statistics.

The Commission was chaired by Sir Claus Moser, former Director of the United Kingdom Central Statistical Office, and was composed of Mr. Peter Jakob Bjerve, Prof. Richard Ruggles, Dr. Nancy Ruggles.

The aim of the Seminar was to review the state of official statistics 10 years after the Moser Report by assessing progress and highlighting the goals reached and the issues still under discussion.

The Moser Report, written at the beginning of the Eighties, can be considered the corner-stone on which a new phase for Italian statistics was based.

It corresponded to a turning point in the history and development of Italian statistics marked by an outward looking approach, the desire to participate more actively in the activities of the international statistical community, and the aim of linking up more closely with the world of research and the academia.

Many of the recommendations and suggestions set forth in the Report have been adopted and carried out by Istat in the course of the 1980's. Since then, the Institute has undergone a new lease of life: a new framework of work organization, a new way of looking at the public administration information systems and at the possibility of using them for statistical purposes, a marked improvement in the quality of produced data.

The national accounts system has been totally reviewed bringing Italy to be currently among the leading countries in this field: particularly noticeable is the method developed to measure the underground economy which is now a reference point within the work carried out at the European level to harmonize GNP measures and take into consideration the exhaustiveness of national accounts.

The legislative system underpinning the National Statistical System at the end of the 1980's was completely overhauled strengthening the role

and powers of the National Institute and, at the same time, giving recognition and visibility to statistical activities carried out in various parts of the public administration, both at the central government level and at the regional and municipal level. The peculiar mix of decentralization/centralization, pluralism/central authority, independence/policy orientation, that characterizes the institutional design of the Italian National System of Statistics (SISTAN) lends itself to relevant considerations in relation to the creation of a European Statistical Systems. Many lessons, therefore, can be drawn from the Italian experience in order to prepare the ground for a leap forward towards better and more integrated European statistics.

Nowadays, statistical data in Italy is not only created for Government use but also and more prominently as a public service for all citizens, including academics, researchers, Trade Unions, economic agents, business and grossroot associations.

Statistics is more clearly seen now as an instrument for management control and advacement of democracy in the country.

The cultural and historical role played by the Moser Report at the beginnings of a decade of change, experimentation and reform will have to be assessed by historians. It is undeniable however that the activities of the Moser Commission marked the beginning of the process which led to the end of the "Italian diversity" in the European context. It signalled Italy's opening up towards the international statistical arena, and an effort to solve its problems in the European framework. The Report raised the issues and indicated the path to be followed. It is no coincidence that the core issues proposed by the Government to the attention of the Commission were national accounts, price statistics and the public sector, corresponding to the main features of Italian "divergence" vis-à-vis its European partners.

The role played today by Istat, within the new statistical system, is to act as a moral authority, by providing standards, methodologies, technologies and monitoring capacities to be used throughout the decentralized system of official statistics.

There may be however worrying trends threatening the new "decentralized" system: does, the National Statistical Institute have sufficient powers to establish objectives and priorities and guarantee independence and quality for the whole of the decentralized statistical supply? Will it command sufficient finantial resources, for itself and the System, giving credibility and authority to its autonomy and coordination prerogatives? How will the National Statistical System respond to the challenges posed by statistical federalism, subsidiarity and European integration?

For instance, statisticians within decentralized statistical offices could become totally subordinated to the interests and directives of their ministers; for this reason, according to Sir Claus Moser, it could be necessary for the Statistical Institute to acquire control over the budget of statistical activities for the whole system, thus enabling it to decide upon priorities and strategic options on statistical surveys and methods.

Statistics should focus increasingly on social phenomena. Governments can count on many types of economic statistics, yet there

is a shortage of social statistics and indicators. Surveys are needed which can be used to develop social indicators, to operationalize social and environmental accounts and to produce better longitudinal data. This is the trend for the future on which Istat has set its course. And it is encouraging to hear Sir Claus Moser in his contribution to point out in that direction in preparing official statistics for the challenge of next century.

Looking backwards to ten years of development in official statistics can be rewarding in assessing progress, detect shortcoming and understanding what remains to be done. However, this was not the main purpose of the meeting with Sir Claus Moser marking the tenth anniversary of the publication of his Report; nor is this the main objective of this publication.

Looking forwards towards the new challenges facing statistics confronted with the increasing pace of technological and economic trasformations and the deepening concerns of fragmented communities and broken solidarities: this is the message that comes from revisiting the lessons learned through the Moser Report and its impact on the development of Italian statistics.

Statisticians are morally obliged to respond at their best to the upcoming challenges. There is an ever increasing need for a more and better informed society, especially as far as socio-economic phenomena within the different national contexts are concerned.

A massive effort therefore is required to put statistics at the core and forefront of policy initiative. Sir Claus Moser concluded his remarks by pointing at the need to start from basics: improving educational systems for our children, investing in human resource development for the competitiveness of our economies, reacting to the social malaise affecting the cohesion of our organizational fabric and, above all, placing statistical information in its proper role and place for a more constructive and science-based community dialogue.

With this intention we publish here the main contributions presented at the Seminar with Sir Claus Moser on the tenth anniversary of the Report that takes his name. We publish it in English because we believe this story has relevance beyond the Italian context and may be of interest to an international readership. We publish also in the Annex the synthesis and conclusions of the Moser Report (Part 1) which was never published in its original language and deserves to be known also in the broader European context.

It has to be remarked that the texts were taken from the speeches given at the seminar and were not revised by the Authors. They are therefore published under the sole responsability of the Editors.

INTRODUCTION

Alberto Zuliani

Today we find ourselves joining Sir Claus Moser for a reflection on the state of affairs of Italian official statistics 10 years after he and his celebrated colleagues on the Commission set up by the then Minister of European Community Policies brought fame to the report on the characteristics of Italian Official Statistics, known to all of us as the "Moser Report".

I think that we all agree that launching this auditing operation represented a tremendous act of courage on the part of the Government and the Italian Official Statistics, an operation which was also justified by the renewal that took place at the same time in the management of the Central Institute of Statistics. Many similar acts of courage followed, I refer to the revision of the National Accounts and the inclusion of the irregular economy in GNP estimates , that is the move towards a greater exhaustiveness which has placed us at the forefront in Europe. As a result, in the international context we now appear to represent a kind of reversed Italian specificity, that is one which, from a position of strength, requires the others to align themselves with this advanced position.

The Moser Report marked the beginning of a completely new phase for Italian Official Statistics. Many of the indications it contained were acted upon, as was seen in the workshop with the staff of the Institute and Sir Claus Moser which took place on May the 30th 1993.

Considerable progress was made in many directions, on an institutional level, on an organisational level, with the radical restructuring of many surveys, with the considerable all round improvements in the quality of statistical information.

A further stimulus for this improvement came from the change in the legal status of Istat consisting in the Institute's entry among the research institutions, which enabled the internal resources to be exploited in the best way and will enable new, equally valuable resources to be acquired.

And now we come to the Moser Report; one of the best results it produced was, in my opinion, that of launching a process of self-appraisal which has now come to form a permanent feature of Istat.

Every survey regularly undergoes a routine control, or sometimes a special control; a management control system has been set up, which allows us to make maximum use of the resources available; a special sensitivity is developing, which will soon make it possible to try out different

ways of organisation to set up working group in data control quality in order to improve statistics both for the policy makers and the other users.

Istat is increasingly acquiring the reputation and role of a magistracy for statistical data, and I believe that this is what has led to my appointment, in my capacity as President of Istat, to head the Commission for the Re-drawing up of the Electoral Districts. I consider this to be an act of acknowledgement of Istat's independence and credibility.

In an informal meeting, Sir Moser reminded us of the recent past of English Official Statistics to which both a Government set of targets and a national one are attributed according to the Prime Minister in office. I believe that Istat has the capacity, the professionality, and the resources to meet both of these sets of objectives and requirements, requirements which tend to overlap considerably.

Every National Institute of Statistics aspires to help the Government make good laws and govern well, supporting its choices with the appropriate information. I have always believed that Istat should represent one of the required steps in the technical consultation procedure for bills with a strong socio-economic impact to so through, guaranteeing full informational coverage and back-up. To implement statistics in this way is undeniably favourable for the community as a whole.

On the other hand, providing the public, economic and social operators, as individuals or as a whole, with the outcomes of government decisions by means of appropriate statistical indicators, represents certainly a shift in favour of the general public whilst providing a direct source of information for the Government, and therefore indirectly leading to positive forms of social control.

As Sir Claus Moser reminded us, we will be facing major challenges in the next ten years: as far as Italian Official Statistics are concerned this means bringing about the growth and improvement of statistical activities in the offices of the National Statistical System (SISTAN), guiding the exploitation process of the submerged wealth of information in the public administration, which has for too long ignored the potential of statistics available for the whole country, strengthening international relations and playing the role assigned to us in the international statistical community, increasing data processing and analysis, putting to use our economic and social research capacities within the context of Istat.

The Annual Report of Istat presented for the first time in 1993 by President Rey indicates the same trends. To ensure that the Government makes increasing and better use of the information we provide, to attract the interest of the general public in the data supplied to it.

Ten years ago, Istat took up the challenge made by the Moser Report and the results can be seen today, and were also acknowledged by Sir Claus Moser. I am convinced that Istat is ready to face the challenges awaiting it in the next millennium.

DEVELOPING THE ITALIAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM: THE CHALLENGE FOR THE 1990's

Guido Mario Rey

I must say that I was slightly taken aback by the request to prepare this contribution because I had already presented my views on the role, the function and the duties of the National Statistical System (SISTAN) in occasion of the first National Conference of Statistics at the end of 1992.

Not wishing to repeat myself, I decided to concentrate my attention on three crucial aspects:

firstly, the events which have taken place in the first half of 1993, the events of the last four to five months, a relatively short but intense period of time, as many interesting and relevant changes took place, as we will see;

secondly, I would like to focus on the resources of the National Statistical System, with respect to both human and information technology;

and thirdly, rather than suggesting possible stategies for the future, which does not lie within my province, I would like to provide a critical reflection on the first three years of the 1990's. I realize that I have reversed the usual order but I would prefer to conclude my talk with this critical reflection, because this will provide an opening for a brief profile of Sir Claus Moser and the wonderful work he carried out in his time at Istat, work which went beyond merely producing the Report. I am not – as it is well known – a statistician, and neither was I at the time. Therefore to have the possibility to take part in high level discussions with an international commission of statisticians provided me with incomparable training. I do not think that I have ever had a better opportunity to discuss, understand and gain expertise in various new fields.

Although there could be alternative opinions with regard to how we followed throughout the 1980's the guidelines given, by the Moser Commission, one thing is certain: that Report has always been a constant reference for me. Every now and again I read it through, every now and again someone mentions it to me; like with a good wine, my appreciation of it has grown with the passing of time.

It was the source of many long-term strategies and I can honestly say that the crux of my paper lies in that document that I have so often referred to.

The central theme was that of public information systems, which were underused in the area of statistics, and the lack of integration of these systems. Whilst criticizing this situation, the Moser document also acknowledged the fundamental good quality of these systems, thus drawing attention to the dichotomy between the potential that existed and the delay in developing and statistically exploiting this potential.

It has taken 10 years, but gradually interesting developments are beginning to take place with respect to the role of Public Information Systems and their use for statistical purposes, I will not waste time on describing what you no doubt are all aware of, I would just like to draw your attention to 3 points:

1) statistics for political use;

2) linked to this concept, the fact that an imbalance of information should not exist working against general public;

3) statistics must also be an instrument for monitoring and control of the public administration.

As you can see these three concepts slightly change our viewpoint on statistics, in that statistics are not only for government use but have a public function. They are for public use, they represent a public service.

The Statistical System then should no longer be centralized and linked to the organs of central government; it should no longer have a single representative, but needs to be decentralized, to be distributed on to the territory and to be available to everyone.

Sir Claus Moser said the same thing to us on many occasions. Of course, the struggle between centralization and decentralization highlight the inherent weakness that decentralization leads to loss of control and links. It may not necessarily represent an advantage because if these links are gradually worn down and finally break, the system becomes disconnected, anarchic. This is a very delicate matter and I believe the most difficult aspect of the task inherited by Istat as a centre, a supervisionary body, the representative body of SISTAN.

Having outlined the Sistan aims, I would like to tell you what has happened in the hectic first few months of 1993. Basically three fundamental changes have occurred:

1) The law establishing delegation of powers from politiciens to high-level civil servants (december 1992). This is not merely a matter concerning the trade unions, but a new way of seeing the public administration. It basically established that decisional-strategic centres and decisional-management centres must be divided by a gap: the gap between politics and bureaucracy. Administration is the responsibility held by top public officials. On the other hand, it is the prerogative, the obligation, the duty of ministers to issue general directives and control the application of these directives.

All this fundamental reform is only meaningful if a Statistical System is capable of supplying performance indicators linked to strategic guidelines

(I refer here to the Statistic System at a management level), and if the reaching of policy objectives is controlled by means of these indicators.

The content of this basic principle and relationship was transformed into law, in the form of a law for the delegation of powers (february 1993), and represents a turning point for Italian Public Administration.

Statistics can play a fundamental role in transforming the Public Administration. I would like to concentrate on this aspect in order to draw attention to the fact that the traditional pretext for the underutilization of statistics in the public administration no longer exists.

The traditional pretext was that ministers pass through, they in general are not interested, they only have a short-term vision, they face political constraints. After Decree Law No. 29 of February 1993, this pretext no longer exists. From now onwards management is all exclusively in the hands of the top public administration, there are no more excuses. This is the first new basic concept, the first change that took place.

2) The second change (it is amazing how many things can happen in just five months!) is the fact that the action of the public administration has become basically bound and controlled by a system of rules, of financial references but not by a management system, by a control system allowing efficiency and effectiveness to be evaluated.

Efficiency and effectiveness were two kinds of litany recited by many of my colleagues and good-will politicians. We now know that efficiency and effectiveness mean measuring and making reference to indicators which enable effectiveness and efficiency to be evaluated by means of calculating variances.

These indicators can only be supplied by statistics. There are no other sources, and at this point the extent of the SISTAN problem becomes clear: in fact SISTAN's capacity to supply these indicators becomes crucial. Nor can these indicators be exclusively defined by managers who are only guided by the rules, the formalities and the procedures of administrative action; help is obviously required.

The second point which must be understood by public management is that statistics does not have the role or aim of taking over or transforming the power structure or the management organization within the public administration. This is in my view a very positive transition; if what I have stated is true, we have gone from a situation of indifference, lack of interest to one of conflict, contrasts and different references between public management and statistics. This is a formidable task, one that I hope statistics will be able to fulfil.

3) Manpower and resources become increasingly topical. We will achieve nothing if we do not change personnel training procedures, if we do not increase statistical skills within the public administration, if we do not succeed in transmitting and delivering the message that one needs to know statistics in order to become a real manager.

Until recently it was thought that the new decisive instrument required by public managers was information technology; I have always tried to

take account of the various positions in this debate and have never raised objections as it was not my role to do so.

Today, in my new role as Chairman of the newly created Authority for Informations in the public administration, I would like to say that I do not consider this to be the main aim and the fundamental instrument which we must supply to public management. What decisive instead is the statistical instrument, i.e. the capacity to understand the figures, and to provide a reference framework for the analysis and the transfer of information.

This coincides with what I concluded earlier about the role of statistics, the role of management systems, the relations between politics and public management. I hope therefore that efforts will be made in this direction. In so saying I do not mean that we should create new "corporations" or a new chaste of high priests of data, nor that we should tolerate small corporate plots. I mean exactly the opposite: statistics should be made available to and used by everybody.

This is and should be the reality of SISTAN. The rest is mere appearance.

Linked to this idea is the theme of organisation. I believe that statistics can also be of help in linking the organisation of the public administration with the incoming data flows from the various bodies. However this is a very delicate point which I do not wish to examine in detail upon this occasion.

I told you that I would be critical in the final part of my contribution, and critical I must be.

SISTAN started with a really interesting institutional design inherent in the bill. It was well-designed and structured; but it was a bill without resources: it was one of these zero-cost bills. I had to accepted this. I was aware and in some ways also proud of this; the first signal we gave out was one of rationalising existing resources, rather than asking for new ones.

But now we have come to the crucial point. I think that the role to be played by statistics within the public administration must be reconsidered: human and information technology resources must be established and quantified, also in terms of financial resources. I realise that everyone will say "At last the President has understood! Statistics need money".

The exact opposite is the case. Before receiving a single lira, statistics must show and must be capable of showing what are the benefits to be obtained from the lira which has been invested. This is the example which illustrates what I have just said. Statistics must play a role similar to any more or less important function about which one can say "I need so and so many billions. Then something is bound to happen because the idea is a good one and the function is important and socially useful." That would be far too easy. Not to say impossible in the tough world of the 1990's. I would say that this marks the real turning point between old and new statistics: the acknowledgement and recognition of the role of statistics in public administration. This is a flaw I see every day; I see it particularly in public information technology.

Everybody comes to me saying "I've got a wonderful idea and I need billions..." Fine, but for what purpose? The idea might be good but what will happen next? Within the field of information technology there is the partial excuse that professionality may be lacking; but within the field of statistics this excuse does not exist, there is an authority and it is called the National Institute of Statistics.

Istat has been invested with this important role and function by the Law Decree No. 322, the one which provided for the delegation of powers to top public officials, and there is no way to avoid this new task: support the decision making process but providing tools for the analysis of costs, and results and the evolution of projects.

I wish to conclude with this criticism of the current state of play: this point of view presents a major challenge, drawing your attention to the theme of the interaction between Statistics and Information Technology, one of the main points suggested to me by the Moser Report.

I hope that Prof. Zuliani and his collegues at Istat will have a similar Commission at their disposal helping them to balance and master the new strategic options emerging in this field; it does not necessarily have to be an international commission, although I hope that it is. But I am convinced that ten years in the field of statistics is a long period, and it is as well to have a long-term vision.

This is a strategic moment for SISTAN; my final reference to the role of statistics is to explain that SISTAN means that the system should be unified, even if composed of many different realities. You all know that statistics cannot differ from the Country or the Institutions that conceived and created it; I hope that statistics could clearly indicate how to create links between the institutions, operators and different areas of the country. This requires clearness of ideas and models, clearness in measuring and methods, quality of information and comparison of the results.

This is the advice that a statistician gives to whoever asks him about the use of statistics. And finally, I would like to think that this advice would be applied, also as far as the new structures that are taking shape in this Country in the course of the last decade of the century.

THE ROLE OF THE "COMMISSIONE PER LA GARANZIA DELL'INFORMAZIONE STATISTICA"

Bernardo Colombo

I would like to offer my personal thanks to Prof. Rey for all he has done for our country and for the science of statistics. It is my hope that Istat will manage to get through as much work and achievements during the next President's term of office.

I told Sir Claus that I would surprise him by quoting a judgment he made some years ago. It goes back to 1976, and can be found in the records of The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society for that year, volume A-1976. He said: "British politicians of all parties have a great respect for the sanctity of statistical information". Now I am unaware of similar 'religious-ethical' feelings of Italian political parties towards Statistics; on the contrary the analyses carried out in policy debates, especially when evaluating election results, are quite worrying. More than criticism and the discredit of statistical information on the part of politicians, administrators and the man in the street, however, I fear lack of interest, indifference and ignorance.

Looking back at what was said in the past, I came across the comment made by Cesare Correnti in 1876: "Politicians, civil servants, community leaders, if you want to govern well, raise your eyes and look around you".

Going back further in time, Melchiorre Gioia declared that the statisticians of Nations show up the shortcomings of the Governments under which they work. Quoting Cesare Correnti again: "Statistics is the art and practice of observing social phenomena, of educating the clinical eye of the Statesman; the right diagnosis is half the battle to finding the cure". In that period, a Government decree, the Cordova Decree in 1861, set up on Advisory Board in 1861, which recommended that the Government should found the Statistical Service, to all intents and purposes independent, so as not to form a simple administrative department but rather a technical office, guided by science alone and aimed at "seeking the truth". The essential features for the soundness of the statistical system were to be: independence, neutrality, professionalism. The present " Commissione per la Garanzia dell'Informazione Statistica " has a similar tradition; the foundations for the creation of the Istat structure were laid by the declarations expressed in April 1922, just before the march on

Rome, which started the Fascist period, by the then Council for Statistics ('Consiglio Superiore di Statistica'). These fundamental principles were gradually implemented (though not fully) in later years, in particular with the 1926 law and then the 1929 law on the establishment of Istat. This Council had Benigni as Chairman, Einaudi, Pantaleoni, Mortara and Gini as members. Brains have certainly not been lacking in the history of Italian Statistics and Economics.

The present Commission was created through Law 400/1988, following on from art. 12 of the D.L. 322. The Commission is a 'watchdog' authority, but its power does not in practice involve the formal control and possible invalidation of data through typical administrative models, pre-determined by regulations used to visa the release of official statistics. Its powers are limited to keeping an informal, external watch on statistical activities, either in parallel with or following the completion of said activities. Its main task is to control the statistical activity performed by the various statistical offices in relation to declared aims. The Commission is empowered to refer its findings to the President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister). In its watchdog capacity, it has the tasks of guaranteeing the impartiality and completeness of statistical information, compliance with the norms governing the safeguarding of confidentiality, the quality of statistical and information technology techniques regarding the collection gathering, storage and dissemination of data, the conformity of gathered data to the directives issued by international organizations and the European Community.

The Commission also undertakes periodical reviews: it must pass judgment on the National Statistical Programme, and compile an Annual Report to be included with in the Report on Istat activity, drawn up by Istat and presented to Parliament. It also has powers deriving from initiatives undertaken by Sistan organizations; for example, it has been called upon to pass judgments on resolutions passed by the "Comitato di Indirizzo e Coordinamento dell'Informazione Statistica" (COMSTAT), the Governing Board of SISTAN, and by others; it has, for instance, passed judgment on that legislative oddity pertaining to the inclusion of a certain item in the price index. It also acts on its own initiative, dealing not so much with matters in its own field, as with problems that overlap areas of common competence.

It has had logistical difficulties, and it is still true to say that it was born and lives without burdening the taxpayer. And yet through the skill of the President Rey, whose term of office has now come to an end, it has managed to grow in strength, acquiring admirable offices and a very robust health! It has operated, through cognitive hearings, on censuses, the safeguarding of confidentiality, the statistical activity of Communes, business registers, and other hearings are planned for the future. It has set up working parties to look into and provide assessments and proposals on procedures for keeping personal information confidential, on price index construction, on public investments in the national accounting and national budget sphere.

I remember that I attended an enjoyable debate between the Istat President, the then vice Director General of the Bank of Italy and the State

Accountant and Controller General, who were discussing the public deficit. From consideration of the various approaches adopted for the same objective in different countries, it emerged that Community regulations were needed in this sphere.

Now, to help with the study of the state of, and prospects for, social and environmental statistics in Italy and of operations and progress made by the Statistical Offices of local councils, a study of organisations similar to our own in other countries is being carried out by study groups, under the guidance of a coordinator and helped by the contributions of external experts.

Despite the logistical difficulties mentioned previously, a Secretariat has slowly been built up, preparing a flow of information, initially from Istat to the Commission and now, generally, from Sistan offices to the Commission, for example through files on data included in the National Statistical Programme, with a collection of data stored in such a way as to be able to use information automatically. The Secretariat also evaluates the structure and the formal quality of publications. Some Istat publications have been evaluated on an experimental basis, and assessments will be extended to outside the Istat sphere and to forms of data dissemination other than the printing of books.

Prof. Rey stated: "Statistical information is a public service". The Commission has the task of evaluating the adequacy of the product in relation to the multiple needs mentioned in Prof. Rey's address, and the way this product is best served; it is a matter of quality in a broad sense, for a variety of uses, enriched by a store of metadata that allows more people to make a better use of the service. The aim is to improve the perception of user expectations and the quality of the service performed. The public administration is an enormous mine of information, so far relatively untapped, of help to the man in the street, to politicians and civil servants in managing and controlling democratic processes. I believe that the important thing is not the production of data but its analysis; the ability to teach Administrations how to understand and use data. This may be a future task for the Commission among the many it has on its plate: that of controlling the use made of statistical information in the programming, implementation and evaluation of Government action.

THE MOSER REPORT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 1980's

Paolo Garonna

Introduction

To attempt to describe the role played by the Moser report in the development of official Italian statistics, I shall need to pursue two paths: first, I will briefly consider the specific suggestions and recommendations the report made, then outline progress, achievements and the difficulties encountered in their implementation, but also discuss what has become outdated, what was missing. Second, I intend to set the report in the context of the early eighties in relation to the concerns, hopes and aims that characterised that intense phase of economic and social transformation.

The transformation of Istat following on from the Moser Report

To give an overview of ten years of intense transformation for Istat, it would be necessary to refer to analyses and studies that are not yet available. I will thus concentrate on four main aspects that deal with as many processes of fundamental transformation affecting the set-up and operations of official statistics in Italy.

The four points are:

1) the transformation of Istat into a Research Institute;
2) the question of management efficiency;
3) the key problem of human resources;
4) the Institute's activity on the international front.

For this work, I have drawn on the written reports prepared for the Seminar on the Moser Report by A. Cortese, S. Lucarelli, F. Marozza and L. Picozzi. The wide-ranging and detailed presentation undertaken by Cortese on demographic, social and environmental statistics in the 1980s was published in Istat "Quaderni di Ricerca" under the title: "Il quadro evolutivo delle statistiche demografiche, sociali e ambientali negli anni '80", 1993. I am grateful to all of them for their contribution.

1 – Istat becomes a Research Institute

The first point concerns Istat's reserved activities in the research field, and the transformation of Istat from an ordinary Public Administration Department to a Research Institute. This change has gone a long way to righting some of the contradictions and problems that had been highlighted in the Moser Report, and has improved relations with Universities, Research Institutes and Centres of excellence in statistical studies, in other words with those bodies that work at the frontier of statistical thought. This has also helped to raise the level of autonomy and reputation of the Institute and the prestige and status of official statistics. The change also laid the foundations for an improvement in the qualifications of Istat personnel and a corresponding improvement in staff salaries.

I would like to draw your attention to the change in the production mix and activities of Istat (Table 1). One of the key sentences Sir Claus Moser was fond of using was: "collect less and use more". If we look at the data on activity carried out, we can see that we have gone from a situation in which activities were almost exclusively of a data gathering type to a situation in 1993 in which data collection takes up only half of the Institute's time, the other half being taken up by project studies, data processing and analysis, data up-dating, filing, ordinary and extraordinary maintenance of surveys.

A figure directly relating to a recommendation contained in the Moser Report concerns sample surveys. The ratio between sample surveys and the total number of surveys went up from 9% in 1992 to around 17% in 1993. From this point of view too, Istat has made an effort to satisfy the Moser Report recommendation, improving data gathering processes by using sampling techniques in statistical surveys.

An interesting indication is provided by the information on the production of microdata (Table 3). If we compare 1982 and 1992 we may see to what extent Istat assimilated and interpreted Sir Claus Moser's basic message, namely to collect less and use more. Looking at microdata, we see that in practice Istat has not only used more but also collected more. The change in the production mix and the move towards research has therefore not led to a drop in production capacity. This is an important point to reflect upon when considering the possible risks involved in decentralizing production activity. Thus Istat has not reduced its production capacity even though it is pursuing a policy of statistical decentralization. In order to fulfil its role of supervising the National System and guaranteeing the quality of decentralized statistical data, Istat must continue to be committed to data gathering and production activities.

Output in terms of publications (Table 2) shows a significant effort made to increase the number of the Institute's publications, as well as a commitment to satisfying user demand by raising the quality of these publications. An important result in this respect has been the publication of the Istat Annual Report, inaugurated in 1993. The Report on the state of the Country covers all fields of activity of the Institute and intuess and tests the Institute's ability to encapsulate and picture the complex situation of the country, its problems and transformations.

Table 1 – Activities of the Italian National Institute of Statistics

ACTIVITY	YEARS					
	1982	1986	1990	1991	1992	1993
	a) Absolute values					
Statistical Surveys	202	200	193	210	204	208
of which: sample surveys	*18*	*22*	*20*	*26*	*25*	*36*
Project studies	–	–	–	46	46	101
Data processing	–	40	70	86	99	109
Analysis and other work	–	12	33	29	21	39
Total	**202**	**252**	**296**	**371**	**370**	**457**
	b) Composition in percentage terms					
Statistical Surveys	100,0	79,4	65,2	56,6	55,1	45,5
of which: sample surveys	*8,9*	*11,0*	*10,4*	*12,4*	*12,3*	*17,3*
Project studies	–	–	–	12,4	12,4	12,1
Data processing	–	15,9	23,6	23,2	26,8	23,9
Analysis and other works	–	4,7	11,2	7,8	5,7	8,5
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Istat Programme of work and Budget, various years.

Table 2 – Products of the Italian National Institute of Statistics – Publications

AREAS	YEARS				
	1982	1986	1990	1991	1992
	a) Number				
General	5	28	29	30	32
Demographic	6	12	7	3	4
Social	38	10	16	36	13
Economic	37	110	43	55	43
Environmental	–	–	–	2	
Methodological	5	10	9	13	4
Total	**91**	**170**	**104**	**139**	**96**
Censuses	–	–	–	–	86
TOTAL	**91**	**170**	**104**	**139**	**182**
	b) Pages				
General	2.496	4.560	4.718	5.334	5.958
Demographic	1.366	2.328	2.000	480	1.228
Social	5.543	2.576	3.872	5.842	2.604
Economic	13.441	25.982	11.300	10.154	10.148
Environmental	–	–	–	652	–
Methodological	410	3.036	1.100	3.450	1.072
Total	**23.256**	**38.482**	**22.990**	**25.912**	**21.010**
Censuses	–	–	–	–	17.654
TOTAL	**23.256**	**38.482**	**22.990**	**25.912**	**38.664**

Source: Istat Programme of work and Budget, various years.

A final aspect to emphasise concerns the methods used to acquire input. The rationalization of data input was another important recommendation contained in the Moser Report. We are aware of the importance, in relation to the quality of data and the efficiency of production processes, of having input collected on computer-based media. As can be seen in Table 4, the percentage of input collected through information tecnology has risen from 10,9% to 35.1%.

We have made the most of opportunities offered for closer links with the market, including contracting out data recording, which is now handled

Table 3 – Products of the Italian National Institute of Statistics – Microdata

AREAS	YEARS				
	1982	1986	1990	1991	1992
	a) Absolute values				
Demographic	3.683	3.138	3.308	2.751	4.430
Social	7.173	6.779	8.657	9.030	9.483
Economic	17.683	21.266	24.011	25.180	23.864
Environmental	–	–	13	24	25
Total	**28.539**	**31.183**	**35.989**	**36.985**	**37.802**
	b) Composition in percentage terms				
Demographic	12,9	10,1	9,2	7,4	11,7
Social	25,1	21,7	24,1	24,4	25,1
Economic	62,0	68,2	67,7	68,1	63,1
Environmental	–	–	–	0,1	0,1
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**

Source: Istat Programme of work and Budget, various years.

Table 4 – Production processes at Istat – Input acquisition methods

AREAS	YEARS				
	1982	1986	1990	1991	1992
	a) Absolute values				
REGISTRATION WITHIN ISTAT:	20.145	21.615	15.178	15.033	16.020
– At the Central Processing unit	10.625	7.160	1.878	1.244	2.109
– At the survey units	8.547	12.961	11.759	12.093	12.544
– At the Regional Offices	973	1.494	1.541	1.508	1.217
– Through Optical scanner	–	–	–	188	150
CONTRACTING OUT:	5.292	5.396	7.680	8.022	8.495
USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	3.102	4.172	13.131	13.930	13.287
TOTAL	**28.539**	**31.183**	**35.989**	**36.985**	**37.802**
	b) Composition in percentage terms				
REGISTRATION WITHIN ISTAT:	70,6	69,3	42,2	40,6	42,4
– At the Central Processing unit	37,3	23,0	5,2	3,4	5,6
– At the survey units	29,9	41,5	32,7	32,7	33,2
– At the Regional Offices	3,4	4,8	4,3	4,0	3,2
– Through Optical scanner	–	–	–	0,5	0,4
CONTRACTING OUT:	18,5	17,3	21,3	21,7	22,5
USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	10,9	13,4	36,5	37,7	35,1
TOTAL	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**

Source: Istat Programme of work and Budget, various years.

to a considerable extent by outside services. Our internal procedure for the acquisition and recording of data has adopted a strategy of decentralization, passing from a centralized recording body (the Data Processing Centre) to a recording procedure performed either in the specific survey unit of the Institute or by outside services. This offers better guarantees for data quality control and the efficiency of the processes.

2 – Efficiency and effectiveness

An important aspect underscored by the Moser Report is management efficiency. Istat activity has been based on two main guidelines:

first, the rationalization and integration of the processes of planning, monitoring, management control, evaluation and accounting,

second, the development of analytical and economic accounting, based on costs and objectives, in addition to administrative accounting.

Experiments to rationalize production processes began as far back as the early 1980s. Here we recall the 'Business System Planning' Programme drawn up with the help of IBM in 1982.

The general framework of this control strategy has led to the creation of three important archives:

1) the work programme archive, from which we create a precise and detailed operative programme, divided into works to be carried out and with detailed data on time schedules, production methods and product quantities, so as to have timely signals on possible flaws in production processes;

2) the second important archive is that pertaining to workloads, containing detailed information on production processes in the technical area and, in part, in the administrative branch, from which we can obtain indicators on productivity and staff performance. It is thus possible for us to create the operational programmes for putting mobility processes into effect and for deciding on the recruitment of new staff;

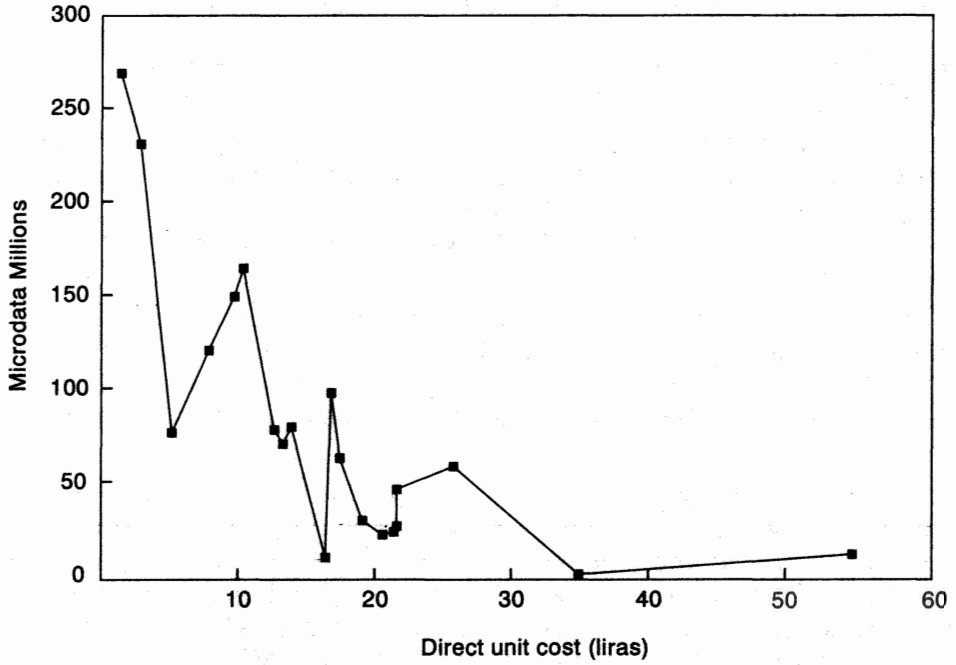
3) finally the archive on analytical accounting, divided into objectives and overall direct unit costs, from which it is possible to evaluate the results of overall performance.

Looking at the progressive expansion of the "National Statistical Programme", we can see that as the purpose and the field of application of the National Statistical System gradually became clearer, the contribution made by the decentralized parts of the system has risen, and the role played by Istat in production processes has decreased proportionately. On the other hand, Istat has become more responsible for the coordination and orientation of global statistical activity. Taking a look at the figures, 76% of the works envisaged in the 1992-94 programme were to be carried out by Istat; in the 1993-95 programme, this figure was down to 60%. The clear trend is therefore a contraction in Istat's share and a corresponding rise in the statistical activity of decentralized Statistical Offices that come to make up the System.

As to results, Figure 1 illustrates the ratio between direct unit costs and the quantity of microdata handled. The table shows up an inverse relation that is consistent with expectations. Economies of scale may be identified on the basis of this relation, which management control aims to maximise. But the graph shows another important aspect: that pertaining to variability, which appears to be still considerable. Internal variability depends to a large extent on the types of data acquisition methods.

It is therefore important to emphasise the validity of data acquisition via computer-based media. Another performance result concerns the analysis of workloads (Table 5), which aims at quantifying total available time, actual working time, actual time spent on standardized activities,

Figure 1 – The relationship between microdata and direct unit costs



Note: The squares represent organizational units at Istat. On the figure two outliers i.e. units with extremely high microdata number (1,8 millions) and direct unit cost (Lit. 82) have been excluded.

actual available time, productive time. From these extimates, it is possible to draw up average productivity indicators for individual Operative Units. On the whole, judging from the available estimates and comparing results, productivity at Istat appears relatively high, and places us in a position of relative advantage and superiority compared to other branches of the public administration.

Table 5 – Production processes at Istat – Analysis of Production Time Year 1992

– Total available time	890
– Actual working time	800
– Actual time spent on standardised activities	643
– Actual available time (85% of working time)	547
– "Productive" time	452

Estimate of Average productivity = 83%
– Degree of variability per operational unit = 30%

Source: Internal data of the Directorate General of Istat.

3 – Human Resources

Human resources policy is of fundamental importance for Istat to be able to fulfil its role properly.

The precise recommendation given by the Moser Report on this point was to raise the number of staff. The report said: "Istat personnel resources are few". We are increasingly aware of this fact, but we have not been able, or as Prof. Rey rightly pointed out, we did not want so far to ask the State Budget for an increase in personnel resources, since we believed that the first step was to rationalize available human resources.

The data on personnel (Table 6) bears witness to the important changes in staff structure that have occurred and are still in progress: a rise in the proportion of middle managers and administrator in relation to the overall employment structure, a rise in the percentage of female employees and of employees in possession of a university degree or other higher education qualification. On the negative side, it can be noted the rise in the average age of staff, in other words the accelerated ageing of the labour force, which constitutes a serious problem that will need to be dealt with by future policy.

If we examine budget items on the expenditure side (Table 7), we see that personnel costs take up an increasing share of overall expenditure. This data, bearing in mind the decrease in the number of employees, is a ready indicator of the improvement in per capita earnings. This is another aspect stressed by Moser, linked up with the importance of recognising the value of statistical activity and the expertise required by the operation of a Research Institute.

In the period from 1990 to 1993, the number of Istat employees went down. Despite this, three censuses were organized and carried out, and a National Statistical System Secretariat was set up. So although the role

Table 6 – The Employment Structure at Istat

STRUCTURE OF PERSONNEL EMPLOYED AT ISTAT	YEARS		
	1983	1988	1992
Administration, research offices and managers	11,4	12,5	12,9
Other (including unskilled)	88,6	87,5	87,1
TOTAL	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
BREAK-DOWN BY AGE GROUP			
up to 35	30,6	23,2	17,1
36-50	50,1	49,9	45,7
50-65	19,3	26,9	37,2
TOTAL	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
BREAK-DOWN BY TYPE OF ACTIVITY			
Data production	49,6	48,6	50,2
Data processing	13,3	12,2	10,0
Regional and Inter-regional offices	5,6	8,8	8,7
Administration and other support activities	31,5	30,4	31,1
ACCORDING TO ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION			
University degree	14,5	15,5	19,8
Other	85,5	84,5	80,2
BREAK-DOWN BY SEX			
Male	–	53,2	52,0
Female	–	46,8	48,0
TOTAL (ABSOLUTE VALUES)	**2.868**	**2.836**	**2.548**

Source: Istat Programme of work and Budget, various years.

Table 7 – The structure of balance account (millions of Italian liras/excluding Census expenditures,for which separate funding was available)

EXPENDITURES	1983	%	1988	%	1992	%
Personnel	62	67,4	114	69,5	152	73,7
Collection and printing	8	8,7	13,4	8,2	15	7,3
Computering and information technologies	7	7,6	13,6	8,3	10	4,9
General sxpenditures	15	16,3	23	14,0	29	14,1
Total (without census)	**92**	**100**	**164**	**100**	**206**	**100**

and the functions of the Institute have risen, there has not been a corresponding increase in human resources. The Institute has enacted a painstaking rationalization process on the human resource side and has taken steps to improve the productivity of available resources.

We have also undertaken important initiatives concerning staff mobility, training, communication, and involvement of personnel in deciding upon and carrying out the Institute's strategies.

4 – International activity

Mention should be made of the efforts made by Istat in international statistical cooperation, where a more active role has been played participating in the activities of international organizations. By making a contribution to the decision-making process at the international level, it is less likely that decisions from above come to be inflicted on us. It also means a better handling of the international activities of the whole National Statistical System, as well as a contribution towards the creation of a European Statistical System and the development of the global system.

This is an important time for statistical cooperation both in Europe and worldwide. Yet the Maastricht process has only marginally touched upon statistics and so-to-speak "in passing"; the legal basis for the development and management of a truly European statistical "system" is practically inexistent. Much of the criticism levelled at Italian statistics by the Moser Committee ten years ago could be applied to European statistics in the early nineties, including criticism of the controversial question of the centralization-decentralization of statistical organization.

There is indeed a real need for some sort of a "Moser Report" at the European level , a new forward-looking cultural initiative, to lay more solid foundations and create more ambitious plans for the construction of an integrated European statistical system and the consolidation of statistical cooperation with eastern European and developing countries. Italy can, and must, play an important role in this process, in consideration of its recent and past experience of transition to a market economy, i. e. the transition from corporate Fascism to democratic pluralism after the war and more recently the last programme of privatisation of the public sector; also relevant is its direct knowledge of underdevelopment questions, with a large part of Italian territory (the Mezzogiorno) still in this condition. Even the geographic position of Italy, in the centre of Europe, where north

meets south and east meets west, should enable our country to play a key role in international policies and organisations.

National accounting, Prices and Public Sector

The Moser Report gave specific recommendations concerning national accounting, prices and the public sector.

Two main questions arose from an examination of the state of National Economic Accounts:

first, the under-utilisation of administrative sources, especially the non-use of fiscal data;

second, the need for a sufficiently exhaustive and up-dated archive on productive units, so as to picture the structure of the reference universe for surveys on businesses. This aspect is particularly important for a country such as Italy, which has many small-sized firms that are not easy to keep track of.

Other recommendations referred to the need for greater coordination between current estimates and input-output tables, the development of quarterly accounts and their coordination with annual estimates, and the improvement of evaluations at constant prices. With regard to the accounts divided into institutional sectors, the Moser Report recommended that the household sector be analysed more carefully, with better planning and coordination. The need to create assets accounting and consequently to arrive at an estimate of national wealth was also stressed.

Between 1986 and 1987, modifications were made to gross domestic product figures and to the aggregates that go to make up GDP estimates. Changes were based on two important analytical improvements:

– the first concerns the estimate of the quantity of work going to make up the product, obtained from analysis of available sources, beginning with the Census. By referring to the concept of full-time labour units, it has been possible to make better estimates of the volume of work performed in the complex Italian labour market, where the phenomena of under-employment, irregular employment, second jobs and regular employment live side by side.

– the second improvement was the creation of the inter-sectorial input-output table in 1982, which made use of employment estimates and ad hoc surveys on cost structures; small-sized enterprises and specific phenomena, for which new data were made available.

This work has led to the creation of a framework capable of measuring, in as exhaustive a way as possible, productive activity, and consequently of reducing that portion of the economic system that escapes statistical observation.

As far as quarterly accounting estimates are concerned, there has been a complete overhaul of methodology and the information base used; a wide range of economic indicators have been adopted, and an effort has

been made to analyse the relationships between these reference indicators and national accounting annual data, so as to obtain more reliable estimates over the year. The largest shortcoming however continues to be the absence of specific surveys on the economic results of businesses during the course of the year.

In the case of constant price estimates, an effort has been made to use all available sources on prices, placing data in an input-output price framework so as to estimate value added at constant prices with the double deflation method. Research has also looked into indicators for the prices of services, especially for those services used by business, where basic information is most lacking.

As regards public sector statistics, the main initiatives undertaken have been:

i) a review of the definitions and classifications of institutional sectors, including those pertaining to public sector agents. The Bank of Italy has adopted these new definitions, so as to reinforce coherence between economic and financial accounts;

ii) in the "Sistan" framework, decentralized statistical offices have been created at Ministries, Regions, large Communes, etc. These offices have the task of developing the information systems of public administrations, making them usable for statistical purposes, controlling data quality, bringing concepts, classifications, definitions and methods up to national and international standards, and encouraging interconnections among various sources and access to users;

iii) finally, links with Finance Ministry data banks are being developed to permit access to fiscal data.

In the field of price statistics too, important innovations have been carried out on the basis of the Moser Report recommendations:

a) first, the data gathering process carried out by Communes has been improved through the computerization of data collection and transmission, the training of surveyors, technical assistance and data quality control;

b) the classifications have been harmonized and, with respect to national accounting, the methods for calculating estimates have also been improved;

c) the series of output price indexes has been completed; price indicators used in the various distribution phases (production, wholesale, retail) have been developed and analysed, together with disaggregated indicators of product variations, for example differences from city to city.

The Moser Report at the beginning of the 1980's

I would now like to pass on to make some considerations about the period in which the Moser Report first saw the light of day, in order to

highlight the historical and cultural significance of the process which led to the Report, and to compare it with the current situation, which presents significant points of analogy and relevance. As a matter of fact, the policy climate of the early 1980's resembled in certain aspects that of the present; but we need to identify and make sense of the specific features of that period.

In 1982 – early 1983 we were in the depths of a serious and prolonged economic recession. More importantly, there was fundamental uncertainty over the extent and the nature of the downturn. The perception was emerging that it was not simply a cyclical swing, but rather more a structural shift.

There were conflicting views over the extent to which monetary and fiscal policy, and structural policies, would have enabled the Italian economy to maintain its "difference" and peculiarity in relation to the rest of Europe. In fact, throughout the post-war period Italy was perceived and indeed it actually behaved, and considered itself, "different" vis-à-vis the rest of Europe. This difference was by-and-large accepted abroad, often tolerated and sometimes even encouraged by our partners. This led to develop both in Europe and at home a sense of somewhat detached indulgence vis-a-vis our peculiar or unique traits, fostering what I would call the culture of "Italian diversity". It suffices to refer to the black or grey economy, the informal networks and the extended family connections, the narrow family-based capitalistic structure of Italian industry, the fragmented industrial structure, the immobile and unstable political system, the politicized and corporatist industrial relations regime etc.

The early eighties marked the beginning of a prolonged period of cultural and economic transformation, whereby the Italian diversity came to be seen for what it is, i.e. as a European problem. But this is hindsight and expost wisdom: at the time what prevailed was uncertainty and concern.

The shaky beginnings of the European monetary system, accompanied by special treatments, by frequent and regular realignments, clearly signalled this uncertainty, itself reflected in policy ambivalence with respect to the exchange rates agreements.

At the same time, however, the first results of the 1981 census began to emerge, bringing to light the extent of the economic and social changes that had been taking place in the Italian society: the fall in fertility rates, the increase in female labour-force participation, the expansion and spread in levels of education, the reversal of previous trends in internal and international migration, the increase in marriage breakdown. The prodigious performance of small and medium enterprises, the extraordinary success of the so-called "industrial districts", seemed therefore to have less to do with "cultural diversity" than with standard economic indicators, such as labour market flexibility, investment in research and development, skilful use of new technologies, competitive market structures, including non-price competition, in particular "niches", aggressive aptitude in export markets.

The diverging patterns of the real economies in Europe was becoming remarkable, and worrying: growing differences in the rates of inflation and

public deficit, trade and other imbalances, contrasted sharply with increasing market interaction and interdependence.

It is not surprising therefore, in this climate, that the lack of pointers, the need for firmer foundations for policy choice, directed attention in Italy to the world of official statistics.

The setting up in this context of an international commission, the Moser Commission, whose terms of reference were to analyse the state of official statistics and suggest guidelines for its improvement and further development, gave a clear message and itself contained an element of implicit response to the underlying policy uncertainty.

Primarily it signalled the end, or the beginning of the end, of Italian cultural diversity: an international commission was considered as being perfectly capable of investigating Italian statistical problems. "Our" problems were felt substantially as no other than European problems, and solutions were therefore to be sought in the European framework and on the basis of European experience.

Secondly, because the challenge could not be framed and tackled within the ordinary management of official statistics, an external intervention was seen as necessary, not least as a catalyst.

Thirdly, a set of specific fields of enquiry was assigned to the Commission, namely national accounts, public sector statistics, price indicators and price statistics, so as to orient the reforming effort and steer it in the direction of clearly defined priorities. This bold initiative – which amounted to a cultural operation – raised expectations and presented issues which confirmed the underlying hypothesis. Not only were a set of specific pragmatic recommendations produced, but also the two main guidelines for progress and development were clearly defined: first, the need for the central statistical office to become a research institute and, second, the need to develop a system of official statistics embracing all public bodies involved in the production of official data in Italy. These two endeavours – the transformation of Istat into a fully fledged research institute and the construction of a national system of statistics in Italy – engaged the best energies of official statistics throughout the 1980s, leading at the end of the decade to the enactment of a new framework of legislation that sanctioned the achieved transformation.

It will be the task of historians to say whether the Moser Report was decisive in determining future trends or simply a contributory or ancillary factor. The historians will determine also the importance of the role played by individuals, such as Minister Andreatta who set up the commission, Sir Claus Moser himself, and President Rey who promoted the establishment of the group. However ten years on, the Moser Report can unquestionably be seen as part of an integrated set of patterns and events which shaped and marked the evolution of the 1980's. These events include the shift to non-accommodating monetary policy, the divorce of monetary policy from public deficit management, the binding nature of the exchange rate constraint, etc. All these developments, including the institutional reform of official statistics, created the conditions for the restructuring and the adjustment of the exposed sector of the Italian economy, particularly industry, for the recovery of profitability and competitiveness that accounted

for the long and sustained pace of economic growth characterizing the rest of the decade.

Official Statistics in the 1990's

When considering the present context of policy issues, one should keep in mind the differences from the early 80s, both at the level of official statistics and more broadly at the level of policy alignment and debate. In official statistics, the national system of Italian statistics (Sistan) has been established and is being implemented. This is an advanced legislative framework incorporating all the fundamental principles of impartiality, confidentiality, autonomy, relevance and reliability.

Sistan should be considered an important reference point for those countries, such the United Kingdom or the United States, where the debate on institutional reform in statistical arrangements has recently warmed up, and it is also a reference point for the construction of a European statistical system.

The new system of national accounts was approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission and in months and years to come national statistical institutes have to devote much effort to implementing the revisions. Italy anticipated this process in the mid 1980s by revising national accounts criteria, adopting some of the conventions that have now become part of the new official System of the National Accounts (SNA).

A broader view of the policy scenario of the 1990's shows that remarkable changes have taken place. Evidence enough are the two major revolutions that have characterized the turn of the decade, i.e. the "revolution" in central and eastern Europe (as Dahrendorf called it), the "silent revolution" taking place in developing countries (as Michel Camdessus, Director General of the International Monetary Found called it), or the Maastricht process of European integration. These events have created new opportunities for world peace, security and economic progress, and are opening up prospects for closer and more widespread statistical co-operation.

The Italian economy and society have greatly changed, achieving a high degree of complexity and maturity: industry has been by-and-large restructured; the labour shake-out from industry towards the services was conspicuous; wage bargaining and industrial relations have been "normalized"; reform of the public sector and public finance is in progress. Undoubtedly there is still much to be done before these far-reaching reforms come to completion and fruition. But one cannot doubt that the road to structural reform has been clearly charted and that we are firmly set on that road. The task that remains is to push ahead as steadily and vigorously as possible, in the knowledge that the process is long and painful.

Other concerns and dangers, however, loom on the horizon, and once again I believe that the policy world is turning towards statistics to find firmer foundations for enhanced policy dialogue and pointers to deal with a renewed threat of uncertainty and instability.

In the first place the development of Sistan opens up the broader and more complex question of how to address the booming market for statistical information. As the boundaries of the public sector change with the speeding-up of privatisation, this process becomes more and more relevant. An effective statistical information system cannot but embrace both official and public sector statistics and, at the same time, the wider network of private producers of statistical information.

Once this task is taken up, the role of official statistics itself becomes broader. Regulation to guarantee the quality of the statistical information produced by official agents, such as government agencies and quasi-governmental or non-governmental organizations, is not in fact sufficient. It is important to promote support and monitor the development of private statistics (those produced, for instance, by unions or employers confederations), so as to enhance quality standards and comparability, and exert moral suasion very widely across the whole spectrum of agents involved in the production of statistical information. In this context Istat has to act more as a moral authority than as a regulator, more as a provider of standards, methodology, technology and auditing capacity than as a monopolistic supplier of official data.

Progress in informatics makes it possible to design systems for the automatic collection and diffusion of statistical data, which, however, can only be effectively implemented if the corresponding problems of organization, compliance with confidentiality rules, user-friendliness, classification and standards are carefully addressed.

In brief, the sovereignty of citizens over the statistical system has to be buttressed, making statistics available not only to policy makers but also to private agents and individual households.

The challenges at the international level are even more far-reaching. The debate over improving co-ordination and cooperation derives an added urgency from the need to support countries in transition and the developing world. The demand for statistical co-operation is increasing at such a pace, and the drain on existing resources is such, that overlapping initiatives, dispersion of efforts and bureaucratic games in the many national and international agencies involved in the world of statistics are no longer tolerable.

Unfortunately the initiative in Europe appears to be lagging behind despite the active stance of Eurostat. Surprisingly, the issue of statistical unification in Europe has not been raised yet. Maastricht has ignored the world of statistics even though its process has wide-ranging implications for official statisticians. This is most disappointing since statistical integration would have seemed a necessary and obvious development of the single market. It should logically anticipate the scope and purpose of monetary and political union. Both these processes – monetary and political unification – are on the other hand suffering from the delays and uncertainties in statistical integration. We are coming to realize, for instance, that the monitoring of the Maastricht convergence criteria requires a great deal of statistical harmonization (on GNP, on price and inflation statistics, on public deficit and public debt indicators, etc.) and we are coming to realize that this delicate statistical work needs to be carried out

independently of other substantive policy aspects. Therefore the statistical work in support of the Maastricht process would greatly benefit from an institutional framework characterized by an independent central statistical authority in Europe.

The experience we gained over the last few years – and are continuing to gain – in the institutional reform of official statistics in Italy, could prove useful in enabling us to contribute to the strengthening of the statistical system at the European level, and beyond. There is a growing awareness of the importance of this issue in the international community of statisticians, and we are committed to playing a leading role in promoting an institutional set-up capable of bringing statistical wisdom to bear on international and global issues.

I would like to highlight one issue in particular, following up on a similar point I raised on various occasions at international meetings: that is the need to launch a bold and forward-looking initiative for the strengthening of co-operation in the field of social statistics.

After the collapse of Communism and the growing adherence of developing countries to the principles of market economy and pluralist democracy, the most fundamental barrier to progress and international dialogue appears to be the following one: the "social divide" that cuts across different countries and regions of the world, jeopardising the solidarity between and within strong and weak countries, between weak and weak, between strong and strong economies. The social divide undermines the very basis of cohesion and the collective identity of nations, social systems, and regions.

This will be the main area for policy initiative and – very likely – policy conflict at the turn of the century and the millennium. Many of the facets of this topic already figure prominently in the policy agenda at the national and international level: e.g. the United Nations "social summit" in 1995.

These policy developments require and demand that work on social statistics be intensified both at the national and international level. We lack data on societal change and social policy indicators of the appropriate quality and comparability to underpin the difficult and contentious policy choices and debate in this field.

On all these challenges and issues, the experience of Sir Claus Moser is of great value, as are his view of the issues he addresses in his contribution: those of educational reform and, more broadly, of human capital policies.

STATISTICS FOR THE CITIZENS: ISSUES FOR THE 1990's

Sir Claus Moser

I wish to thank President Zuliani, Prof. Garonna and President Rey for inviting me to come back for the meetings celebrating the tenth anniversary of the publication of the Report. I'm very honoured and touched, and the fact that you have asked me back and that you had these meetings is symbolic of the way in which our rapport was started, asked for and followed up, in spirit of total professional cooperation.

I want to go back for a few considerations to that time ten years ago, when I was asked to cooperate for the Report by Minister Andreatta, and I was very pleased to accept. It was an honour to be asked by the Italian government. I had many talks with Prof. Andreatta, he was a friend and, as Professor Garonna has said, the priorities were set by him; in other words: national accounts, prices and the public sector. We were then put together as a commission of four, and although I'm flattered that the Report was called the "Moser Report", because I was the Chairman, I wish to acknowledge that much of the most important work was done by my colleagues. Mr. Bjerve was perhaps at that time the most distinguished director of statistics in Europe and he had had an interesting career. He had been Director of statistics in Norway, he then became Finance Minister, but he came to the conclusion that to be Director of statistics was more important than Finance Minister, and he went back. He resigned then, and became Director of statistics. That was a good decision. He was a brilliant man, and he came from a very centralized office.

Professor Ruggles was one of the great men, and *is* one of the great men, in the field of national accounts. His handwriting can be detected in every sentence of the report, particularly in the national accounts and prices chapters.

He participated in the Commission together with Nancy Ruggles, his wife, sadly so long a widow. It was a wonderful group to work with.

Of course, nobody likes outsiders coming in to investigate. I have to confess that when we had our first meeting, just the four of us, we were very worried. Why should Professor Rey and his colleagues at Istat welcome us? It is true that Mr. Andreatta had told them that they should, but that would not have been enough. The fact that the Report was, I hope,

a useful one owes as much to the reception we had as to the authors. I would like therefore to pay the warmest possible tribute to Guido Rey, for the way he received us, opened the whole of Istat to us, and insisted that all his colleagues gave us every possible help, not to mention the fact that he has been the leading person in reforming the system during the last ten years.

Of course he was not alone, and my tribute to him is meant to cover others, the Director General of the time and all the Directors, top managers and employees of Istat, who have played such a part.

We had an informal meeting with Istat staff to discuss the implementation of the recommandations of the Report; I don't want to repeat much of that discussion, except to say that I believe that, in terms of the substance of the report, in the three fields we covered in detail, Istat has done virtually everything we recommended suitable for Italy. Since the Report was not meant to be a blueprint, Istat has adjusted the implementation to his own needs.

We, of course, had some wider criticism on the state of Italian Statistics, to do with the use of administrative data, to do with the analysis and research, which was rather lacking at the time, the use of sampling in the economic areas, the links, above all, with users whether in the Universities or in the rest of society. This analysis arose some critical remarks. However, as far as I can tell from all the reading I've done in recent months, and my conversations, not only in Italy but elsewhere, the system has been truly transformed, partly perhaps because of the Report, but for other reasons too. There is no doubt at all, and I speak really for other directors of statistics (because I'm no longer one), people with whom I have spoken, that Istat and Italian statistics now ranks as one of the leaders in European statistics, which one could not say ten years ago. It is widely respected and playing a very important part in international statistics, and I'd like to congratulate all those involved.

The wider reforms Italian Official Statistics has made are extremely constructive and interesting and I'm sure good. I refer to the new laws, enacted since the Commission was here, and the other organizational changes.

But I'm sure you didn't ask me here either to write a new report, God forbid, or to simply say how wonderful everything is; and I do have to express a personal worry about the risk of decentralization.

When we wrote our report, we as a group, though not totally unanimously, rather favoured the kind of system which in fact Italy has set up in the early 1990's: the National Statistical System, the relationship between Istat and Sistan. And this system is very similar, of course not accidentally, to the British system, which I had set up, with a central statistical office and ministries, each with statistical offices, and with the centre exerting influence over the whole system. I'm by the way not talking about regional statistics at all, I'm talking only about the central Government.

We all know the advantages of such a system, above all the fact that the statisticians in the individual ministries are close to policy makers, both to the civil servants and to politicians. That is the reason why I favoured

such a system and set it up in Britain. It's an enormous advantage. Also the fact that one can use the administrative sources and the individual ministries better is a remarkable advantage.

The advantages of decentralization are extremely wellknown, and so are the disadvantages. A centralized office, like Norway or Sweden, or Canada, has many advantages: it is on the whole easier to control quality; it is easier to control objectivity and independence from politicians; it is easier to link data; it is easier to train personnel and to use them differentially, as their careers develop. It is certainly much easier to direct the central office – like Canada – than it is to direct the decentralized system, like the United Kingdom and Italy. This is why in the later years of my directorship, I did centralize the collection of statistics, not totally but considerably: economic statistics in what we call the Business Statistics Office, social statistics in what we call the Office of Population, Census and Surveys.

And I, as the director, had a certain influence over those two big offices, as well as over the individual statistical offices in the individual ministries. It is half way to a centralized system.

We wrote in the Moser Report that the advantages of decentralization, of statisticians being close to policy, were so great that we argued in that direction; but we did also say that we would be worried if Italy went even further in the direction of decentralization, and I think that is what you are doing. The reason why I'm worried is not because it is not a good system, but that it can be, as I will explain, *vulnerable*, if you have problems with certain ministries or politicians.

What I mean is the following: I do not think that there is any great problem in the old worries about coordinating data, because with information technology, coordination of statistics between departments is not a great problem. To my mind the great problems with decentralization are two.

If one has a single statistical office, then the Director General and the President, are totally responsible for objectivity and integrity. If you have a decentralized system, the statisticians in the ministries are closer to their minister, to the politicians, which could create problems. I could give examples: for instance, in the times of the last ten years in the United Kingdom, there has been more interference of a political kind with the statisticians in the individual departments, than it could have happened if they had all been in a single office. But that is simply a danger. However, let me make another remark: in trying to protect statistics in individual ministries in my country I had more difficulties with civil servants than with politicians. Civil servants tend to be very loyal to their political masters. I am not saying that they were guilty of lack of integrity, but I had more problems of one kind or another with civil servants; which is why I would now be a little more tempted to having all statistics under a centralized office, if I were still there.

But the second problem is much more serious. It is priorities. In my early days, when the ministers and the civil servants were all on my side, I used to be able to say to the director of statistics in the Ministry of Education, for example: we need some better statistics on schools, you

should have a new service, etc. I had considerable control and influence over him; control in quotation marks, because I was new. But I had a powerful position, and I used to be able to persuade that ministry to give money, and some money came from the centre; and I used to be able to persuade that ministry to give staff, and some staff came from the centre.

In my later years, the decentralized system slightly fell apart because the ministers got more independent of me, and the statisticians in the ministries became more loyal to their ministries than to the centre.

So in my last few years, because ministers were getting much more interfering in public administration, I found it very difficult if not impossible to exert a real influence over priorities in the other departments. That was one reason why I actually left a little earlier than I need have done, the other reason being partly because the main harm was done to social statistics which was my main interest and concern, but the social departments took less notice of what we wanted.

So, my view is the following: if you can combine the present system that you created, with control of the budgets, which means manpower as well, of the other ministries' statistical departments, then you will have the best system in the world, because the President will be able to feel responsible for what happens to Health Statistics, Education Statistics, Employment Statistics etc. He will be able to say, with the Director General, where the priorities should be, and he would feel totally responsible to the general public, as to what happens in statistical priorities.

If you don't have a budgetary control, or a manpower control, which is most of the budget, then the danger is that if ministers become too powerful with civil servants in the other ministries, then a lot of the statistical work which is in other departments will not be under central control and responsability.

I have got two more things I want to talk about, concerning the statistical world generally. On Economic Statistics I would like to think that governments in Italy and the United Kingdom and most countries, are extremely well-served, and should be grateful for the excellence of the statistics on national accounts, prices, and all the rest of it, that they get from Istat in Italy, and the other departments. I honestly think that our economic masters, for economic management, have most that they could ask for.

The fact that economic policy is such a mess in most countries is not because the data are poor; it is because quite often the economists do not know what they are doing, and more often because politicians do not take any notice of the economists.

I honestly think that if one looks at the economic statistical framework that Istat and the other such offices provide, apart from two points, we can be fairly satisfied.

The two points are: a) service industries, which are everywhere a problem, because they are becoming much more important and much harder to measure: various working groups at the international level are discussing improvements in service trades statistics; b) the other one is foreign trade, because happily, boundaries are getting less important, so

the data are less easy to get. Those are the two main areas which occupy economic statisticians.

The same is not true of social statistics. It is an extraordinary fact that in every country that I visit in a statistical capacity, or whatever, in the industrialized world, social statistics have not gained the priority in the last ten or twelve years, that they should have.

It is a bit mysterious why this is. One reason is because whereas governments manage the economy, they don't manage society in the same single sense. There is not a phrase, say, for social management we need such and such statistics. It's much more divided. So there is not the same kind of pressure.

Secondly, it is much more difficult to get good social statistics and so for one reason or another in the United Kingdom, although we have some good statistics, such as you have at Istat, social statistics is still regarded as secondary.

When Mr. Major, our Prime Minister, was Finance Minister, he wrote a short article on the importance of statistics, and he only mentioned the importance of statistics for economic management. The new central statistical office in the United Kingdom, the new Agency,as it is called, has been given the task of improving statistics for economic management.

Yet, if you look around the United Kingdom, and Italy, and every other country we visit, the social problems concerns, are enormous, horrendous. My view is that if Istat can find the resources, Italy could set a wonderful example and would be among the leaders.

If there were a Moser Report starting today this would be the single most important chapter. Italian statisticians could be the leaders because of your interest in social concerns and problems, and in improving social statistics as a high priority.

I am not just meaning Istat should have some more publications. I am saying three things:

first of all, going back to the work on social indicators, which used to be very popular in the nineteen-seventies, and which has gone to sleep, except in education, where there is some very good work on educational indicators at OECD. If you could concentrate on developing a new system of social indicators, particularly linked social indicators, this would be a great service, and could immediately be copied throughout the European Community. Everybody talks about it, but every country gives it low priority;

secondly, I believe very strongly in the work of that great man, Sir Richard Stone, which he was working on just as he died, on social and demographic accounts, not as part of the national accounts, but as a different system. It will never be like the national accounts, but it was a very exciting start. That work has also gone to sleep. It was a way of stimulating the development of social statistics;

and thirdly, as Richard Stone used to stress, the best way of getting good social information is through longitudinal surveys, where you follow children through age-groups. We have them in the United Kingdom, but

there has never been the responsibility of government linked to censuses, which one ought to have. So that would be my top priority.

To conclude with some response to what all my colleagues have referred to in their papers, the question of priorities and outside users was raised. I so agreed with professor Rey in what he said about the change in balance of our users. When I was young, one only thought of the government as the user of official statistics. Then the world broadened out in the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties, except in the United Kingdom, where it went exactly the other way because Mrs. Thatcher thought that official statistics should be only for ministers, and she became Prime Minister just after I had left. That wasn't the reason she became Prime Minister, nor was it quite the reason why I left, but she cut the statistical service by fifty percent. She thought that the statistical service should only serve ministries and not the outside world. That has gradually now been changed again. Governments are huge users of data and of course the official statisticians have to serve them.

But now take Prof. Rey's comments even a stage further. I think I would now put the government quite low down in the list of statistical users. I would put the citizens first; I would put the public as the main user, by which I mean the ordinary citizens, academics, researchers, trade unions, businesses.

One should think that the business world in our countries, in Italy as well as in the United Kingdom, is becoming a totally knowledge-based part of society, the structure of industries, is totally changed,that by the year two thousand there will be virtually no unskilled workers, and no unskilled work, it will all be knowledge-based, which means information based.

The same is true of every other sector of society. The government being one sector of society, somehow we got into the habit, as official statisticians, of giving our priority and our sophistication to the needs of government, because we are surrounded by government, whereas the general public, which is becoming more numerate and more educated, needs our data just as much, and is beginning to demand more better-based public debates on public issues. I noted that in Statistics Canada, which is a single centralized Statistical Office, the priority now is the general public, and the government needs are almost a byproduct of statistical activities. I think that if I were still in charge, I would go in that direction. Let us consider, when we talk about the general public, its hunger for information now: in whatever we do, whether we are in the school or in the university, wherever we are, we want information, statistical information, other information. There aretelevision screens where we can press buttons and any number of things come up, with information.

I think the priority number one now, is the general public, in all its constituents. One of these little constituents would be called government, public administration, as of course public administration needs data; but I would much rather concentrate today on the less sophisticated way of feeding the public, the general public, with information.

We are guilty, as statisticians, (and I've been a statistician all my life,

so I share the guilt), of not having been good at educating the public in statistics and the use of statistics. Even people who are numerate, and understand figures, are frightened of statistics, make jokes about statistics. We have failed worldwide in our educational task. We are too tempted to produce great national accounts for the government, and then move on to say: "let's find some special publications that can be used by the public, where we add some comments". That is not the way. The way is to find out what the general public is worried about, whether crime, or productivity, or the trade unions, or the hospitals; and to start from there, to determine what sort of information we need to collect and supply.

That leads me to my final remark. I was asked to say something about education but I will confine myself to only a few comments.

Two years ago, I was President of the British Association for Science, and as President I had the privilege of making a public speech called "The need for a more informed society". My speech was in two parts: one part refers to what I have just said, i. e. we need to understand our society better, goverment needs to understand it better, and the man in the street needs to understand better what is going on. That is our job as statisticians, to bring that understanding about; and so that led me in the rest of the speech to talk about our educational system. I gave as an example of the appalling situation in our schools, that our children are expected to learn about the moon and about clouds, and about music and history, and languages, but they are not yet, all of them, expected to learn about the world of our social-economic environment, and I used that as an example for asking for a reform of our school system.

The result was that with support from the government and the opposition, we set up at the beginning of 1992 a National Commission on education, which is like a Royal Commission, of which I am a member. The Commission has been looking at the entire school system, very much from the point of view of how can we give our children a better chance in life. Our Report is to be published in November 1993. There is enormous interest in it around the world. It could be the most far-reaching investigation of an educational system. That has been I hope. To show how we feel about the citizens, versus the government, the book, which is a public report, costs only four pounds, it is a paperback. We hope it will be read by thousands of people, and we don't really mind too much whether it's read by officials or policy makers. What encouraged me to endeavour this, is that I do believe that we should in our efforts, think primarily about the general public; which means that we should think about our children, and what statistics could mean to them in due course. And perhaps take our educational role more seriously than in the past.

ANNEX 1

The Moser Report:
Aspects of Italian Official Statistics:
Review and Proposals.
Part 1

We have the honour to submit
to

On. Senatore Prof. Giovanni Spadolini
Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri

ASPECTS OF ITALIAN OFFICIAL STATISTICS: REVIEW AND PROPOSALS

Report of the Internation Statistical Commission
Appointed by
Ministro Segretario di Stato per il
Coordinamento delle Politiche Comunitarie

Sir Claus Moser
Mr. Petter Jakob Bjerv
Prof. Richard Ruggles
Dr. Nancy Ruggles

February 1982

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PART 1

Introduction

A. Role and Approach of the Commission

1. The Internationl Statistical Commission was established by a Decree of the Italian Government, reproduced in Annex A.

The membership was agreed as follows:

Sir Claus Moser (Chairman)	(Vice-Chairman, N.M. Rothschild and Sons Limited; Chairman, Economist Intelligence Unit. Formerly Head, UK Government Statistical Service).
Mr Petter Jakob Bjerve	(Formerly Director, Central Bureau of Statistics of Norway; and Minister of Finance).
Prof. Richard Ruggles	(Professor of Economics, Yale University).
Dr. Nancy Ruggles	(Senior Research Economist, Yale University; formerly Assistant Director, UN Statistical Office).

2. Our appointment was initiated by Professor Nino Andreatta, then Minister in the Prime Minister's office, and we benefitted from many discussions with him, before and since our appointment. His vision of the importance of statistics for government administration, policy and decision-making, led him to seek improvements in Italian official statistics. As a step towards this he decided to seek international guidance. We share Minister Andreatta's vision, and were pleased and honoured to accept appointment.

3. The purposes and focus to be adopted by the Commission were first developed in discussion between Minister Andreatta and Sir Claus Moser. Mr Henry Ergas, (an economist who has international experience in this field) played a significant part in this. Several points deserve emphasis.

4. First, one needs to be clear just what contribution a group of statisticians from outside Italy can make. We can bring to bear experience from other contexts, so as to enable the Italian government to take advantage of experience abroad. This raised a problem. In the chapters that follow, we often compare Italian practices with international standards. It may be said that *no* country matches up to these standards in all respects, and that, to be fair, one should compare Italy with what is actually achieved elsewhere. We, therefore, whenever possible, make such national comparisons. At the same time, since *agreed* international

standards represent the objective for all countries, we regard them as appropriate criteria for assessing the state of play in any single country, such as Italy.

5. Our views and recommendations, coming from outsiders, can be neutral and independent politically. They are unhampered by national or local traditions and pressures, and an outside view can often be more open-minded and constructive. Conversely, it is hard from the outside to gauge all the practical circumstances which might make even the most admirable foreign experience inapplicable.

6. This report is addressed to the Italian Government, and to those whose role it is to support, encourage and direct ISTAT and statistical developments generally; and whose concern is with broad strategy rather than fine detail.

7. We started work effectively in April 1981 and were asked to report by November 1981. In the event, the size of the task and difficulties of language and communications made this time-table impossible; and we are reporting early in 1982.

8. We were asked to confine ourselves to three broad subject-areas (the prime responsibility of authorship being shown in brackets):

A – The National Accounts (Professor Ruggles)

B – Public Sector Statistics (Mr Bjerve)

C – Price Indices and Price Statistics (Mrs Ruggles)

This choice was made by the Italian authorities and obviously made sense in terms of national priorities, both of policy and of statistical development.

9. For each subject, we were expected to consider the present state of play – regarding range, accuracy, timeliness and relevance of the statistics for policy purposes; and to recommend how these might be improved. We tried, in our recommendations, to consider steps for immediate action as well as medium and long-term improvements. Clearly some actions are required urgently, even if they cannot bear fruit in the short-term; others can only be introduced in the longer term. We were asked to concentrate on substance and methodology rather than on organisation.

10. These were our general guidelines. But in fact the three subject-areas needed rather different treatment. In particular, public sector statistics had to be tackled differently from the other two. Many agencies are involved – this indeed is one of the problems – and we have gone into more technical and administrative detail than with the other topics.

11. To make our task feasible, we needed two kinds of help. We needed the full co-operation of ISTAT, and this was given unstintingly. And we needed to have as counterparts Italian experts, with special expertise in the three subject areas. This was agreed and we were very fortunate in the help we received. We list the names in Annex B, but would like here to express some particular acknowledgements.

12. First, we wish to record our gratitude to *Minister Andreatta* for his stimulating help and encouragement from start to finish. We are also grateful to *Minister Scotti* and *Minister Abis* for their interest. *Professor Guido Rey*, the President of ISTAT, could not have been more encouraging and helpful throughout the work of the Commission, and he participated whole-heartedly in all we did. We also owe to him, and to *Mr L. Pinto*, the Director-General of ISTAT, the collaboration of ISTAT at all levels. We have already recorded our gratitude to *Mr H. Ergas.*

13. We were fortunate in the Italian counterparts chosen to work with us. Above all, we have to thank *Mr R. Filosa* of the Bank of Italy, who helped us not only with our study of national accounts, but was largely responsible for guiding the Commission through all its work and – no easy task – looking after all aspects of communication and administration. We are much indebted to him; as we are also to *Professor F. Cavazzuti* and *Professor A. Niccoli*, who worked with us on public sector statistics and on price statistics respectively. Without Dr Filosa and his colleagues we would not have been able to do our job.

14. The same goes, in a different sense, in regard to our sponsorship. We record our gratitude to the Bank of Italy; the Association of Italian Banks, the General Confederation of Industry; and ENI; and, above all, to *Dr M. Sarcinelli*, then Vice-General Manager of the Bank of Italy, for his commitment to the establishment of the Commission and for ensuring its support and financing.

Finally, we want to thank *Professor G. Fuá* for his support and for agreeing to have the Commission financed through ISTAO.

15. We held four formal sessions, three in Rome and one in London. The first in April 1981 enabled us to agree, with our Italian colleagues, how we should proceed and what we should cover, and to form initial impressions. The second, in June 1981, included sessions with key *users* of statistics, – covering government, industry, unions, and the key academic and research community – as well as talks within ISTAT and with other professional statisticians. We also had meetings with relevant Ministers. The third meeting was a session in London in August 1981, when we considered first drafts. Thereafter, we sought detailed comments from ISTAT and other Italian experts, and these we discussed in our third Rome meeting in October 1981 with our Italian counterparts, with Ministers and key users. In between, various of us paid visits to the IMF in Washington, OECD in Paris, EEC in Brussels and Luxembourg, and ECE in Geneva.

We had various informal meetings in between, and examined a large body of documentation and communications.

16. We would like to indicate the spirit in which we approached our task. All of us have spent much of our professional lives directing, or working in close collaboration with, official statistical services; and this has made us conscious both of the aims and the ideals such systems set themselves and of the practical hurdles in the way of their achievement. We regard government statisticians as having a key role to perform in helping government administration, policy-formation and decision-making, but we see this role less narrowly than is traditional in some countries, probably including Italy. On the one hand, we see it as having to serve the community at large (including business organisation, trade unions, researchers and the general public) and not just government. And on the other, we see it not just as a responsibility for issuing statistical digests and abstracts, but perhaps above all as covering analysis and interpretation.

We see the official statistician's role as crucial for good planning and decision-making in government, and elsewhere, e.g. in business, and as vital for public understanding and participation. It is throug this wider role of the government statistician that he makes his true contribution to the work of a government and to the life of a nation.

17. In accordance with this approach, the Commission gave particular emphasis to the views of users of statistics, both within governments and outside. To us, it was vital to approach our subjects through the eyes of users as much as of producers of statistics.

18. We have for many years worked with our Italian statistical colleagues in international gatherings, and welcomed the opportunity of working in a collaborative endeavour in the interest of Italian statistics.

19. Our conclusions on the three subject-areas are summarised in the next section, and discussed fully in Parts II-IV thereafter. We have inevitably become conscious of more general issues affecting the Italian statistical system; and have, therefore, at the end of Part I, expressed views on a few matters where we felt that comments rooted in international experience may help our Italian colleagues.

B. The Special Studies

20. In this section, we summarise the findings and recommendations of the three studies that follow. As we have already explained, the treatment of public sector statistics (Part III) differs somewhat from the other two.

National Accounts

21. The national accounts published by ISTAT constitute the major source of coordinated statistics about the Italian economy; they record its

past performance, and are widely used as the basis for economic policy, forecasting and long-term planning.

22. During the past decade, the Italian economy has undergone substantial change. In addition to the oil price shock of the early 1970's, there have been major cyclical changes in output and employment, high rates of inflation and substantial fluctuations in foreign trade. It has been the task of the national accounts to record such events accurately and in such a manner that the inter-relationships among the various parts of the economic system, in particular the role of the government, can be understood.

23. In evaluating the Italian national accounts two questions were addressed: (a) are the basic data and methods of estimation adequate for producing timely and reliable measurements of the Italian economy; and (b) do the Italian national accounts function as a framework both for the elaboration of statistical data and for analysing the behavior of the economy?

24. It is apparent that in developing the national accounts estimates, ISTAT has employed many different methods and sources, showing *considerable skill in developing estimates even where adequate basic data are unavailable*. The general approach has been the traditional national accountant's one of piecing together fragments of information, utilizing whatever basic sources seem most appropriate and supplementing them where possible to remedy known deficiencies.

25. The fragmentary nature of the data and the resulting complexity of the estimation process makes it doubly necessary to publish detailed sources and methods, which ISTAT has not so far found it possible to do. This lack of information has undermined users' confidence in the estimates, and in some degree impaired their usefulness. We gather that steps are now being taken to fill this gap.

26. In terms of data sources, the annual survey of value added of establishments employing more than 20 workers and the quarterly labour force survey that provides employment information are central to the estimation of GDP but, given the nature of the Italian economy, the absence of information about the output and employment of small business is a very serious gap. For many branches, furthermore, it has not been possible to make effective use of either the value added or employment data. Thus, the estimates for agriculture and construction are built up from physical output measures, and the sources underlying the construction estimates are quite adequate. Information for inventories is almost non-existent. Although considerable public sector information exists, it often becomes available only after considerable delay, is difficult to adjust to the accrual basis required for the national accounts, and does not cover all government units.

27. In comparison with the other major EEC countries, Italy lags considerably behind in the development of appropriate basic data for the national accounts. Much less use is made of computerised administrative records, the resources currently put into creating and updating registers are far below the general level of other EEC countries, and the use of sample surveys is very much below average. The quarterly accounts are another area of weakness.

28. One area in which Italy does not lag behind are the regional accounts. Whether this is in any case a matter of priority when there is so much else to do is a large issue and one which we have not gone into. It would need special investigation.

29. What is needed in Italy is a *quantum improvement in the basic* data used for estimating the national accounts. In many countries *a two-pronged approach* has been found to be the most cost-effective.

Comprehensive and detailed information is needed as a basic frame for the economy – thet is, to establish periodic *benchmarks*. In the interval between benchmarks, however, much less detailed information can be used. Benchmark data serve not only to establish correct levels at regular intervals, but also for the development of representative samples to be used between benchmarks, and for testing the validity and accuracy of alternative sources and methods of producing timely and cost-effective short term estimates.

30. Despite the inadequacies of the basic data, the national accounts of Italy do provide the best information available about the Italian economy. Inasmuch as ISTAT has since 1975 implemented the European System of Accounts, the Italian national accounts are both comprehensive and integrated. The estimates for the supply of goods produced and imported are fully consistent with the estimates of the domestic and export use of goods. The estimates for the national economy are systematically broken down into estimates for the sectors and subsectors. Even the regional data represent a consistent disaggregation of the total. Such an integrated and consistent set of estimates represents an important achievement.

31. Nevertheless, although the Italian accounts are comprehensive and consistent, *they do not in fact serve as a framework for the statistical system*. In part this is due to the fact that ESA was only recently put in place, and was overlaid on a highly diverse statistical system that had evolved over many years.

In a few cases, the more recently developed sample surveys have taken the national accounting framework into consideration. But for the most part, the national accounts are derived by a process of piecing together unified estimates from highly diverse basic data, rather than by harmonising the statistics themselves.

32. The Italian accounts also have drawbacks as an analytic framework. Historically, many statistical offices – including ISTAT – have

seen their role principally as one of producing and publishing data. To some degree this has ensured continuity of time series, but it has also often resulted in neglect of the users' point of view.

One of the central purposes of national accounts is the provision of an analytical framework for economic and social policy; and it is important that this be viewed in terms of the needs of users rather than purely as part of the statistical production process.

33. Some of the *users' problems result from the adoption of* ESA as the Italian system for internal use as well as international reporting. One of the major complaints of users of Italian statistics is that the ESA division of enterprises between the household sector and the corporate and quasi-corporate enterprise sector is both statistically and analytically unsatisfactory.

For production ESA recognizes the statistical difficulties, and does not insist on separate production accounts for corporate enterprises and households. But for the analysis of saving and investment and in the financial accounts, sectoring problems are not satisfactorily resolves. ESA, furthermore, calls for some insignificant distinctions – introducing a major sector for non-profit institutions – while omitting distinctions that are of major importance; it does not, for instance, contemplate any further subsectoring of households in terms of social and demographic groups, nor does it call for information on the size distribution of income.

34. If the national accounts are to serve as both a statistical and an analytic framework, they will need both modification and extension. They should provide for the systematic integration of sets of microdata with the sector and subsector accounts, in order to provide for further disaggregation. This requires defining sectors in such a way that administrative records and sample surveys will correspond and can be used as part of the microdata base. Thus the population censuses, the household consumption survey, the labour force survey, etc., should match the scope, classifications, and definitions of the household sector. Similarly, administrative records relating to enterprises and establishments should match the classifications and definitions of the enterprise sector. Input-output tables need to be expanded beyond the 44 branches provided by ESA, so that they will be more closely harmonised with the enterprise sector of the national accounts and will yield better information on commodity flow into the final uses of output.

The accounting system should be extended to cover financial flows, balance sheets and national wealth, with appropriate sectoring and subsectoring.

35. This does not mean the ESA should be abandoned. Rather it should be taken as a point of departure, but adapted to meet Italian needs. This will require extending the Italian national accounting system to provide a better framework both for the statistical system and for analytic users.

Recommendations

36. In light of the serious lack of comprehensive, reliable and timely data on which to base the national accounts estimates, major efforts to achieve improvements in a systematic and cost effective way are needed. Our specific recommendations are as follows:

(1) *Use of administrative data*

37. ISTAT should be given statutory authority to acquire for statistical purposes the computerised administrative data files of other government agencies. This will permit ISTAT to develop more cost-effective, reliable and comprehensive methods of estimation for major elements in the national accounts such as employment, wages and salaries and public sector receipts and outlays.

(2) *Establishment of registers*

38. Registers of business establishments and enterprises should be developed and maintained by ISTAT on a centralised basis. The 1981 Census can be used to create the basic register, and the computerised administrative files of various government agencies should be utilised to update the register in terms of births, deaths, address changes, and changes in size of individual establishments and enterprises.

(3) *Increased use of sampling*

39. A greater use should be made of sample surveys and sampling of administrative records for developing both annual and quarterly estimates of components of the national accounts and their detailed composition. In this connection business registers should be used to develop appropriate frames for sample surveys.

(4) *Development of benchmarks*

40. Benchmark data should be developed at periodic (approximately five year) intervals. These should consist of large microdata sets drawn from censuses, administrative files, or large sample surveys, or samples of administrative files. Such data should be used not only for periodic major statistical revisions of the accounts, but also in developing and testing the methodology used for obtaining timely and reliable estimates in the intervals between benchmarks.

In addition to the annual national estimates, methods need to be developed and tested for deriving quarterly estimates of national accounts, preliminary annual estimates and regional estimates.

(5) *Extension of the national accounting system*

41. The Italian national accounting system, which is based on ESA, should be extended both to serve as an adequate frame for the statistical

system as described in recommendations (1) to (4) and to provide users with the information needed for economic and social policy and analysis. In particular the national accounting system should:

(a) accommodate microdata sets for sectors and subsectors; although this is relevant for all parts of the economy, it is especially important for the household sector in order to develop information on the distribution of income and to provide the needed linkages between economic, social, and demographic data;

(b) incorporate more fully developed public sector accounts, including in particular information on the sources of public sector revenues and the breakdown of expenditures by function, and showing explicitly the derivation of the accounts from the available data sources and their relation to conventional government accounts;

(c) permit further development of input-output analysis and its linkage with the commodity flow analysis of the national accounts;

(d) extend the accounts to include financial flows, balance sheets and national wealth with appropriate sectoring.

(6) *Improvement of basic data*

42. Additional resources should be provided for the improvement of basic data in specific areas where it is generally recognised that these data are unsatisfactory. Emphasis should be placed upon utilizing appropriate computerized administrative files together with specially designed sample surveys. The major areas are:

(a) the activities of small business enterprises;
(b) the construction of industry;
(c) the estimation of "unrecorded" employment;
(d) the measurement of the change in inventories;
(e) parts of the public sector accounts;
(f) the quarterly accounts.

(7) *Provision of sources and methods*

43. Information on sources and methods needs to be supplied to two different groups of users. On the one hand, sufficiently detailed documentation is needed so that analysts in research organisations and other government agencies will be able to use the estimates correctly and to evaluate their validity and reliability. On the other hand, users' guides need to be prepared for the layman that can provide a general explanation and summary presentations of the national accounts and their basis.

(8) *Establishment of working groups*

44. Inter-agency working groups should be established for major areas of statistical concern, to develop better communication between the producers and users of statistical data. ISTAT should take the leadership

in establishing these groups. They should include representatives of (1) the relevant administrative bodies supplying data, and (2) policy and research groups using the data. We have proposals for new working groups in the different parts of this report. As to the national accounts:

(a) perhaps the most important would be a group concerned with the system as a whole, and integration between its parts;

(b) there should be groups (as explained in Part II below) on specific areas like production and employment; household sector accounts; public sector accounts; foreign trade and balance of payments; financial accounts and balance sheets; and regional accounts and data;

(c) there might also be a group on relevant methodology of time series, including seasons adjustment procedures.

(9) *Strengthening research and development*

45. ISTAT should recruit additional professional staff and devote more resources to research and development, in order to establish cost effective methods for obtaining reliable estimates and providing a more fully integrated statistical system which is capable of meeting the needs of economic and social policy. The research and development staff should be particularly concerned with the design of an appropriate national accounting system (recommendation (5)) and the development of the basic data which underlie it (recommendations (1) to (4) and (6)). They should serve as the co-ordinating group which interfaces with the working groups referred to in recommendation (8).

Public Sector Statistics

46. It was made clear to us by Minister Andreatta that in recent years, deficiencies had come to light in Italian public sector statistics, and that there had even been talk of setting up a separate statistics service for the public sector. Hence the importance of public sector statistics as a subject for our investigation.

47. The large size of the public sector in Italy, the complexity of governmental decision-making and the range of policy ambitions make public sector statistics vitally important. This is true in many senses. The activities of the public sector, and the various economic transactions, need to be measured, both at central and at local government levels. The use of money for different public purposes needs to be assessed, as does the source of different kinds of revenue. The needs for resources at various levels must be gauged. In these different ways, public sector statistics carry enormous implications for economic and social policy, and are at the heart of relations between different levels of government.

48. It is clear that, at this stage, public sector statistics are not satisfactory. There is much confusion and controversy as to the meaning

of different statistics. They must be improved both in quality and quantity if the needs of the users are to be satisfied. It must also be remembered that the public sector is a source, as well as a user of statistics: this is why we have occasionally strayed beyond public sector statistics as such.

49. The public sector in Italy is defined differently for different sets of statistics. The narrowest definition is that of the State, the most comprehensive that of the enlarged public sector; in-between is the general government concept used in the national accounts. Differences arise also in the coverage. For instance, lending and borrowing, which are items of the State budget, are not included in either the enlarged public sector accounts or the general government accounts. The basis of recording transactions also introduces differences among different kinds of government accounts. The State budget figures represent appropriations, the accounts of the enlarged sector record actual payments, and the general government accounts in the national accounts are on an accrual basis. As a consequence, considerable confusion exists among the users.

50. The bewilderment of users is also due to the fact that public sector statistics are compiled and presented by several agencies, without much co-operation and co-ordination between them. For instance, statistics on lower level governments bodies are elaborated and published both by ISTAT and the Treasury, and to some extent by the Ministry of The Interior, the Ministry of Budgets and the Bank of Italy. The overall responsibility, not so far carried, should be squarely with ISTAT. In the past, various committees have been established to resolve the problems arising from this decentralised production of statistics but so far without much success.

51. In recent years, the Italian government has made large investments in the computerisation of government budgets and accounts, the administration of taxation and the social security administration. These information systems potentially provide an improved basis for public sector and other statistics. However, so far they have been utilised mainly for budgeting and accounting and for taxation and social security decisions. Statistical utilisation is still in its infancy.

52. We have evaluated existing public sector statistics and considered how they can be improved, taking into account both the needs of users and the resources likely to be available. Our main conclusions are these:

(a) First and foremost, a clear view has to be taken – by ISTAT in co-operation with the Treasury and other major users – exactly what public sector statistics are needed by whom and from whom; and what this means in terms of building up a proper new framework and system of public sector statistics.

(b) An essential step towards these objectives is to utilise the three main administrative information systems. However, since these systems are designed mainly for storage and retrieval of information on

individual transactions, persons and enterprises, their statistical utilisation involves both technical and administrative problems, which must be overcome.

(c) Experience from other countries shows that a statistical agency must play a leading role in ensuring that the relevant information systems are fully utilised for statistical purposes. This very much applies to Italy, and unless ISTAT takes a strong lead, progress will be slow. Co-operation and co-ordination is needed on two fronts: (i) between ISTAT and the administrative bodies responsible for information systems and (ii) between ISTAT and the administrative bodies preparing public sector statistics; particularly those relating to lower level government bodies.

(d) And, perhaps above all, the Treasury needs a unit concerned with statistical analyses of all aspects of public sector finance; with trends over time and sectional analyses (north vs. South etc.). Such a unit, working inclose conjunction with ISTAT could not operate without – and would therefore press for an integrated system of public sector statistics such as we envisage.

(e) For analysis and planning, both government revenue and expenditure must be classified by economic type and expenditure by function. This is useful also for evaluating individual budget items and the welfare impact of the budget as a whole. The Treasury information system includes such classifications – in addition to the traditional classification by administrative units – but they must be improved and the coding must make cross classification by type and function possible.

(f) If the Government wants to improve public sector statistics substantially, the standardization of accounting systems aimed at by the Reform law of 1978 must be implemented. More detailed instructions should be issued to the accounting offices concerned, and a central authority must enforce the instructions.

(g) To facilitate the use of public accounts data and to eliminate confusion, ISTAT should clearly specify the coverage of sectors and of the stage of the budgeting and accounting process to which the data relate (a forthcoming UN Handbook gives guidance).

(h) Statistics on central government revenue and expenditure classified by type, and on expenditure classified by function, might be substantially improved if the Treasury could let ISTAT use the detailed accounting data available on machine-readable media. ISTAT should also prepare statistics on borrowing and lending as well as balance sheet statistics for this sector.

(i) For several groups of lower level government bodies, especially for municipalities, the USL's and local public enterprises, satisfactory statistics could be based on small random samples, yielding more timely, reliable and efficient data. Both ISTAT and the Treasury could obtain higher response rates if they reduced the amount of data collected by obtaining support from the Treasury, Ministry of the Interior

and the Ministry of Budgets, and by strengthening relationships with data suppliers. The Treasury and ISTAT need to collaborate closely.

(j) The collection of statistics on tax revenues by the Ministry of Finance and the Treasury should be improved, if necessary by law. Taxation data should also be used for statistical purposes, e.g. for income distribution data and statistics on value added.

(k) ISTAT should collaborate with the Ministry of Labour and INPS in utilising social security data for statistics on employment, unemployment, wages, etc.

Recommendations

53. For the subject of public sector statistics we have thought it right to give detailed recommendations, to suggest who should do what, and what the priorities might be. But, as regards these priorities, we must stress that actions classified as medium or longer-term are not necessarily less important than those called immediate. Indeed some (e.g. the first under the longer therm heading) are fundamental, though a long process.

(i) *Immediate action*

54. ISTAT should:

(a) Make decisions on the conceptual framework of public sector statistics and produce a manual specifying clearly the relations between the various-sets of statistics. This applies to coverage, sequence in the budgeting and accounting process, and delineation of end-period balances carried over.

(b) Take a lead to achieve an optimal statistical utilisation of the information systems on budgeting and accounting, taxation and social security. We think ISTAT should:
   (i) Have access to Treasury budget and accounts data on revenue and expenditures of the central government coded by economic type, and data on expenditure coded by function; this should preferably be in machine-readable form. ISTAT should prepare and publish annual and quarterly statistics on revenue classified by type, and on expenditure cross-classified by function and type. If feasible, ISTAT should also prepare government balance sheet statistics integrating them with the revenue and expenditure statistics.
   (ii) Initiate co-operation with the Ministry of Finance on statistical utilisation of its information system (SOGEI) for direct taxation and VAT with the purposes of elaborating statistics on assessed incomes and tax revenue by municipality.

(iii) Obtain from the Social Security information system (INPS) microdata on public and private employment, unemployment and incomes to explore the possibility of utilising them for elaborating statistics on the public sector.

(iv) Initiate establishment of steering committees and task forces in order to promote these actions; if necessary seeking statutory power.

(c) Design a sample for the annual collection of data on revenues of municipal governments broken down by type, and on the expenditure by these governments broker down by type and function. To improve timeliness and reduce costs both for ISTAT and the municipalities the number of municipalities in the sample should be considerably reduced.

(d) Apply sampling also for USL's, local public enterprises and possibly even for other groups of lower level government bodies, and simplify questionnaires used for annual statistics on all lower level government bodies.

(e) Seek support from the Treasury, Ministry of The Interior, and Ministry of Budget to improve data collection from lower level government bodies, and strengthen relationships with these bodies.

(f) Seek support from the Prime Minister in carrying out the improvement and co-ordination of public sector statistics, as here envisaged.

55. The Treasury should:

(a) Support ISTAT by granting access to the most detailed data collected by the Treasury information system (ITALSIEL).

(b) In co-operation with ISTAT evaluate the experience gained in collecting quarterly data on government revenue and expenditure from lower level government bodies.

(c) Establish a committee with representatives of Treasury, the Bank of Italy and above all ISTAT to define the objectives of annual and quarterly statistics on lower level government bodies; clarify problems, for example, the definition and classification of groups of bodies; and make recommendations on the division of work between Treasury and ISTAT on data collection and presentation of results. This is a key task.

(d) In co-operation with ISTAT, formulate instructions to the accounting offices of the central government and of lower level government bodies on their reporting to ITALSIEL on improved harmonisation of their budgets and accounts, and on the classification by type and functions.

56. The Ministry of Finance should: Provide statistics on assessed income for each municipality either in publications or by other means of dissemination.

57. The Bank of Italy should:

(a) Elaborate, in co-operation with the Treasury, monthly statistics on deposits held by municipal, provincial and regional governments in Post Office and banks.

(b) Take an active part in the steering committes and task forces to be estbalished for the statistical utilisation of ITALSIEL, SOGEI, and INPS.

(ii) *Medium term action*

58. ISTAT should:

(a) In co-operation with the Treasury (ITALSIEL) improve the classifications by type and function presently used by ITALSIEL, *inter alia*, with a more detailed industrial breakdown and facilitating cross-classifications.

(b) Assist the Treasury in preparing detailed instructions to accounting offices of central government and of lower level central government bodies on implementation of the harmonisation law.

(c) Define precisely the various groups of lower level government bodies for which statistics are collected, and for these groups gradually prepare balance sheet statistics integrated with the revenue and expenditure data.

(d) Discontinue the summary annual survey of municipal revenue and expenditure as soon as the quarterly survey of the Treasury becomes satisfactory.

(e) Approach one or two countries, for instance Denmark, that have been successful in elaborating statistics on value added based on VAT data and explore whether this can be done in Italy. If feasible, then prepare plans for processing of such statistics in co-operation with the Ministry of Finance (SOGEI).

(f) Prepare a publication providing an overview of the revenue from direct and indirect taxes (including social security contributions) similar to that discountinued in 1973. Initiate co-operation with INPS to utilise its information system for elaborating statistics on public and private employment as well as for other statistical purposes.

59. The Treasury should:

(a) Make strong efforts to ensure that the various information systems become fully operative.

(b) Use the same classifications by type and function as ISTAT when presenting statistics for State budget and State sector. In co-operation with Istat improve the classification systems of ITALSIEL so as to help statistical uses.

(c) Enforce a satisfactory implementation of the Reform law of 1978 and in co-operation with ISTAT prepare and issue detailed instructions to

accounting offices both in the central government and for lower level government bodies.

(d) Use sampling when collecting data for quarterly statistics on municipalities, USL's and local public enterprises and support ISTAT in its collection of annual statistics for lower level government bodies.

(e) Co-operate with the Ministry of Finance and ISTAT on co-ordinating and improving the monthly and annual statistics on tax revenue.

60. The Ministry of Finance should:

(a) Co-operate with ISTAT on a better statistical utilisation of the data collected for income tax and VAT purposes.

(b) Co-operate with Treasury and ISTAT on co-ordinating and improving its tax revenue statistics, and take advantage of ISTAT's statistical expertise for this purpose.

61. The Bank of Italy should:

Co-operate with ISTAT in planning and implementing the integration of the statistics on governments' current accounts with that of their balance sheets, *inter alia,* to enable cross-checking of the statistics.

(iii) *Longer term action*

62. ISTAT should:

(a) Gradually strengthen its function of co-ordinating work on, and integrating the content of public sector statistics, ensuring that a common framework of concepts, definitions, and classifications is adhered to and that the methods applied are standardised.
This is a continuing task which needs attention from the very beginning.

(b) In co-operation with the Treasury (ITALSIEL), Ministry of Finance (SOGEI) and Ministry of Labour (INPS) utilise relevant data collected for the information systems of these ministries for a gradual extension and improvement of public sector statistics and at the same time attempt to modify and extend these systems so as to satisfy statistical needs.

(c) Co-operate with the Ministry of Finance (SOGEI) and the Bank of Italy in utilising data on assessed incomes of persons for income distribution analyses; and explore possibilities of utilising data on assessed incomes of enterprises for elaborating statistics on business incomes.

(d) When feasible, and with due regard to confidentiality constraints, persuade the Ministry of Finance to grant access to data supplied by persons and enterprises on their tax returns, obtain data for each of them on taxes levied, assessed income and other characteristics as required for statistics on incomes and income distribution.

Price indexes and price statistics

63. Italian concern with the measurement of prices and with the analytic uses made of price statistics has centered around two topics: on the one hand, indexation (primarily of wages) and the price measures related to it, and on the other, the use of price data in connection with the measurement of the growth of output and of productivity.

64. The inflation rate in Italy is currently higher than that of most other industrial countries, and indexation is a highly controversial topic. In part, the controversy is due to the existence of a number of different price indexes all of which purport to measure the change in the prices of consumption goods, but in part it stems from more substantive concerns: that the system of indexation that is being used may itself exacerbate the rate of inflation, and that it may not result in an equitable sharing of the inflation burden.

65. To some extent, these two concerns inherently conflict with each other. For controlling the wage-price spiral, indexes are proposed that would exclude the impact of rising prices of oil and other imports, and of policy actions such as increased taxes and high interest rates. But if such omissions succeed in lowering the measured index, they will inevitably conflict with the aim of protecting workers from inflation losses. The choice between these objectives is essentially political, not technical, but a technical study can show whether given prices indexes do correctly measure what they are intended to measure.

66. Although it is on indexation that most discussion of price issues focuses, the use of price data in connection with the derivation of national accounts in constant prices may be of equal – or greater – policy importance. Despite high inflation and high unemployment, measured Italian productivity growth is among the highest in Europe – a feature which puzzles many commentators, especially outside Italy. Here again, policy aims may differ, and different aims may be incompatible. But a technical study can show the extent to which the measures used are valid and reliable.

67. The most visible problems of Italian price indexes, and those which attract the most public discussion, are (a) the existence of three different (and occasionally conflicting) indexes purporting to measure consumer prices, and (b) the obvious technical obsolescence of at least one of these, the indice sindacale used for wage indexation. But these are merely symptoms of a deeper problem. In many aspects of price data collection, index compilation, and preparation of data for analytic use, Italian practices still bear the marks of an earlier period, before computers, before national accounts, before probability sampling. Price collection and processing methods lag well behind most industrial countries, and surely are at the edge of the range found among the larger EEC countries.

68. A major problem, which is also shared by some other EEC countries, is the lack of coherence of the price statistics programme. There is no overall co-ordination or framework, and the relationships among the indexes and deflators have not been worked out – or, seemingly, even considered. The consequences are inconsistent results from indexes that should be related in logical ways, and an inability to trace changes in prices and quantities through the states of production owing to inconsistent coverage and classifications.

Duplication and overlap exists side by side with major gaps in the data.

69. A second major problem is lack of quality control, arising from the extreme decentralisation of the data collection and compilation process. Although the different consumer prices indexes yield fairly consistent results and seem quite robust, they are based on a data collection programme which does not provide an objective way to evaluate their quality. Ninety-three municipal statistical offices share the responsibility for almost all consumer price and expenditure data, and for the editing of the data and its compilation into city averages – all on their own budgets. They employ the data collectors (whose main job is often something else), choose the outlets and families to be sampled, and select items to be priced. They are responsible for ensuring comparability over time. ISTAT provides instruction manuals and forms, but it does not have the budget, staff, or authority to provide direct training or supervision of the local government staff involved or to establish the sample frames needed and oversee their application. Since ISTAT does not even receive the basic data, it cannot apply effective procedures – and it has little or no control over those applied by the municipal authorities.

70. A third set of problems is in part an outcome of the first two. It encompasses a number of technical issues of sample frames and sample selection, data definition, and index compilation, where Italian practices do not take advantage of modern developments in both theory and practice.

71. A final problem concerns the utilisation of price data. ISTAT's approach is still that of the pre-computer age, when data were collected with a single output in view. Little thought is given to possible uses beyond the construction of specified indexes, and no attempt has been made to construct a re-usable data base, even of the semi-aggregated data that ISTAT receives. Thus, possible opportunities for improving the efficiency and quality of the program through analysis of past data are not exploited, and analytic questions that could be investigated with such a data base remain unanswered.

72. These problems point to the need for fundamental changes in ISTAT's price statistics programme, if Italy is to reach the average EEC level. Changes are needed in the design of the programme (on both an overall and a detailed level), in the organisation of data collection and

compilation, and in the approach to utilisation of price data. Specific recommendations on these points are given below, and are spelled out in greater detail in Part IV. It is important to recognise, however, that the problems identified in the price statistics programme are also found in other areas of statistics. The need for a more complete statistical framework is identified as a problem in Part II, and lack of co-ordination and integration is responsible for much of the confusion surrounding public sector statistics noted in Part III. The issue of decentralisation and its impact on quality control pervades the whole statistical system, and is one of the most important issues now facing ISTAT. The use of obsolete technologies in some areas and inadequate emphasis on research and development also presents problems. As is clear from the remainder of our report, this is a general problem in Italian statistics. And finally, the need for re-usable data bases, and for the development of appropriate data base management techniques, is also emphasised in both Parts II and III.

Recommendations

(1) *The structure and content of price statistics*

73. In order to avoid the confusions arising from overlapping, uncoordinated, and inconsistent price indexes, price indexes and price statistics should be designed within a single integrated system, based upon the framework provided by the national accounts and following international guidelines insofar as possible. The first step in reforming the price statistics programme in Italy should be consideration of the design of the system as a whole.

74. The system of price indexes should include, as a minimum,

(a) a single national index of consumer prices and corresponding regional indexes, with component indexes at the most detailed level of the national accounts classification used (ESA or national), and at various intermediate levels of aggregation (1 and 2 digit levels of the classification);

(b) an index of producers' price for gross output of domestic producers, with component indexes for key commodities and for industries at the most detailed level of the standard industrial classification used (NACE, ISIC, or national) and at various intermediate levels of aggregation (1 and 2 digit levels of the classification);

(c) indexes for imports and exports, initially based upon unit values (these are available now) but moving toward true price indexes as quickly as feasible. For analytic usefulness, import and export prices should be classified both according to the standard industrial classification and the standard international trade classification.

enquiries into national statistical systems (e.g. in the USA, Canada, UK ([2])). There is striking likeness in the problems faced, and the solutions favoured, in different national contexts, and this work, in which members of this Commission have been involved, has influenced the present report.

The role of official statisticians

84. The most fundamental point concerns the very role of official statisticians. Attitudes have changed over the years and still vary from country to country; and the different viewpoints have often been summarised ([3]). One tradition views the prime task of the official statistician to be the compilation of «pure facts» to publications and bulletins, another sees his role as extending well into analysis and interpretation. Some regard the task as primarily to help and inform government, others conceive it to be a service for the nation as a whole.

85. The first point to stress is that a statistical system and those in charge of it should take a clear stance on how they see their role, should let this be known publicly and to their Ministerial masters, and use it as the yardstick for priorities and in fighting for resources. It should orient the approach of everyone working in the system.

86. We detected in ISTAT uncertainty and wavering in this respect, and some variation between a traditional and a more modern approach. For this reason we emphasise our views on the matter.

87. The responsibilities of official statisticians have grown out of all recognition. At one time, up to the last war, statisticians kept a low profile, little in the public eye. But this has changed in most advanced countries. Statistics have come to occupy a central role in decision-making in many walks of life, not least in government. They are accepted as integral to the *preparation* of decisions and policies, in government as well as in the private sector, and to the *evaluation* and monitoring of policies and changes. So the official statistician now has key and very public responsibilities. He is, rightly in our view, highly visible, and no longer an anonymous occupant of the back room.

88. In his responsibilities, he must serve government as the foremost customer, to provide the government of the day and its successors with timely, comprehensive, impartial, accurate and relevant data; to produce the data base on which forecasts and assessments of the future rest; and

(2) See US Government (1981) *Improving the Federal Statistical System: Issues and Options* (Report of the President's Reorganisation Project for the Federal Statistical System; Govt. of Canada (1980) *Statistics Canada: Methodology Review* (in which Sir Claus Moser and Prof. Ruggles were involved); UK Government (1981) *Government Statistical Services* (White Paper Cmd. 8236: Sir Claus Moser (1980) *Statistics and Public Policy*; Jnl. of the Statistical Society, Vol. 143, PE.I.

(3) United Nations (1977) *Statistical Services in Ten Years' Time* (Pergammon Press).

to contribute to their use by skilful analysis and interpretation. The official statistician is thus an essential part of government management and administration.

And this applies at all levels of government – from central to municipal; and we repeat, to monitoring the effects of policies as much as their preparation.

89. Ministers, top administrators and other public servants will vary in their enthusiasm for statistics. This is why it is part of the role of the central agency and of those running it to educate people in and around government towards a modern approach; not as seeing in statistics the key to good government (an exaggerated view we do not hold), but in appreciating how and when they *can* contribute to this end.

90. However, official statisticians have a wider role. In that they command a vast range of economic and social data, it is their duty to use this to the benefit of the entire community.

They must serve Parliament; regional and local authorities; the business community; trade unions; market researchers; research institutes and scholars; the media; the general public; and also international organisations. For all these they must make available, with guidance on sources and with analytical help, such data as are not covered by secrecy constraints. Different user groups in the community should be provided with the particular kinds of data they need, or be given access to them. This is a high priority duty. The entire community has the «right» to information collected and provided from public funds; and it is indeed part of a democratic society to circulate and use information collected by official agencies.

91. It is our impression, from talks with many users, that ISTAT could become more helpful in the special service provided to different user groups in the community.

92. In all this, the role of official statistics should in our view encompass analysis as well as description, and also statistical interpretation. Indeed these should be a central objective. To collect, compile and provide data is a relatively simple and limited task, but the concept of the official statistician as someone who simply provides "true facts" is out-dated. There are no such things as simple "true facts" and facts are in any case not an end-product in themselves. The skill of the statistician is in drawing inferences from uncertain data as much as in collecting them, and we would be shirking our responsibility if we left *this* task to others. To analyse and to interpret is a central role, in serving both government and outside users.

93. In our view, Italy has fallen behind in some of these respects. The coverage of what is collected and published is considerable but too much of it is under-used. The presentation and analysis is somewhat traditional.

Analysis and interpretation are not given sufficient priority in the work of ISTAT, the main output still being in the form of simple compilations of data.

These are not to be under-valued, but they are only part of the story. ISTAT could play a much stronger role in helping government and the rest of the community, if there were stronger links with the decision-making machine and if it concerned itself more with the analysis of data, which needs very high-level statistical staff. But analytical work is more interesting than collection and compilation and a change of emphasis would make it easier to recruit first-rate staff.

94. This calls for a change of attitude in two respects. It requires that Ministers, high civil servants and the public agencies acquire a modern and enlightened attitude to the value of statistics, and to the significance of the work of ISTAT for good government. And it requires that ISTAT changes its attitude from focusing on the production of statistics to one concentrating on their analysis and use.

95. At the same time, ISTAT should be more involved with suppliers of data, especially in the case of administrative information systems. Such systems should not be autonomously run and developed. They are too valuable as the basis for the provision of overall information, and ISTAT should have a strong voice in their structuring. This is reflected in many of our recommendations.

96. It remains to add that there is *no* conflict between statisticians analysing and interpreting data on the one hand, and keeping to the tenets of statistical integrity on the other. Italian statisticians have always properly guarded the needs for total integrity and policy neutrality in their work; and what we are proposing would not put this at risk.

User links

97. It follows that we attach great importance to contacts between ISTAT and different user groups. First and foremost is the question of relations between ISTAT and users *within* Government. This we return to below. As to external relations, these are normally (in other countries) formalised in:

(i) an overall «National Statistical Council»

(ii) Committees for specific subject areas; and

(iii) Committees for specific methodological topics.

98. A proposal for a National Statistical Council was made, and embodied in a draft Law, some time ago ([4]). This proposed a Council

(4) See also L. Pinto (1978) La riforma dell'Ordinamento Statistico nelle offica nazionale, in Città e Regione, IV, n. 4.

comprising some 70 members and as being purely advisory. We welcome this proposal, though we are not convinced that the model is necessarily right. We envisage the functions of such a body as giving advice on issues of public statistical policy (e.g. on form-filling, confidentiality); to stimulate better dissemination and use of statistics; and to provide a high level forum for the interchange of ideas between users of statistics and producers.

It would provide a means of increasing public interest in statistics and help to bolster confidence in their integrity. In addition – and this is where we view it as having a stronger function than envisaged – it would be the public forum for considering priorities and the future statistical programme. This programme would be put to the Council by ISTAT for discussion, amendment and approval.

Naturally this approval would not be the final stage of the process since decisions on budgets belong to Ministers and Parliament. But the voice of the National Statistical Council, in giving its stamp of approval on priorities, would become crucial. How crucial, and indeed how great the influence of the Council, would depend on its public standing. The Council needs to be weighty and distinguished and, for this reason, our preference would be for a small body, with not more than 12 to 15 members. These would be selected for their public standing in various fields and would *not* represent specific organisations. This wider representation would be achieved through the sub-Committees mentioned below. The Council itself would be compact and distinguished, and of unquestioned neutrality and influence. Its Chairman should be independent of ISTAT; its executive Director (and key member) the President of ISTAT. It should not be hard to create an effective instrument on the lines we suggest.

99. ISTAT has numerous advisory committees on subject areas and fields of methodology. However, our investigation left us with the impression that these committees are not regarded, outside ISTAT, as having much influence or importance. More than once we heard the view that the committees were formalities, and that advice was not taken seriously by ISTAT. This needs to be put right.

100. There may be too many committees, and they might perform a more useful role if grouped into a smaller number, and linked to the proposed National Statistical Council. Each should cover a broad subject or methodology area. Outside representation should be at top level and should always be in the majority on the committee. ISTAT should put all major relevant matters to these committees; discussions should be well prepared and documented; and the committees views invariably followed up. The secret is to have them serviced by the best staff available. Specific recommendations are made in Parts II, III and IV.

101. Another aspect of user relations is the dissemination of official statistics. ISTAT has a large publication programme along conventional lines, i.e. bulletins, abstracts and the like. It is worth considering following

the example of other countries in which publications, though by no means being abandoned, are being complemented increasingly by forms of dissemination of more direct use to different user groups. We refer to public use microdata samples; computer access to aggregated data, microfiches etc. User conferences are also a helpful device. High priority should be given to the production of guides to the data, including explanation of sources; guidance to accuracy and quality generally, and so forth. There should be stronger links with the Press, TV and Radio.

102. The whole dissemination programme should be reviewed with a view to streamlining the output of conventional publications, and making more headway with direct-access facilities for micro-data.

The emphasis should be to provide a service (whether through publications, tables, microfiche or direct access) ear-marked for different user groups. Classified by subject interest or indeed geographically.

103. Our many discussions left us with the impression that users of statistics are on the whole poorly acquainted with what statistics are available and how they can be used; are not in good touch with ISTAT; and are surprisingly sceptical. In these respects, Italy lags behind most advanced countries, and there is much room for advance.

Integration

104. The essence of a good statistical system lies in the co-ordination and integration of data. In the old days, the task of the statistical office was seen as producing facts on each of a wide range of subjects, with little attention to connections between them. The national accounts changed all that. One of the remarkable developments in government statistics has been the building up of inter-connected statistical systems, above all in the economic accounts, but also increasingly in social and demographic statistics.

105. It is no longer necessary to demonstrate why this is a major advance. Facts gain disproportionately in usefulness the more they are related to other facts, and it is the miracle of the economic accounts that they reflect in sophisticated detail the complexity of the real world. Moreover, social and economic analysis and policy itself has become increasingly concerned with inter-connections – whether between the «ripple effects» of any particular policy or the inter-related implications of different policies. Numerical models have been developed to enable such analysis to be made in a precise manner. The official statistician must concern himself with systems, linkages and models; and, generally, with all aspect of the integration of data.

106. This is not novel for Italian statisticians who have participated in these developments in international gatherings. Even so, ISTAT itself does not yet place the integration and co-ordination of statistics, linkages,

models and – generally – the building up of statistical systems, at the centre of its concerns. In most advanced statistical systems, all specific developments and priorities are now viewed as part of an overall system. This should also be the approach of ISTAT and priority should be given to perfecting the tools of integration: the accounts themselves, classifications, standards, registers etc.

107. The building of statistical systems, and the integration of data generally, must become more dominant in the work of ISTAT.

To this end, a unit should be established with the sole function of planning all aspects of co-ordination and integration – within ISTAT; between ISTAT and other central agencies; and between and within regions and other geographical groupings. This unit should come directly under the President of ISTAT. It would work closely with the National Accounts Division(s) where much of the implementation would lie; and with the special Committee concerned with system building we have proposed above.

108. The construction and maintenance of registers, especially of business establishments, is of outstanding importance. We welcome the remarks of Professor G. Rey in his important paper ([5]), both on this and on developments in system-building generally.

Methodology

109. One cannot emphasise sufficiently the importance of work on methodology within a statistical office. Data quality is crucial and requires strong methodological back-up. We have in mind not solely mathematical statistical work, but, e.g. all aspects of survey and sampling design; quality control, the methodology of sampling frames; data linkage techniques; the development of computer systems; index construction; data editing; estimation procedures; seasonal adjustments; model building, for economic, social and demographic applications; and so forth. We can't emphasise enough the role of methodological work in designing and building statistical systems.

110. ISTAT devotes a fair amount of attention to methodology. There is a separate department devoted to research and development but we cannot judge how effectively it works or how well its findings are integrated into the regular work of ISTAT.

Organisationally, we think there should be a methodology group, covering economic statistics and social statistics and responsible for ensuring co-ordination and overall data quality, and a strong voice for methodology in central priority setting.

(5) Guido M. Rey (1981) *Guidelines for a Statistics Policy for the 1980's* (translation of a paper given to the Meeting on Statistical information in Italy, Rome 17-19 June).

111. We think that insufficient use is made by ISTAT – as in many statistical offices – of theoretical statisticians and professional economists. The fault lies on both sides. Academic statisticians and economists are often too interested in theory and too little in official statistical practice; whilst officials of ISTAT, with exceptions, are insufficiently interested in contributions theoreticians can make to their work. There should be closer contact between ISTAT and the universities and research institutes. There might also perhaps be a few scholarships to attract young graduates to work with ISTAT; also leave arrangements to enable ISTAT personnel to have spells in universities and research institutes. There are many ways of bridging these gaps ([6]).

112. To summarise, we think that methodological work should be given higher emphasis throughout ISTAT. There should be methodological cells (perhaps just one or two people) in all the key divisions, plus one strong central group on the lines indicated. Outside academics and researchers, both statisticians and economists should be drawn upon as much as possible. Links with the universities should be strengthened.

113. One aspect of methodology needs special emphasis.

We were surprised to find how little use ISTAT makes of sampling. There are a few major sample surveys (e.g. annual statistics on revenue and expenditure of municipalities, labour force survey), but they are the exceptions. And in some cases, samples tend to be much larger than appears necessary. One almost feels oneself back 30 or 40 years ago when sampling was viewed with suspicion.

Time has moved on. Any well-developed statistical system now uses sampling for most purposes, and circumstances have to be very special to justify *anything other* than the sampling approach. All ISTAT surveys should be reviewed with a view to being put on a random sampling basis – their design needs high-level expertise, to be incorporated in the central methodology group.

Administrative Data

114. Statistics are derived both from special enquiries and as by-products from administrative data. Much progress has been made in advanced statistical systems in exploiting the latter for statistical purposes, and we believe that Italy has fallen behind. It is a vital area for progress.

115. In particular, computerised administrative data systems must be brought more into play to serve statistical purposes. They are comprehensive, detailed and a much more economic source of statistics than special surveys. They are also potentially, easy of access. We have extensive recommendations on this throughout the report.

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(6) Moser (op. cit.); American Statistical Association (1978): *Conference on Transfer of Methodology between Academic and Government Statisticians.*

116. It is obvious, and well-known to Italian statisticians, that administrative data are a potential gold mine for statistical information, which it might be impossible and certainly less efficient, to collect by special surveys. But, though this may be widely recognised, it is usually hard in practice – not only in Italy – to capitalise on administrative data for statistical by-products. Administrators often give low priority to the statistical uses of their data, or do not realise how best to exploit them in this way. Classifications, definitions and coverage may differ from those needed for statistical purposes; and there may be confidentiality inhibitions. It requires pressure on those in charge of the administrative systems to put them to good statistical use. This pressure ought to be applied by ISTAT, with the help of the National Statistical Council, and Ministers must be persuaded that this is the path towards efficiency. The aim should be to derive statistical information from individual administrative sources and also to utilise links between the different administrative sources (perhaps by common numbering systems) so that data can be connected. Modern computer methods make it easy to protect the confidentiality of individual data in this process.

117. We learned that a new Council for Information is being set up. This is to be welcomed. But we were concerned whether the statistical use of data was being given the necessary priority in its terms of reference and thinking. If our concern is justified, the Italian Government is missing a unique opportunity to improve its overall information system, including statistics. Italy should follow the example of other countries – e.g. the USA, Canada, Denmark, France, to mention only a few – and use this opportunity to improve statistics as well as administrative data. An ISTAT working group, under the President, should be set up urgently and show the way. ISTAT must have a strong influence on the new Council.

Planning and Priorities

118. Mechanisms for determining priorities in the statistical system have been much discussed in recent years ([7]), and we confine ourselves here to three comments.

119. In the first place, the system for setting priorities ought to encompass *all* statistical work, whether conducted by ISTAT or by other agencies, central or regional. This is a tough task for a central office distanced from many administrative and policy sources, but it must be done. The scheme of priorities must be all-embracing.

120. Secondly, as already mentioned, the priorities should, in the form of a plan for the development of statistics, be put to the National Statistical Council for comment and preliminary approval.

(7) See United Nations (1981): *op. cit.*

Consequently, we strongly support the proposal made by Professor Rey in his paper ([8]) that there should be a three-year statistical plan, updated annually on a rolling basis. This is the only way of placing priorities in a coherent context and of properly planning the statistical *system*.

121. The programme should be discussed and approved by the Board of ISTAT; and, once approved, it should then be the responsibility of the Board and relevant government departments to ensure that ISTAT is given the resources and support for implementing it.

Regional Statistics

122. For well-known reasons, special importance has come to be attached in recent years to the development of Italian regional statistics, both in the sense of data presented regionally and national data broken down regionally. These trends will increase if more policy and administrative responsibilities are shifted to the regions and the localities; and certainly the planning of the statistical future should be prepared for such trends.

123. We therefore fully support the emphasis given to regional (and other sub-national) statistics in Professor Rey's paper ([9]).

In particular we underline the importance of setting up all the regional offices, and making them fully effective. At the same time central coordination of their work, their priorities and their methodology, is vital and this must be the task of ISTAT. Indeed the regional offices should be *part of* ISTAT in terms of staffing and authority, so that there is no question of conflicting or un-coordinated activities. Changes may have to be made in existing laws.

124. It is possible to think of different roles for the regional and other local offices. They should first and foremost be user oriented, with the responsibility of promoting and marketing statistics in the regions, municipalities, etc. It is one of the key tasks of ISTAT and its counterparts to stimulate interest in, and create demand for, statistics sub-nationally.

Data quality and decentralisation

125. One pre-requisite for ensuring good data quality *nationally* as well as sub-nationally, is to insist that regional (and other sub-national) statistics are obtained as breakdowns of national figures, and not as independent regional exercises. The organisation of regional offices should be conceived accordingly. They should not have autonomous responsibility

(8) Rey: *op. cit.*
(9) See Rey, *op. cit.*

for producing or processing of statistics. Enumerators may be organised regionally, but they must operate according to central instructions. The processing of statistics and all aspects of quality control should be a central job for ISTAT. It is not sensible to handle these matters regionally. Once processed and analysed centrally, it is – given modern means of communication – an easy matter then to disseminate the data, as required, to regions, municipalities and the like.

126. Municipal, provincial and regional administrations have massive administrative sources under their command. It follows from what has already been said that we would like to see these exploited for statistical purposes; this has to be centrally planned, even if the work falls locally.

127. The preceding paragraphs relate to a vital aspect of the Italian statistical system, and one causing us most concern. It is true that regional (and other sub-national) needs for statistics should be satisfied, indeed stimulated. But this must be done as part of the national framework and with as little functional decentralisation as possible. The quality of *national* statistics is what is at issue. The present organisation of data collection, effectively controlled by the municipalities, virtually guarantees poor data qualities. True, some municipalities may do the job well, but many do not. ISTAT has no enforcement powers, no control over local procedures, no control over personnel and training, and only limited review capabilities. For most kinds of statistics, municipalities even process the basic data, forwarding to ISTAT only averages and aggregates. Editing is done locally, without even suggestions from ISTAT on how to do it.

128. It is vital that responsibility for all aspects of methodology, as well as for control of data collection, should be shifted to ISTAT. In these respects, the trend should be firmly towards *more* rather than less centralisation. Otherwise national as well as sub-national statistics will deteriorate rather than improve.

Organisation

129. Our views on the role of official statisticians; the need for closeness to users within and outside government; and the paramount importance of analytical and methodological work; the need for integration and overall planning of statistics; and the significance of regional statistics: all these lead us to proposals concerning the organisation of statistics.

130. It has to be recognised that some of these features conflict organisationally. Thus the need for efficiency, integration and coordination points to a totally centralised organisation; whereas the need for analysis and closeness to policy calls for statistical groups being placed in different ministries, so that they become closely aware of policy needs for data, are better able to decide on relevant priorities in tune with policy needs and better placed to feed the results into policy-making and administration.

131. The pros and cons of centralisation have been extensively discussed in recent years ([10]) and are well known to Italian statisticians.

So are the models now established in different countries. In terms of arrangements at the centre – not geographically – systems range from totally centralised offices (e.g. West Germany, Norway, Sweden and many others) to mixed systems (e.g. the UK) and largely decentralised systems (e.g. the USA). Most statistical services have gone through stages of reform since the war (Italy being one of the few to have kept broadly to its traditional organisation for the last 50 years) and the trend is firmly towards centralisation. This is because it is felt that the need for production efficiency, integration and co-ordination in the statistical service are seen as predominant and to outweigh the case for policy closeness achieved through decentralisation. We share this view, and believe that it should be the basis of Italian reforms.

132. We would view with great concern any proposals to decentralise statistical functions further. We recognise that the collection of statistics will continue to involve a number of other departments and agencies, and if this is because they are a by-product of administrative or regulatory activities it is inevitable and can be efficient. But, in such cases ISTAT must approve the definitions, classifications and timing so that the data are in the correct form for the statistical systems. And we urge that proposals for any further diffusion of collection responsibilities should be firmly resisted.

133. In short, we would like to see ISTAT play a *more* rather than a less centralised role in the processing and presentation of official statistics. The same applies to all stages of processing and production. We are indeed concerned that there is so much talk of diffusing some of the responsibility ISTAT now carries. We urge that this temptation be resisted.

134. Where there is need for radical change is in analysis of the statistics in different government departments, centrally and regionally, and in helping in their actual use and interpretation. There is no doubt that statisticians, economists and other social scientists actually placed in a department are in the best position to "promote" statistics in the sense of arousing the interest of Ministers, civil servants and others in the value of data and in explaining their use; they are also best placed to focus their analytical and research activities so as to assist policy and management.

135. So we strongly favour the setting up of groups for statistical analysis and interpretation in key ministries and regional offices. They should be responsible for analytical, research and promotional tasks, but

(10) See UN (1981) *op. cit*; and Moser (*op. cit.*).

not for the collection of statistic. These "cells" should be composed of economists, statisticians, and other social scientists, trained in statistics, with some staff out-posted from ISTAT. If possible they should have dual responsibility to their host-Ministry and to ISTAT.

136. In this way, we believe that the Italian statistical service could combine the advantages of centralisation (of production and dissemination) with the advantages of policy-closeness in analysis and use. But, to repeat, this can only bear its full advantage if the cells in the Ministries have substantial organisational links with ISTAT, and if their programme is, at least in part, integrated with that of ISTAT.

137. It is further desirable that the President of ISTAT should be a member of the key official policy committees in government, both on economic and social matters; and that he and, therefore, the entire statistical service should report to a top Minister, preferably the Prime Minister.

Staffing

138. We have the impression that ISTAT is under-staffed. It has also lost able people over the years and finds it difficult to recruit people of the highest calibre. This is a reflection of poor financial rewards in a very competitive profession, and of the relatively unattractive image of the work. The best statisticians, economists and other social scientists are more attracted by analysis, research and methodology than by the routine production process. The reforms we have proposed, particularly on methodology and analysis would make ISTAT more attractive, especially if statistical analysts have periods of outposting to policy departments.

139. We favour having more economists in ISTAT.

140. No organisation can be better than its staff, and we suggest to the Italian Government that it is in its own best interest to try to increase and up-grade the staffing of ISTAT by whatever means are at its disposal, not least through pay and working conditions.

Concluding remarks

141. We have the impression that the Italian Government does not give to its statistical organisation the interest and priority that is now customary in advanced countries and expected in international thinking. It is now accepted, and evident in statistical reforms in e.g. the UK, France, Canada, Germany, Denmark, etc., that official statistics are a vital part of government administration (centrally and sub-nationally), of policy-making and of the efficient and enlightened functioning of the country. We hope that this attitude will become more prominent in Italy; and that ISTAT will

be more widely esteemed as the statistical power-house and conscience of Italy. It would do much to encourage ISTAT and its work.

142. At the same time, ISTAT – a distinguished and respected statistical office – needs to widen its outlook, become more "extrovert" towards non-Government users and also serve the Government by a more policy-oriented and analytical outlook; and by "selling their products more effectively even to Ministries.

As we have said, it could "collect less and use more". It should shed traditional pre-occupations and become a more modern statistical office, with integrated statistical systems as its centre-piece – as in almost every EEC and other advanced ountry.

143. We have suggested some reforms, and others have been suggested over the years ([11]). The President, Professor Rey, in the paper referred to ([12]), has sketched his vision for the future. It deserves the full support of the Italian Government and nation.

(11) See Pinto, *op. cit.*
(12) See Rey, *op. cit.*

ANNEX 2

The Reform of the Statistical System: Legislative Decree No. 322 of 6 September 1989

GENERAL SERIES
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LAWS, DECREES AND ORDINANCES OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

LEGISLATIVE DECREE No. 322 of 6 September 1989

Provisions on the National Statistical System and the reorganization of the National Istitute of Statistics pursuant to Article 24 of Law No 400 of August 23, 1988

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Having regard to Articles 76 and 87 of the Constitution;

Having regard to Article 24 of Law No. 400 of 23 August 1988, giving the Government powers to enact provisions reforming public statistical agencies and bodies;

Having obtained the opinion of the relevant parliamentary committees as provided for by the aforementioned Article 24;

Having regard to the resolution of thy Council of Ministers adopted at the meeting of 30 August 1989;

On a proposal from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Regional Affairs and Institutional Problems, in agreement with the Ministers of the Intherior, of Agriculture and Forestry, of Health, of the Budget and Economic Planning and of the Treasury:

ENACTS
the following legislative decree:

Title I
NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Article 1
Subject

1. On the basis of the guiding principles and criteria referred to in Article 24 of Law No. 400 of 23 August 1988, this Decree regulates the activities carried on by public statistical bodies and agencies in respect of the collection, compilation, analysis, dissemination and storage of statistical data with a view to establishing a uniform policy, homogeneous organization and rationalized information flows at local and central levels, together with the organization and operation of the National Institute of Statistics.

2. Official statistical information is provided to the country and the international organizations through the National Statistical System.

Article 2
Organization of the National Statistical System

1. The National Statistical System comprises the following bodies:
a) the National Istitute of Statistics (ISTAT);
b) the central and branch statistical offices of government departments and of autonomous authorities and concerns, created pursuant to Article 3;
c) the statistical offices of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces;
e) the statistical offices of individual or associated municipalities and of local health-care units;
f) the statistical offices of the Chambers of commerce, industry, handicrafts and agriculture;
g) the statistical offices, however designated, of public authorities and agencies, as identified pursuant to Article 4;
h) any other public statistical agencies and bodies as identified by Decree of the Prime Minister.

Article 3
Statistical Offices

1. Statistical offices, placed under the functional control of ISTAT, shall be created in the central government departments and the autonomous agencies.
2. The statistical offices shall also be organized in compliance with the technical requirements specified by ISTAT. Each office shall be headed by a manager or an executive officer designated by the competent Minister on the opinion of the President of ISTAT.
3. The activities and functions of the statistical offices of the Provinces, Municipalities and Chambers of commerce, industry, handicrafts and agriculture shall be governed by Law No. 1823 of 16 November 1939 and the relevant implementing provisions and, where applicable, by this Decree. Within six months from the date this Decree takes effect, the local agencies – including local halth-care units that have not yet made such provision – shall set up statistical offices, which may also be in associate or co-operative form. Municipalities with over 100 000 inhabitants shall immediately set up statistical offices within the framework of the National Statistical System.
4. Save for the matters falling within the regional jurisdiction of the Government Commissioner, as provided for by Article 13 (1) (c) of Law No. 400 of 23 August 1988, the statistical offices created in the Prefectures shall also ensure the coordination, linking and interconnection at province level of all public sources, as identified by ISTAT, used for the collection and compilation of statistical data.
5. The statistical offices referred to in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 shall carry out their activities in accordance with the directives and guidelines issued by the Committee referred to in Article 17.

Article 4
Statistical Offices of public agencies and authorities

1. On the basis of directives from the Prime Minister, on the opinion of the supervising Minister and the President of ISTAT, statistical offices – to be entrusted with the tasks referred to in Article 6 – may be set up in public agencies and bodies.

2. The statistical offices referred to in paragraph 1 shall be set up with regard to the significance of the activities carried on by the agency or authority for national statistical information purposes and the requirements of completing the National Statistical System. In organizing such offices, due consideration shall be given to the degree of specialization and the processing capacity of the information system of these agencies and bodies.

3. The offices set up in accordance with paragraph 1 shall be included within the National Statistical System referred to in Article 2 and shall be subject where applicable to the provisions of this Decree.

4. The agencies carrying out their activities in the fields referred to in Article 1 of Legislative Decree of the provisional Head of State No. 691 of 17 July 1947 that do not fall within the National Statistical System shall nonetheless provide this System with the aggregate data compiled in connection with their statistical surveys. They shall ensure that their statistical activity conforms to the principles of this Decree and to those defined at Community level for the harmonization of national legislation on the prevention and suppression of the use of receipts from illegal activities.

5. The sanctions referred to in Article 11 shall apply also to infringements of the statistical provisions laid down on currency matters, without prejudice to the criminal proceedings provided for in the Unified Code of currency laws, approved by Decree of the President of the Republic No. 148 of 31 March 1988.

Article 5
Statistical Offices of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces

1. Each Region and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano shall be required to enact Laws to set up statistical offices.

2. The Council of Ministers shall adopt guidelines and coordinating measures in accordance with Article 2 (3) (d) of Law No. 400 of 23 August 1988 to ensure the uniform conduct of statistical activities falling within the responsibility of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces.

3. ISTAT shall exercise prowess of technical guidance and coordination in respect of the offices referred to in paragraph 1, in order to ensure that their methodologies are homogeneous.

Article 6
Duties of the Statistical Offices

1. In addition to the other tasks entrusted to them by the relevant provisions, the statistical offices of the National Statistical System shall:

a) promote and carry out the collection, compilation, dissemination and storage of the statistical data that concern the authority they belong to, within the context of the National Statistical Programme;

b) supply the National Statistical System with the information laid down in the national statistical programme with respect to the authority they belong to, including individual but not nominative data, for purposes of subsequent statistical processing;

c) cooperate with other authorities for the execution of the surveys provided for in the National Statistical Programme;

d) contribute to the promotion and computer development for statistical purposes of management files and collections of administrative data.

2. The offices shall interconnect and link the information systems of the authorities they belong to with the National Statistical System.

In order to establish the connection between the information system of the Tax Records Office and the National Statistical System, within six months from the date this decree takes effect, the Cabinet Office shall promote specific agreements between the Ministry of Finance and the National Institute of Statistics in order to ensure full respect for the anonymity of individual taxpayers and fiscal secrecy.

3. For the purposes of the duties referred to in paragraph 1, the statistical offices shall have access to all statistical data held by the authority they belong to, barring exceptions relating to categories of particularly confidential data as explicitly laid down by law. They may require the authority they belong to to provide such processing of data as is necessary for the statistical purposes provided for by the National Statistical Programme.

4. In order to meet special requirements related to particular statistical surveys provided for by the national statistical programme, the President of ISTAT, having consulted the Committee referred to in Article 17, may require the offices to communicate to the System categories of data in nominative form. The reservations provided for by law shall apply.

5. In special cases, the authorities or agencies concerned may identify further categories of data that may be subjected, even for limited periods of time, to confidentiality, notifying the Committee referred to in Article 17.

6. Statistical offices shall forward to the President of ISTAT and to the authority they belong to an annual report on their activities by 31 March of each year.

Article 7
Obligation to supply statistical data

1. Unless otherwise provided by the Committee referred to in Article 17, all public authorities, agencies and bodies shall be required to supply any data and information that is requested of them for the surveys provided for by the national statistical programme. The same obligation shall apply also to private individuals in respect of statistical surveys included in the programme which are explicitly specified by resolution of the Council of Ministers.

2. Subject to compliance with Article 9 (2), the obligation referred to in paragraph 1 shall not apply to personal data on racial origins, political and ideological opinions and religious convictions or to data relating to the state of health, sexual life and penal record of individual citizens or any other subject provided for by national laws or international agreements ratified in Italy.

3. Those who, being required to supply data and information in accordance with paragraph 1, fail to do so or knowingly provide inaccurate or incomplete information, shall be liable to administrative fines within the limits laid down in Article 11, imposed in accordance with the procedure specified therein.

Article 8

Official secrecy in respect of statistical office employees

1. The provisions on official secrecy in the current regulations governing the Civil Service shall apply to all employees of the statistical offices referred to in Articles 3, 4 and 5.

2. The provision of Article 15 of Decree of the President of the Republic No. 784 of 2 November 1976 shall continue to apply.

Article 9

Provisions for the protection of statistical confidentiality

1. Data collected by statistical offices in connection with statistical surveys included in the national statistical programme may only be used for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed other than in aggregate form such that no individual reference can be extracted.

2. The data referred to in paragraph 1 may not be communicated to any public or private outside party nor to any department of the public authorities other than in aggregate form on the basis of non-nominative individual data.

3. In exceptional circumstances, after consulting the Committee referred to in Article 17, the administrative body to which the statistical office is attached may seek authorization from the Prime Minister to extend statistical confidentiality even to aggregate data.

4. Except as provided in Article 8, the essential particulars identifying persons or property or the deeds recording relationships filed in public registers are not included among the data protected by statistical confidentiality.

Article 10

Access to statistical data

1. The data compiled in connection with the statistical surveys included in the national statistical programme are in the public domain and shall be made available for study or research purposes to those who request them in accordance with the provisions of this Decree, without prejudice to the prohibitions referred to in Article 9.

2. Sample collections of basic data, rendered anonymous and purged of any references linking them to individual natural or legal persons, may

also by provided, if available, further to a reasoned request and with the prior authorization of the President of ISTAT.

3. Liaison offices between the National Statistical System and the public shall be established at the headquarters of ISTAT in Rome, at the regional offices of ISTAT, and at the prefecture statistical offices. The other statistical offices referred to in Article 2 may set up liaison offices between the National Statistical System and the public, notifying ISTAT that they have done so.

4. Public bodies or agencies, legal persons, companies. associations and individual citizens shall be entitled to have access to the data referred to in paragraph 1 by submitting a request to the offices referred to in paragraph 3. If the data are not immediately available, they shall be delivered to the requesting parties with only such delay as is strictly necessary for their reproduction, on payment of the costs in the amount established by ISTAT.

5. The Committee referred to in Article 17 shall lay down the operating procedures of the offices in accordance with paragraph 3.

6. The data compiled by the National Statistical System shall be transmitted at regular intervals by ISTAT to the public authorities and agencies that belong to the National Statistical System.

7. The procedures for access by the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate of the Republic, and their bodies and individual members to data compiled by the National Statistical System are governed by parliamentary regulations.

Article 11
Administrative sanctions

1. The administrative fines referred to in Article 7 shall be levied in the following amounts:

a) from a minimum of four hundred thousand Lire to a maximum of four million Lire for infringements by natural persons;

b) from a minimum of one million Lire to a maximum of ten million Lire for infringements by agencies and companies.

2. For the purposes of imposing administrative fines, infringements shall be assessed by the statistical offices belonging to the National Statistical System referred to in Article 2 that have become aware of them.

3. The competent statistical office shall draw up a reasoned report on the infringement and, with prior notification of charges to the parties concerned in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 13 et seq. of Law No. 689 of 24 November 1981, shall transmit it to the Prefect of the Province, who shall start proceedings in accordance with Article 18 et seq. of the same Law. ISTAT shall be notified of the start of proceedings.

Article 12
Commission for the Protection of Statistical Information

1. With a view to guaranteeing the principle of the impartiality and comprehensiveness of statistical information, a Commission for the Protection of Statistical Information shall be established, attached to the Cabinet Office. In particular, this Commission shall watch over:

a) the impartiality and comprehensiveness of statistical information and compliance with the regulations governing the protection of the confidentiality of the information supplied to ISTAT and to other agencies of the National Statistical System;

b) the quality of the statistical methods and data-processing techniques used in the collection, storage and dissemination of data;

c) the compliance of the surveys with the directives of international and Community organizations.

2. In the exercise of the functions referred to in paragraph 1, the Commission may address observations and comments to the President of ISTAT, who, having consulted the Committee referred to in Article 17, shall supply the necessary explanations within thirty days of the communication. If such explanations are not deemed sufficient, the Commission shall report the matter to the Prime Minister. The Commission shall also give its opinion on the national statistical programme in accordance with Article 13.

3. The Commission shall comprise nine members, who shall be appointed by Decree of the President of the Republic, on a proposal from the Prime Minister, six months from the date this Decree takes effect. Six of these members shall be chosen among professors of statistics, economics and related subjects or directors of institutes of statistics or of statistical research that do not belong to the National Statistical System, and three shall be chosen among senior executives of public agencies and authorities who are of great renown and competence in the disciplines and fields connected with the production, dissemination and analysis of statistical information and are not in charge of offices belonging to the National Statistical System. Citizens of Community countries having the same qualifications may also be appointed.

4. The Chairman of the Commission shall be elected by the Commission members.

5. The members of the Commission shall remain in office for six years and may not be reappointed.

6. The commission shall meet at least twice a year and shall draw up an annual report which shall be attached to the report on the activities of ISTAT that is submitted to Parliament.

7. The President of ISTAT shall take part in the meetings.

8. The Secretariat-General of the Cabinet Office shall act as secretariat to the Commission and shall establish for this purpose a special office which may also make use of outside experts in accordance with Law No. 400 of 23 August 1988 .

9. The remuneration of Commission members within the meaning of Article 20 shall be charged to the ISTAT budget.

Article 13
National Statistical Programme

1. The statistical surveys of public interest entrusted to the National Statistical System and the related objectives shall be laid down in the national statistical programme.

2. The national statistical programme shall be drawn up for a three-year period and shall be kept up to date.

3. The national statistical programme shall be drafted by ISTAT, submitted for its opinion to the Commission for the Protection of Statistical Information referred to in Article 12 and approved by Decree of the President of the Republic on a proposal from the Prime Minister after consideration by the CIPE (Interministerial Economic Programming Committee).

4. Updating of the national statistical programmes shall be drafted and approved by the same procedure as that referred to in paragraph 3.

Title II
ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF ISTAT

Article 14
National Institute of Statistics

1. The Central Institute of Statistics established by Law No. 1162 of 9 July 1926 shall be named Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (ISTAT – National Institute of Statistics).

2. The National Institute of Statistics shall be a legal person under public law and shall have an autonomous structure in accordance with the provisions of this Decree.

3. The governing bodies of ISTAT shall be:

a) the President,

b) the Policy-making and Coordinating Committee for Statistical information,

c) the Governing Board,

d) the Board of Auditors.

4. ISTAT shall be under the supervision of the Prime Minister.

Article 15
Duties of ISTAT

1. ISTAT shall:

a) draft the national statistical programme;

b) carry out the censuses and other statistical surveys provided for by the national statistical programme which have been entrusted to the Institute;

c) direct and coordinate the statistical activities of the agencies and offices belonging to the National Statistical System referred to in Article 2;

d) give technical assistance to the agencies and offices belonging to the National Statistical System referred to in Article 2 and assess, on the basis of the criteria laid down by the Committee referred to in Article 17, the adequacy of the activities of the aforementioned agencies with regard to the national statistical programme;

e) draw up the classifications and basic methodologies for the classifying and recording of demographic, economic and social

phenomena; these classifications and methodologies shall by binding for the agencies and bodies belonging to the National Statistical System;

f) carry out studies and research on the results of the censuses and other surveys that have been conducted and on the statistics concerning phenomena of national interest that are included in the three-year programme;

g) publish and disseminate the data, analyses and studies produced by the Institute or by other offices of the National Statistical System that are not able to do so directly, and in particular to publish the Annuario statistico Italiano (Italian Statistical Yearbook) and the Bollettino mensile di statistica (Monthly Statistical Bulletin);

h) pursue the promotion and computer development for statistical purposes of management files and collections of administrative data;

i) carry out activities to provide vocational training and qualifications for those employed in the National Statistical System;

j) relate with international agencies and offices working in the statistical sector;

k) promote studies and research on statistics;

l) compile special statistics on behalf of agencies and private individuals, to be charged at market prices.

2. In the performance of its duties, ISTAT may make use of public and private bodies and companies, either through contracts and agreements or by taking a holding in those bodies and companies.

3. In implementing the national statistical programme, ISTAT shall make use of the statistical offices referred to in Article 2, as specified in Articles 3 and 4.

4. For the exercise of its functions ISTAT shall convene a National Statistics Conference at least every two years.

5. ISTAT shall make use of the legal representation and advice of the Government Law Officers.

Article 16
President

1. The President of the National Institute of Statistics, chosen among the professors of statistics, economics and related subjects, shall be appointed, in accordance with Law No. 400 of 23 August 1988, by Decree of the President of the Republic on a proposal from the Prime Minister following a resolution of the Council of Ministers. He shall be the legal representative of the Institute and shall administer it and ensure its proper operation.

2. In cases of urgent need, the President may adopt measures falling within the responsibility of the Committee referred to in Article 17, subject to ratification by the Committee itself, which shall be convened immediately and in any event within thirty days from the date of the adopted measure.

3. In the event of absence or impediment, thy President may delegate the legal representation and other functions inherent in his office to a member of the Governing Board.

4. For the exercise of particular responsibilities, the President may delegate the legal representation of the Institute to the Director-General,

to central directors or to heads of the departments and offices of the Institutes, within the limits and on the terms to be laid down in the organizational regulations referred to in Article 22.

5. The President shall hold office for four years and may be reappointed only once. He shall be entitled to an official allowance to be fixed by decree of the Prime Minister in agreement within the Minister of the Treasury.

Article 17

Policy-making and Coordinating Committee for Statistical Information

1. A Policy-making and Coordinating Committee for Statistical Information is hereby established for the exercise of ISTAT's steering functions vis-à-vis the statistical information offices set up in accordance with Article 3.

2. The Committee shall comprise:

a) the President of the Institute, who shall chair it;

b) 10 members representing the government departments, three of which shall be from the financial departments having the most complex statistical information systems, as specified by the Prime Minister after consulting the President of ISTAT;

c) a representative of the Regions, designated from among its members by the Standing Conference for relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces referred to in Article 12 of Law No. 400 of 23 August 1988;

d) a representative of the Unione Province d'Italia;

e) a representative of the Union-camere;

f) three representative of the Associazione Nazionale dei Comuni Italiani;

g) two representatives of public agencies among those which are equipped with the most complex information systems:

h) the Director-General of ISTAT;

i) two experts chosen among top-ranking professors of statistics, economics and related subjects.

3. On a proposal from the Chairman, the Committee may be joined by representatives of other government departments who are competent on specific subjects to be considered.

4. The members referred to in subparagraphs b), c), d), e), f) and g) of paragraph 2 shall be appointed by Decree of the Prime Minister on a proposal from the Minister or the representative of the bodies concerned; the members referred to in subparagraph i) shall be appointed by Decree of the Prime Minister on a proposal from the Minister of Universities and of Scientific and Technological Research.

5. The Committee's term of office shall be four years. Its members may be reappointed for not more than two further terms.

6. The Committee shall issue binding directives to the statistical offices established pursuant to Article 3 and guidelines to the other offices belonging to the National Statistical System referred to in Article 2. Directives shall be submitted for approval to the supervising authority, and

if the latter has not expressed any comments within thirty days from the date of the communications, such aproval shall be deemed to have been given. The Committee shall decide, on a proposal from the Chairman, on the national statistical programme.

7. The Committee shall meet, convened by the Chairman, whenever the latter or the authorities and bodies represented deem it necessary.

8. The Committee shall be established on the appointment of an absolute majority of its members.

Article 18
ISTAT Governing Board

1. The Governing Board of ISTAT shall plan, guide and monitor the activities of the Institute.

2. The Board shall comprise:

a) the President of the Institute, who shall chair the Board;

b) three members chosen from among its members by the Committee referred to in Article 17;

c) five members appointed by the Prime Ministers, two of whom shall be professors or directors of statistical research institutes;

d) the Chairman of the Commission for the Protection of Statistical Information referred to in Article 12.

3. The Director-General of the Institute shall take part in the meetings of the Board and act as its secretary.

4. The members of the Board shall be appointed by Decree of the Prime Minister. The members referred to in subparagraphs b) and c) of paragraph 2 shall hold office for four years; at the end of that period the individual members shall retire from office even if they were appointed during the four-year period.

5. The Board shall be established on the appointment of an absolute majority of its members.

Article 19
Board of Auditors

1. The Board of Auditors shall be appointed for a three-year term by Decree of the Prime Minister and shall comprise:

a) a judge of the Council of State, who shall act as chairman;

b) a senior official of the Cabinet Office;

c) a senior official of the Ministry of the Treasury.

2. Two alternate members shall by appointed by the same Decree.

3. The Board of Auditors shall check that the accounts are properly kept and that the final balance corresponds to the results of the book entries and accounting records. It shall check the results obtained against the objectives and examine the explanations supplied by the Institute with regard to any discrepancies. The Board members shall be invited to participate in the meetings of the Governing Board.

4. For the purposes of the annual report to Parliament on financial management, ISTAT shall transmit to the Court of Auditors the final account

and the accompanying documents within the time provided for by Article 24 (3).

Article 20
Remuneration of members of the collegiate bodies of ISTAT

1. The remuneration of the members of the bodies referred to in Articles 12, 17, 18 and 19 shall be fixed by Decree of the Prime Minister in agreement with the Minister of the Treasury.

Article 21
Directives and guidelines

1. The directives and guidelines of the Committee provided for by Article 17 (6) shall concern:

a) acts implementing the national statistical programme;

b) measures to carry out the aforementioned programme;

c) criteria for the reoganization and operation of the statistical offices of the government departments, including those governed by autonomous regulations, and of the agencies and offices belonging to the National Statistical System;

d) criteria and procedures for the exchange of data, as laid down in Article 6, between the statistical offices of agencies and authorities belonging to the National Statistical System, ensuring at all times compliance with the provisions referred to in Article 8.

Article 22
Duties of the Governing Board

1. The Chairman shall convene the Board and lay down the matters to be discussed.

2. It shall be the duty of the Board:

a) to decide by April 30 of each year on an annual plan that specifies the objectives, the forecast expenditure for the subsequent three-year period and the annual revenue forecasts, showing separately the amounts of the Institute's own funds and those to be charged to the State budget, with regular follow-up of the state of implementation; this document shall also include a separate yearly plan for the implementation of the national statistical programme referred to in Article 13;

b) to decide on the budget, the related amendments and the final account;

c) to decide on the organizational structure of the Institute, specifying central and branch offices and their structure and laying down their duties, staffing and resources, together with stuffing regulations and establishment plan;

d) to decide on the regulations governing the financial and economic management and the administration of assets, taking account of the specific nature and autonomy of ISTAT;

e) to decide on ISTAT holdings in the capital of agencies and companies, in accordance with Article 15 (2);

f) to appoint, on a proposal from the President, the Director-general and the central directors of the Institute.

3. The quorum for meetings of the Board shall be at least six members. For decisions to be valid, the majority of the members present must vote in favour. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.

4. Decisions on the matters referred to in subparagraphs a), b), c), d) and e) of paragraph 2 shall be approved by Decree of the Prime Minister, in agreement with the Ministers of the Treasury and of the Civil Service with regard to subparagraph c) and in agreement with the Minister of the Treasury with regard to subparagraphs d) and e).

Article 23
Financial Management

1. The financial management of ISTAT shall be based on a multiannual budget drawn up in relation to the activity programmes and the multiannual expenditure forecasts referred to in Article 22 (2) (a).

2. The financial management for each financial year shall be carried on on the basis of an annual budget adopted by the Governing board by 31 October of the preceding year and transmitted to the Cabinet Office within fifteen days from the date of the decision.

3. By the month of April, the Governing Board shall adopt the final account of the preceding year, which shall be transmitted to the Cabinet Office within fifteen days from the date of the decision. In addition to the reports of the President and of the Board of Auditors, a document on the asset management situation, the profit-and-loss account and the administrative situation shall be attached to this final account.

4. The classification system, the presentation of the budget and the accounts and the balance-sheet documents shall be governed by the regulations referred to in Article 22 (2) (d).

5. The budget report must also illustrate the economic management aspects, showing the state of implementation of the programme, the costs and the results obtained, together with any discrepancies.

Article 24
Report to Parliament

1. By 31 May each year the Prime Minister shall transmit to Parliament a report on the activities of ISTAT, on the collection, processing and dissemination of the statistical data of public authorities and on the state of implementation of the current national statistical programme.

2. The annual report referred to in Article 12 (6) shall be attached to this report.

Article 25
Repeal of previous regulations

1. Insofar as they are incompatible, Royal Decree Law No. 1285 of 27 May 1929, converted by Law No. 2238 of 21 December 1929, Law No. 1823 of 16 November 1939, Law No. 638 of 6 August 1966, Law No. 1025

of 19 December 1969 and all other regulations incompatible with this decree are hereby repealed.

Article 26
Transitional provisions

1. Withing three months from the date this Degree takes effect, the authorities and the agencies referred to in Article 3 and 3 shall submit to the Cabinet Office a report on the situation of the existing statistical offices and on the measures required to adjust them to the provisions of this decree. Within the following three months, the authorities and agencies shall reorganize or establish their statistical offices in accordance with the provisions of this Decree and on the basis of any directives from the Cabinet Office.

2. The structure provided for by this Decree shall become effective six months after the Decree enters into force.

3. The provisions laid down in this Decree involve no expenditure chargeable to the State budget.

This degree, bearing thy seal of the State, shall be entered in the official collection of laws and decrees of the Italian Republic. All persons shall be required to comply with and enforce it.

Done at Rome, 6 September 1989

COSSIGA
ANDREOTTI, Prime Minister
MACCANICO, Minister of Regional Affairs and Institutional Problems
GAVA, Minister of the Interior
MANNINO, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
DE LORENZO, Minister of Health
CIRINO POMICINO, Minister or the Budget and Economic Planning
CARLI, Minister of the Treasury

Seen, the Minister of Justice; VASSALLI

NOTES

N.B.: The text of the notes published below has been drawn up in accordance with Article 10 (3) of the Unified Code approved by Decree of the President of the Republic No. 1092 of 28 December 1985, with the sole purpose of allowing easier reading of the provisions referred to and without prejudice to the validity and effect of the legislative acts transcribed below.

Note to the preamble:

The text of Article 24 of Law No. 400/1988 laying down the activities of the Government and the structure of the Cabinet Office is as follows:

"Article 24 (Mandate for the reform of public statistical agencies).

1. Within one year from the data this law takes effect, the Government shall enact provisions having the force of ordinary law for the reform of the public statistical bodies and agencies, on the basis of the following guiding principles and criteria:

a) attainment of systematic liaison and interconnection between all public sources entrusted with collecting and compiling statistical data at central and local levels;

b) establishment of a statistical office in each central government department, including autonomous concerns, each office so established being under the functional control of ISTAT;

c) assignment to ISTAT of all the policy-making and coordination duties;

d) guaranteeing the principle of impartiality and exhaustiveness in the collection, compilation and dissemination of data;

e) guaranteeing the direct access of Parliament, the Regions, public agencies, State bodies, legal persons, associations and individual citizens to processed data within the limits explicitly provided for by the Law and in accordance with the fundamental rights of the individual;

f) Parliament being informed annually by the public authorities about the activities of ISTAT and the collection, processing and dissemination of statistical data;

g) guaranteeing the autonomy of ISTAT on matters of structures, organization and financial resources.

2. The mandated Decrees referred to in paragraph 1 shall be enacted after the opinion of the relevant standing committees of Parliament has been obtained. The Government shall enact such Decrees in any event if no opinion has been given within sixty days of its being requested."

Note to Article 1:

Refer to the above note to the preamble for the text of Article 24 of Law No. 400/1988 .

Notes to Article 3:

Law No. 1823/1939 is entitled: "Establishment of statistical offices to municipalities with one hundred thousand inhabitants or more."

The text of Article 13 (1) (c) of Law No. 400/1988 is as follows:

"1. The Government Commissioner, besides exercising the duties referred in in Article 127 of the Constitution and those specified by the Laws currently in force,

in compliance with the directives of the Prime Minister adopted on the basis of the guidelines of the Council of Ministers:

(omitted).

c) shall collect information that may be useful for the exercise of the functions of State and Regional bodies, acting as the means of implementing the obligation of mutual information in the relations with regional authorities; shall supply data and information for drawing up the "Annual Report on the State of Public Administrations"; shall act in conjunction with the Central Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), making use of its regional offices for the collection and exchange of data having statistical relevance."

Note to Article 4:

– The text of Article 1 of Legislative Decree No. 691/1947 (Establishing an Interministerial Committee for Credit and Saving) is as follows:

Article 1 – An "Interministerial Committee for Credit and Saving" shall be established, with responsibility for overall control on matters of supervising savings, the exercise of lending functions and currency.

The Committee shall comprise the Minister of the Treasury, who shall chair it, and the Ministers of Public Works, of Agriculture and Forestry, of Industry and Commerce, and of Foreign Trade (nowadays, the Committee also comprises the Ministers of the Budget and Economic Planning and of State Holdings – editor's note).

The provisions of Royal Decree-Law No. 375 of 12 Match 1936, converted into Law No. 141 of 7 March 1938, and its subsequent amendments shall apply as regards the responsibilities, powers and functions of the Interministerial Committe."

– The Unified Code of legislation on currency matters was adopted by Decree of the President of the Republic No. 148/1988.

Note to Article 5:

The text of Article 2 (3) (d) of Law No. 400/1988 is as follows:

"3. The matters to be submitted to the Council of Ministers for a decision are:

(omitted)

d) the guidelines and coordination measures regarding the administrative activity of the Regions and, in accordance with the statutory provisions, of the Regions governed by special statutes and of the autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano; the instruments falling within its responsibility as provided for by Article 127 of the Constitution and by the Statutes of the Regions and of the autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, except as otherwise provided by the special statutes of the Regions of Sicily and Valle d'Aosta".

Note to Article 8:

The text of Article 15 of Decree of the President of the Republic No. 784/1976 (Amendmends and additions to D.P.R. No. 605 of 29 September 1973, as subsequently amended, concerning provisions on the Tax Records Office and taxpayers' tax codes) is as follows:

"Article 15 (Official secrecy). – The data and information gathered by the Tax Records Office shall be subject to official secrecy.

The Ministry of Finance shall be entitled to make public, without giving names, statistics and compilations relating to the data referred to in the previous paragraph."

Note to Article 11:

The text of Article 13 of Law No. 689/1981 (Amendments to the penal system) is as follows:

"Article 13 (Investigation procedures). – The bodies responsible for checking compliance with provisions which entail, in the event of infringements, administrative sanctions in the form of a pecuniary penalty may, in order to investigate the infringements falling within their responsibility, gather information and inspect objects and premises other than private dwellings, record identifying and descriptive particulars, take photographs and carry out other technical operations.

Furthermore, they may carry out preventive seizure of objects liable to administrative confiscation by the means and within the limits allowed by the Criminal Code for seizure by the criminal police.

Any motor vehicle or marine craft running without the compulsory insurance coverage or any vehicle running without a registration document having been issued shall in all cases be liable to seizure.

Infringements punishable by the administrative sanction of a pecuniary penalty may also be investigated by officers of the criminal police, who, besides exercising the powers specified in the previous paragraphs, may also, when it is not possible to obtain evidence by other means, search premises other than private dwellings, subject to a prior reasoned authorization from the magistrate of the place where the search is to be carried out. The provisions of the first paragraph of Article 333 and of the first and second paragraphs of Article 334 of the Criminal Code shall apply.

The exercise of the specific powers of investigation provided for by the laws currently in force shall not be affected in any way.

Note to Article 12:

For the title of Law No. 400/1988, see the above note to the preamble.

Note to Article 14:

Law No. 1162/1926 is entitled "Reorganization of the statistical system".

Note to Article 16:

The text of Article 3 of Law No. 400/1988 is as follows:

"Article 3 (Appointments to the presidency of agencies, institutes or concerns falling within the responsibility of central government).

1. Appointments to the presidency of agencies, institutes or concerns having a national character and falling within the responsibility of central government, with the exception of appointments in respect of public credit institutions, shall be made by Decree of the President of the Republic enacted on a proposal from the Prime Minister adopted on a proposal from the relevant Minister.

2. The provisions currently in force as regards obtaining the opinion of the relevant parliamentary committees shall continue to apply".

Note to Article 17:

The text of Article 12 of Law No. 400/1988 is as follows:

"Article 12 (Standing Conference for relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces).

1. A Standing Conference for relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano shall be established, attached to the Cabinet Office, with responsibility for information, consultation and liaison with regard to general policy guidelines that are liable to affect matters of regional responsibility, other than the general guidelines on foreign policy, national security and defense and justice.

2. The Conference shall be convened by the Prime Minister at least once every six monthly and on any other occasion when the Prime Minister considers it advisable, having regard also to the requests of the Presidents of the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces.

The Prime Minister shall chair the Conference, unless he delegates this function to the Minister of Regional Affairs or, if no such Minister has been appointed, to another Minister. The Conference shall comprise the Presidents of the Regions with either special or ordinary Statutes and the Presidents of the Autonomous Provinces. The Prime Minister shall invite the Ministers involved in the matters on the agenda and representatives of government departments or public agencies to attend the meetings of the Conference.

3. The Conference shall have a secretariat, as provided for by Decree of the Prime Minister in agreement with the Minister for Regional Affairs.

4. The Decree referred to in paragraph 3 shall provide for the secretariat staff to include personnel from the Regions or the Autonomous Provinces, whose remuneration shall continue to be the responsibility of their Regions or Provinces of origin.

5. The Conference shall be consulted:

a) on the general outline of legislative activity directly affecting the Regions and on the fixing of the objectives of national economic planning and financial and budget policy, without prejudice to the further tasks provided for on the basis of paragraph 7 of this Article;

b) on the general criteria for the exercise of the policy-making and coordinating functions of the State involved in relations between the State, the Regions, the Autononous Provinces and the sub-regional agencies, together with the general guidelines for the preparation and implementation of Community acts affecting regional responsibilities;

c) on other matters on which the Prime Minister considers it advisable to obtain the opinion of the Conference;

6. The Prime Minister or the Minister designated for that purpose shall from time to time report to the parliamentary committee on regional affairs on the actiuities of the Conference.

7. Within one year from the date this Law takes effect, the Government, having obtained the opinion of the parliamentary committee on regional affairs, which shall deliver its opinion within sixty days from receiving the request to do so, shall enact regulations having the force of ordinary law for reorganizing, or in some cases abolishing, the other joint bodies involving the State and the regions established by either laws or administrative provisions, so as to transfer to the Conference the responsibilities of these committees, with the exception of those which operate on the basis of technical and scientific responsibilities, and to review the delivery of opinions on issues of a general nature on which all the Regions and Autonomous Provinces must also be heard, laying down the

arrangements for obtaining such opinions, which are adopted on the votes of only the Presidents of the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces.

Notes to Article 25:

– Royal Decree-Law No. 1285/1929 is entitled "Amendments to the organization of the Central Institute of Statistics".

– For the title of Law No. 1823.1939, see the note to Article 3.

– Law No. 628/1966 is entitled "Establishing regional or inter-regional liaison offices of the Central Institute of Statistics".

– Law No 1025/1969 is entitled "Changes-to the establishment plan of the regional or inter-regional liaison offices of the Central Institute of Statistics".

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