

and it makes one wonder if real progress has been made in this area since Helsinki.

The situation I have been describing raises another question, that of information which the officials have on hand and which they are ready to distribute in response to an official request. It is quite obvious that the more the published information leaves to be desired — often with regard to rather basic questions — the greater is our tendency and the greater our need to speak to an official. But can we be certain, in such cases, that the officials are ready to co-operate as fully as possible? A sort of reticence, a somewhat defensive attitude, can be noticed.

Two principles have been set out in the field of statistics: first, quality, including accuracy; second, regularity — that is, the least possible delay between the moment of publishing the data and the time to which they refer. A third characteristic that I would ask the delegations to consider as a principle is that the statistics should appear automatically.

I have spoken of Bulgaria in this context; I could also mention Romania, where, for example, our representatives recently encountered some difficulty in obtaining up-to-date information on the pulpwood industry. I could also mention Czechoslovakia in this connection, in relation to specific statistics in a number of sectors.

These considerations lead me to speak of two complementary means which my Government hopes to see pursued regarding economic and commercial information. First of all, bilateral channels, since they exist already, particularly commercial consultation and sessions of joint committees. This provides a practical framework which my Government finds naturally appropriate for an exchange of accurate, thorough information on the economic and commercial activity of the parties involved. I would add that this is a field in which our past experience has not been as satisfactory as it might have been. Thus I am asking the delegations to consider this channel of information, if they will, especially since it is dealt with in one paragraph of the Final Act. A natural complement to this channel is the multilateral channel, including the ECE, GATT and UNCTAD, and, while we recognize the results already achieved in the ECE, we believe the usefulness of these organizations in the information sphere has room to grow.