Note on the Statistical Programme in connexion with the Proposed Long-Term Arrangement

Article 9 of the draft long-term arrangement (see document L/1707) provides that the Committee "will undertake studies on trade in cotton textiles as the participating countries may decide. It will collect the statistical and other information necessary for the discharge of its functions and will be empowered to request the participating countries to furnish such information."

For the implementation of this Article of the draft arrangement a programme of periodic statistics would be necessary so that trade, production and consumption trends for cotton textiles in the participating countries could be followed systematically.

As regards trade in cotton products, monthly statistics could be prepared showing:

(i) value of imports and exports, broken down into main groups of products but with no distinction as to provenance or destination; it is desirable that quantities of yarn and fabrics should also be indicated;

(ii) value of imports by provenance and of exports by destination for all cotton textile articles;

(iii) value of imports by provenance and of exports by destination, broken down into groups of products; quantities should also be indicated where possible.
This information should be drawn up by the participating countries as rapidly as possible. The data mentioned in paragraph (iii) could be collected only after a relatively long period, and accordingly it would be helpful if the less detailed statistics under paragraphs (i) and (ii) could be transmitted to the Committee as soon as they have been compiled.

As regards production and consumption of cotton articles, data on production of yarn and fabrics could probably be collected monthly while data relating to production of wearing apparel and consumption of yarn, fabrics and wearing apparel could be prepared quarterly (or annually). A periodic enquiry could be made into changes in production capacity of the spinning and weaving industries.

The statistics available in the various participating countries are not compiled on a strictly comparable basis and it would, therefore, be useful to specify the product nomenclatures to be used, to select common measurement units and to define the commercial transactions to be taken into consideration.

(1) Definition of cotton articles. The report of the Statistical Group on Textiles which met in July 1961 (document Spec(61)225) noted that "'cotton fabrics' include not only pure cotton fabrics, but also fabrics where cotton is the predominant fibre (i.e. more than 50 per cent by weight in the case of the trade statistics of Australia and countries applying the Brussels Tariff Nomenclature; more than 50 per cent by value in the case of imports into the United States). In terms of the Brussels Tariff Nomenclature, cotton fabrics include the following items: 55.07; 55.08; 55.09; 58.04." Likewise, in the case of wearing apparel it seems difficult to distinguish cotton articles from articles of silk or man-made fibres.
(ii) Groups of products to be taken into consideration. The foreign trade statistics of most of the participating countries are compiled on the basis of either the Brussels Nomenclature or the SITC. These nomenclatures are not sufficiently detailed to enable a large number of groups of textile products to be defined. As regards wearing apparel, in particular, they provide for only some fifteen groups with no distinction according to fibre. These nomenclatures would have to be clarified and broken down into greater detail if they were to serve as a basis for the definition of detailed groups of cotton articles such as the sixty-four categories mentioned in the annex to the short-term arrangement.

(iii) Common measurement units. For the compilation of certain statistics mentioned in the draft long-term arrangement, quantitative units would have to be specified so that like articles could be grouped together. Such units might be selected according to theoretical and practical considerations. Each country would then have to make a careful study of rates of conversion of the respective units.

(iv) Re-exports. Article 2, paragraph 6, of the draft long-term arrangement refers to "the importation, under a system of temporary importation for re-export after processing, of cotton textiles originating in other participating countries". Since the relevant data are not compiled systematically by all the participating countries, it might be useful to study how comparable data in this field could be collected in a more methodical manner.