

ISSUES RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE TASK FORCES
AND INTERSECRETARIAT WORKING GROUPS

TASK FORCE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS

Report on coordination issues by the World Trade Organization,
convener of the Task Force

1. The principal current areas of coordination are:
 - (a) completion of a compilers manual;
 - (b) UNSD use of national aggregate import and export values (national currency) and index numbers of price/unit value, quantum, for countries, collected by IMF;
 - (c) UNSD use of aggregate import and export values in US dollars, for countries, compiled by IMF;
 - (d) exchange of detailed trade data of countries among UNSD, OECD and EUROSTAT;
 - (e) reduction of differences in trade statistics maintained by each organization;
 - (f) estimation of data for non-reporting countries; and
 - (g) technical cooperation

2. No co-ordination issues require the attention of the Subcommittee. On the contrary, there has been significant progress in co-ordinating and rationalizing activities in all areas. To highlight a few examples:
 - (a) Task force members have agreed to assist UNSD on the Compilers' manual;
 - (b) Data exchanges between international agencies were initiated in 1998. This work is progressively being extended in terms of country coverage and processing levels. UNSD and OECD for example have been discussing

the feasibility of adopting uniform processing procedures and computer systems and sharing processed data;

- (c) Exchanges of technical information with a view to furthering burden sharing and reducing the differences in trade statistics maintained by international agencies are on-going. These include estimating for non-reporting countries, the consistent treatment of EU statistics, and the establishment of a common data set of aggregate trade data to name a few important areas. These issues will be taken up at the next meeting of the Task Force to be hosted by UNIDO in April 2000; and
- (d) Communication and co-operation between Task Force members has been further improved through the establishment in April 1999 of a web-based electronic discussion group.

3. The report of the last meeting of the Task Force (Washington D.C., 8-10 March 1999) is being separately distributed.
