

tions, and two members of the staff of the Bureau of the Budget. A member of my staff is one of the Budget Bureau representatives on this task force.

Since the National Conference on Comparative Statistics, some eight States have created or designated a statistical coordination/standardization unit or have such a step under active consideration. There may be similar activity underway in other States about which I am not aware. While it had been hoped that substantially more progress in this direction would have been accomplished by now, the steps that have been taken represent significant gains. I hope that the States which have not yet established statistical coordination/standardization units will soon do so, for efforts to promote the statistical comparability desired by the governors are seriously hampered when there is no single point of contact within each State charged with overall responsibility for statistical development.

I have mentioned some of the major efforts which have been undertaken in the recent past to bring about an integrated body of statistical information which can be used to better understand existing and emerging problems and to provide a basis for developing action programs to deal with them.

It may be useful at this point to first note the more specific formal authority under which the Bureau of the Budget currently carries out the statistical coordinating function and second, to list the major methods that it uses.

The Budget and Accounting Procedures Act of 1950 provides in Title I, Part I, section 103 as follows:

"The President, through the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, is authorized and directed to develop programs and to issue regulations and orders for the improved gathering, compiling, analyzing, publishing and disseminating of statistical information for any purpose by the various agencies in the executive branch of the government. Such regulations and orders shall be adhered to by such agencies."

This provision of law is carried out under Executive Order 10253.

Another specific grant of authority is provided by the Federal Reports Act of 1942. It empowers the Director of the Bureau of the Budget (a) after certain procedures specified in the Act to transfer the responsibility for the collection of statistical information from one agency to another and, with certain safeguards, to transfer information among agencies to avoid duplication and promote efficiency; and (b) to review, and approve or disapprove, reporting proposals by Federal executive agencies for obtaining information from the public. This review of reporting requirements is broader than statistical inquiries and relates to all requests for information by the use of identical questions addressed to 10 or more respondents.

As I have indicated illustratively in my remarks these duties are carried out flexibly and with reference to the particular problems at hand. The methods used include:

The direct transfer of responsibility for the collection, preparation, and maintenance of statistical series from one agency to another.

The focal agency principle—the assignment of responsibility for exercising leadership for the planned and coordinated development of a subject matter field to a particular agency, without any transfer of function relating to the actual collection and preparation of statistical series.

Basic guidance of the statistical program through the President's budget requests for statistics programs. This is a particularly effective way to determine priorities for an integrated program. A special budget analysis, setting forth the details of statistical programs in a single place and explaining the interrelationships of recommended improvements has strengthened the effectiveness of this action. We are grateful to this Committee for suggesting it.

Authority to review data requests directed to the public is also extremely important. It assures that each request for information follows sound statistical procedures, and prevents duplicating of requests.

The use of interagency task forces and consultants and consultant groups from outside Government is essential for thorough examination of issues to determine sound and well considered courses of action for the improvement of statistics that can be supported by both the executive and legislative branches. Here again we owe a large debt of gratitude to this committee for promoting the use of outside consultative groups by the example of the groups set up by the Federal Reserve Board at this committee's request more than a decade ago to review statistics on Inventories, Plant and Equipment Expenditures, Consumer Anticipations and Savings.