

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE RELATING TO ECONOMIC STATISTICS.

(Geneva, November 26th to December 14th, 1928.)

APPLICATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING FURTHER STATISTICAL AGREEMENT.

NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE.

Geneva, November 16th, 1929.

The following Governments have so far indicated their general acceptance of Recommendations II and III of the above Conference¹ which were communicated in April last by the Secretary-General to all States Members of the League and to certain States not Members

South Africa	Egypt	Poland
Germany	Estonia	Sweden
Denmark	France	Switzerland
Danzig (through Poland)	Norway	

The Recommendations in question read as follows

“ II. That, in view of the fact that this Convention represents a minimum standard ,

“ (3) Countries with highly developed statistical systems should endeavour, with the aid of the Committee of Experts if they so desire, to establish informal or formal understandings among themselves with a view to securing comparability with regard to certain of the statistics published by them for which no provision is made in this Convention.

“ III. That, in order to put into effect the third paragraph of the preceding recommendation

“ (2) The countries which accept this proposal should be invited

“ (a) To prepare a document showing the categories of economic statistics on which they are prepared to discuss the introduction of uniform methods ,

“ (b) To circulate this document, either directly or through the intermediary of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, to the other countries which have also accepted this proposal, if possible not later than September 30th, 1929 ,

“ (c) To send their comments on documents so received to the countries from which they emanated, if possible not later than June 1st, 1930 , and

“ (d) To send copies of all these documents to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations ,

“ (3) These documents should be discussed by the Committee of Experts, with a view to the conclusion of an agreement or agreements with wider obligations.”

Extracts from the replies received are given below

10B/12738/11138.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Pretoria, May 28th, 1929.

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Union of South Africa is greatly interested in the obtaining of a greater comparability of international statistics and is taking steps to have a document prepared of the nature recommended by the International Conference on Economic Statistics held in Geneva last year. This document will be circulated in due course through the intermediary of the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

(Signed) B. HERTZOG,
Minister for External Affairs.

¹ See *Official Journal*, March 1929, page 465.

10B/15234/III38.

GERMANY

[Translation.]

Berlin, October 11th, 1929.

I have the honour to inform you that the German Government is prepared, even beyond the limits of the International Convention concluded on December 14th, 1928, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Statistical Conference, to support any efforts made and collaborate in any work undertaken with a view to securing comparability with regard to the statistics of countries with highly developed statistical systems.

The German Government considers it better, however, to refrain from submitting specific proposals and to leave the work of determining the questions to be dealt with to later negotiations of experts.

(Signed) KÖPKE.

10B/13404/III38.

DENMARK.

[Translation.]

Geneva, July 22nd, 1929.

The delegation has been instructed by its Government to inform the Secretariat of the League of Nations that the Royal Danish Government will be glad to participate in the international action to be taken in this matter.

By order of the Royal Government, the delegation is also forwarding to the Secretariat a copy of a letter of May 21st last received from the Danish Ministry of Finance, pointing out the desirability of establishing a uniform basis for drawing up and modifying indices of wholesale prices. As regards the offer kindly made in the last paragraph of the Secretariat's note, the delegation has the honour to request the Secretariat to communicate the observations of the Danish Ministry of Finance to all the other countries which have agreed to co-operate in the international action to be taken.

Extract from the Letter from the Statistical Department to the Ministry of Finance.

Copenhagen, May 21st, 1929.

Whereas during the first years after the war most countries were still taking the year 1913 or some shorter period immediately prior to the war as the basis of comparison for computing wholesale price indices, a departure has been made in recent years from this uniform practice, a number of countries having taken as a new basis one of the post-war years. Such a change was natural where it was thought desirable to include new categories of articles in the calculation of the price index or to re-group the articles used.

The price indices should of course, first and foremost, show the variations occurring from time to time in each country but for the purposes of international comparisons a considerable difficulty arises from the fact that different basic years are adopted in the various countries for the price indices showing these variations this difficulty is enhanced where the actual year used as a basis is not clearly indicated. It would therefore undoubtedly be desirable in international negotiations to decide upon a single basic year, and perhaps also to agree to change it every five or ten years since new categories of articles will have to be considered in the future and the importance of those at present used as a basis for the statistics will change, it ought obviously to be made possible to shift the basic year at reasonably short intervals.

(Signed) Adolph JENSEN.

10B/15766/III38.

DANZIG.

Polish Delegation accredited to the League of Nations.

[Translation.]

Geneva, November 13th, 1929.

With reference to the circular letter of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, dated April 13th, and addressed to the Free City of Danzig, the Polish delegation has the honour to inform him that the Polish Government is ready, after having consulted the Danzig authorities to negotiate and to conclude, on behalf of the Free City of Danzig, agreements relating to the comparability of certain classes of statistics to which reference is made in the third paragraph of the letter mentioned above.

10B/14588/III38.

EGYPT.

[Translation.]

Cairo, September 10th, 1929.

With reference to my letter of April 25th, 1929, concerning the two Recommendations of the International Conference relating to Economic Statistics which dealt with the comparability of statistics not covered in the Convention, I have the honour to inform you that the Egyptian

Government is prepared to examine the question as soon as the Committee of Technical Experts, mentioned in Article 8 of the Convention, has been set up and has put forward its suggestions for improving statistics and developing their scope.

(Signed) H. AFIFI,
Minister for Foreign Affairs.

10B/11662/11138.

ESTONIA.

Tallinn, August 19th, 1929.

[Translation.]

I have the honour to inform you that the competent Estonian authorities are, in principle, willing to put into effect the suggestion set forth in Recommendation II, paragraph 3, of the International Conference relating to Economic Statistics.

In order to give effect to this suggestion, the competent Estonian authorities are prepared to discuss proposals relating to the adoption of uniform methods for all categories of economic statistics, the purpose of such proposals being the development of the Convention signed at Geneva on December 14th, 1928, by means of individual agreements on questions not settled by the Convention.

For the Minister for Foreign Affairs
(Signed) I. LIPPIK.

10B/13218/11138.

FRANCE.

Paris, July 12th, 1929.

[Translation.]

The French Government is of opinion that, before fresh international agreements are concluded in regard to statistics, it would perhaps be best to see what results are obtained from the application of the Convention of 1928.

It also considers that the possible field for negotiation is somewhat small, in view of the limited powers of the Committee of Experts set up by Article 8 of the Convention. That Committee must not make any suggestions in respect of statistics relating to public or private finance or, without the previous agreement of the appropriate international institutions or organisations, in respect of statistics relating to agriculture, labour or transport.

For these reasons, the French Government cannot at present see its way to make any proposals for the conclusion of further agreements. It is fully prepared, however, to accede, as far as possible, to any proposals put forward by other States.

For the Minister for Foreign Affairs
(Signed) Charles CORBIN.

10B/14919/11138.

NORWAY.

Berne, September 30th, 1929.

[Translation.]

I have the honour to inform you that the Norwegian Government is ready to accept the proposal contained in Recommendation II of the International Conference held at Geneva in December 1928. My Government is, however, of the opinion that no detailed proposal can be formulated before the Convention of 1928 has been put into force.

(Signed) Hersleb BIRKELAND,
Permanent Delegate to the League of Nations.

10B/12512/11138.

POLAND.

Geneva, June 5th, 1929.

[Translation.]

In conformity with Recommendation II of the International Conference relating to Economic Statistics, the Polish Government is ready to negotiate and conclude, with any Governments which express a similar desire, agreements with a view to securing uniformity and comparability in regard to certain economic statistics not dealt with in the Convention of December 14th, 1928.

The Polish Government would be specially ready to conclude understandings on agricultural statistics and statistics relating to foreign commerce, transport, prices and, lastly, labour and occupations.

I have the honour to request the Secretariat of the League of Nations to be good enough to forward this reply to the countries concerned, in accordance with paragraph (b) of Recommendation III of the Conference.

(Signed) Ch. KRACZKIEWICZ,
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

10B/13762/11138.

SWEDEN.

[*Translation.*]

Stockholm, August 7th, 1929.

I have the honour to inform you that the Swedish Government is willing to accept the proposal contained in Recommendation II and to take the necessary steps to carry out the procedure indicated in the provisions laid down in the Conference's recommendations.

For the Minister for Foreign Affairs
(*Signed*) G. HOLMGREN.

10B/12312/11138.

SWITZERLAND.

[*Translation.*]

Berne, May 27th, 1929.

After consultation with the competent Department, we have the honour to inform you that the Federal Authorities are not yet in a position to take a decision in regard to the different points raised by these Recommendations. They consider, however, that it will be possible for them to prepare before September 30th next the document mentioned (Recommendation III).

(*Signed*) MOTTA.