

Processing and Dissemination of Trade Statistics

Progress Report on the Arrangements for

Processing and Dissemination of International Trade Statistics

Report prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations

1. The Sub-Committee will recall that this item was discussed at length at its twenty-third session in June 1989 and earlier sessions following on from the Sub-Committee's request to the Statistical Office to keep users fully informed concerning the transfer of trade statistics processing from Geneva to New York. At the twenty-third session, the concerns of users were brought out and discussed. The Statistical Office has continued to keep users abreast of developments, most recently by its letter of 6 March 1990.

2. The transfer is proceeding largely according to plan. At this stage, the bulk of the processing is being done in New York, while the Unit in Geneva continues with processing activities but at a level consistent with its reduced staffing levels. The annex to this paper shows the actual country periods processed in New York in the period August 1989 to 31 May 1990 (125 country periods). At the end of February 1990, the New York unit had processed 80 country periods since August 1989. Other quantitative data on

We show this to demonstrate that the staff are processing now the full range of countries - large and small, and annual figures by period.

progress in processing trade statistics is contained in SA/1990/7.

3. In New York existing staff have been re-deployed to trade processing activities to allow processing to be done whilst administrative arrangements are dealt with relating to transfer of additional posts from Geneva and recruitment of new additional staff in New York. The staff have undergone extensive training and the efficiency of the New York activity has reached expected levels such that significant and improving levels of output have been achieved as set out in para 2 above. The P2 professional post has been transferred from Geneva and the post has been filled with effect from 1 June. At the completion of staff/post moves at the end of 1990, one P5 professional and one general service staff will remain in Geneva on a long term basis to carry out essential servicing for organizations that use the ICC to access COMTRADE.

4. In December 1989, letters were sent to all trade statistics suppliers informing them that the processing work has been transferred to New York and requesting them to send their national data to the Statistical Office in New York in the future. A number of countries have already followed this request and the procedures for handling and following up on materials received are operating properly. A few sets of data have been received in Geneva and have been processed there. Follow up letters are being sent to countries still providing tapes to Geneva.

5. In December 1989 the Statistical Office received a special request from a major trade statistics user in Geneva to carry out conversion to SITC Rev.2 of

①

②

③

④



*data
tapes
sent
being
received
in
Geneva*

January-September 1989 trade statistics shown in terms of SITC Rev.3 for developed countries. The policy of the Statistical Office over the years has been to present cumulative quarterly data only in the version of SITC reported by the country providing the data. The Statistical Office agreed to this special request which was carried out largely in Geneva. This temporarily diverted some effort away from the routine processing of commodity trade statistics and other regular work.

6. A meeting to co-ordinate the final phase of the transfer i.e. consolidation of the processing work in New York and the future work programme for the Geneva staff was recently held in New York. The results from this meeting will be provided orally at the twenty-fourth session.

7. Some important changes have been noted which we would like to bring to the attention of the Sub-Committee. ① Firstly, the data processed into SITC Rev.3 has resulted in almost 50% more records than comparable sets in SITC Rev.2. One result has been that the computer storage space utilized by Comtrade is growing more rapidly. In particular, disk storage for cumulative quarterly data recently became a problem and in order to resolve it, the 1987 cumulative quarterly data set was transferred to tape a month earlier than it would have been in normal circumstances. The Statistical Office is proposing that, in future, only two years of cumulative quarterly data be kept on line in Comtrade. Users having a need for earlier quarterly data will be able to obtain such data on magnetic tape.

8. ② Secondly, the growth in disk storage requirements is further accelerated

Track
will
continue
Applied
accumulation
this year
only
delay in
factor in
personnel
to
accumulate
data
GVA
NY
notes
How
beginning
of
Dec/17

in the case of annual data by the requirement for SITC Rev.1 and Rev.2 versions of data to be stored in addition to Rev.3. Although the Statistical Office has been able to absorb the increased storage costs for the current year, it will be necessary to review this situation for 1991.

③
9. Third, a change in the pattern of country reporting that has been noticed is a tendency of some countries using the Harmonized System not to fully utilize the level of detail provided by this classification. We have seen the creation of a significant number of non-HS headings of a general nature. This has resulted in a lower level of detail than the optimum that the SITC Rev.3 could have been expected to provide. However, the same kind of deficiency exists for the data in terms of the HS itself. In addition, there has been an increase in the use of "unspecified" trading partners. We are encouraging reporters to reverse this trend.

④
10. Fourth, as agreed at the twenty-third session, the United Nations Statistical Office has worked with user organizations and set up a mechanism for providing national tapes to the users. The mechanism involves obtaining agreement from the countries concerned and providing the tape for internal analytical use only and subject to any other restriction that may be imposed by the supplier country.

The national data tapes are being held by UNCTAD especially those that have reported in terms of HS as we are investigating now the feasibility of unambiguously trade data in terms of HS as well as SITC. A need for this data has been expressed by users like ECOC, UNCTAD, ILO, etc. UNCTAD has indicated their wish on developing such a system and would like to cooperate with UNCTAD on this.

- Now to other trade matters

COUNTRIES PROCESSED IN NEW YORK

31 MAY 1990

COUNTRY	PERIOD	SITC VERSION	DATE LOADED INTO COMTRADE	DATE REVISED
AUSTRIA	JD88	R1 @	05 APR. 1990	
AUSTRIA	JD88	R2 #	19 DEC. 1989	15 JAN. 1990
BELG-LUX	JD88	R2 #	19 DEC. 1989	12 JAN. 1990
* BELG-LUX	JD88	R1 @	2 MAY 1990	
BERMUDA	JD85	R1	23 FEB. 1990	06 MAR. 1990
BOLIVIA	JD86	R1 \$	18 DEC. 1989	24 JAN. 1990
BOLIVIA	JD86	R2	21 AUG. 1989	
BOLIVIA	JD87	R1 \$	18 DEC. 1989	24 JAN. 1990
BOLIVIA	JD87	R2	21 AUG. 1989	
BRAZIL	JD86	R1 \$	24 JAN. 1990	
BRAZIL	JD86	R2	10 NOV. 1989	9 MAY 1990
BRAZIL	JD87	R1 \$	24 JAN. 1990	9 MAY 1990
BRAZIL	JD87	R2	10 NOV. 1989	9 MAY 1990
CANADA	JD88	R2 #	19 DEC. 1989	12 JAN. 1990
CANADA	JD89	R1 @	29 MAR. 1990	
CANADA	JD89	R2 #	29 MAR. 1990	
CANADA	JD89	R3	29 MAR. 1990	
CHILE	JD87	R1 \$	05 APR. 1990	9 MAY 1990
CHILE	JD87	R2	3 OCT. 1989	9 MAY 1990
* CHILE	JD88	R2	9 MAY 1990	
* CHILE	JD88	R1 \$	9 MAY 1990	
CHINA	JD86	R2	21 AUG. 1989	06 MAR. 1990
CHINA	JD87	R2	21 AUG. 1989	06 MAR. 1990
CHINA	JD85	R2	10 NOV. 1989	06 MAR. 1990
COLOMBIA	JD88	R1 \$	05 APR. 1990	
COLOMBIA	JD88	R2	2 JAN. 1990	
CYPRUS	JJ89	R3	05 APR. 1990	
CYPRUS	JM89	R3	05 APR. 1990	
CYPRUS	JS89	R3	29 MAR. 1990	
CZECHOSLOVAK	JD87	R2	1 FEB. 1990	23 FEB. 1990
DENMARK	JD88	R2 #	19 DEC. 1989	15 JAN. 1990
DOMINICA	JD83	R2	8 DEC. 1989	24 JAN. 1990
ECUADOR	JD87 (M)	R2	10 NOV. 1989	
FAEROE ISL.	JD88	R2 #	18 JAN. 1990	
FAEROE ISL.	JD89	R1 @	25 APR. 1990	
FAEROE ISL.	JD89	R2 #	25 APR. 1990	
FAEROE ISL.	JD89	R3	25 APR. 1990	
FRANCE	JD88	R2 #	15 DEC. 1989	12 JAN. 1990
* FRANCE	JD88	R1 @	2 MAY 1990	
GREECE	JD88	R2 #	15 DEC. 1989	
GREECE	JD88	R3	8 DEC. 1989	15 JAN. 1990
GREECE	JJ88	R3	10 NOV. 1989	
GREECE	JJ89	R3	31 JAN. 1990	
GREECE	JM88	R3	10 NOV. 1989	
GREECE	JM89	R3	31 JAN. 1990	
GREECE	JS88	R3	8 DEC. 1989	

COUNTRIES PROCESSED IN NEW YORK

31 MAY 1990

COUNTRY	PERIOD	SITC VERSION	DATE LOADED INTO COMTRADE	DATE REVISED
* GREECE	JD88	R1 @	2 MAY 1990	
GREENLAND	JD88	R2 #	18 JAN. 1990	
GREENLAND	JD89	R1 @	25 APR. 1990	
GREENLAND	JD89	R2 #	25 APR. 1990	
GREENLAND	JD89	R3	25 APR. 1990	
GRENADA	JD85	R2	10 NOV. 1989	
GRENADA	JD86	R2	10 NOV. 1989	
HUNGARY	JD88 (2D)	R2	9 OCT. 1989	
ICELAND	JD88	R2 #	19 DEC. 1989	15 JAN. 1990
INDONESIA	JD87	R2	05 APR. 1990	
INDONESIA	JD88	R2	29 MAR. 1990	
ISRAEL	JD88	R2 #	19 DEC. 1989	15 JAN. 1990
ITALY	JD88	R3	21 AUG. 1989	3 OCT. 1989
ITALY	JD88	R2 #	15 DEC. 1989	12 JAN. 1990
ITALY	JJ88	R3	3 OCT. 1989	
ITALY	JM88	R3	3 OCT. 1989	
ITALY	JS88	R3	3 OCT. 1989	
* ITALY	JD88	R1 @	26 APR. 1990	
JAMAICA	JD83	R2	14 DEC. 1988	
JAMAICA	JD84	R2	24 MAY 1989	30 AUG. 1989
JAMAICA	JD85	R2	3 OCT. 1989	
JAMAICA	JD86	R2	3 OCT. 1989	
JAMAICA	JD87	R2	9 OCT. 1989	18 JAN. 1990
JAMAICA	JD88	R2	9 OCT. 1989	15 JAN. 1990
JORDAN	JD88	R2	8 DEC. 1989	18 JAN. 1990
KENYA	JD86	R2	21 AUG. 1989	
KENYA	JD85	R2	9 OCT. 1989	
* MALAYSIA	JD88	R3	9 MAY 1990	
MEXICO	JD86	R1	21 AUG. 1989	06 APR. 1990
MEXICO	JD87	R1	9 OCT. 1989	06 APR. 1990
NETHERLANDS	JD89	R2 #	25 APR. 1990	
NETHERLANDS	JD89	R3	06 APR. 1990	25 APR. 1990*
* NETHERLANDS	JD89	R1 @	26 APR. 1990	
NIGERIA	JD85	R1	10 NOV. 1989	
NIGERIA	JD86	R1	21 AUG. 1989	
NORWAY	JD88	R2 #	24 JAN. 1990	31 JAN. 1990
NORWAY	JD88	R3	2 NOV. 1989	06 MAR. 1990
NORWAY	JD89	R3	06 MAR. 1990	
NORWAY	JJ89	R3	10 NOV. 1989	
NORWAY	JM89	R3	2 NOV. 1989	
NORWAY	JS89	R2 #	23 FEB. 1990	06 MAR. 1990
NORWAY	JS89	R3	31 JAN. 1990	
OMAN	JD87	R2	3 OCT. 1989	19 JAN. 1990
* OMAN	JD87	R1 #	26 APR. 1990	
PANAMA EX.CZ	JD87	R2	31 JAN. 1990	
PARAGUAY	JD87	R2	3 OCT. 1989	19 JAN. 1990

COUNTRIES PROCESSED IN NEW YORK

31 MAY 1990

COUNTRY	PERIOD	SITC VERSION	DATE LOADED INTO COMTRADE	DATE REVISED
* PARAGUAY	JD87	R1 #	26 APR. 1990	
PERU	JD87	R2	3 OCT. 1989	19 JAN. 1990
* PERU	JD87	R1 \$	25 MAY 1990	
* PORTUGAL	JD89	R3	25 MAY 1990	
* PORTUGAL	JJ89	R3	25 MAY 1990	
* PORTUGAL	JM89	R3	25 MAY 1990	
* PORTUGAL	JS89	R3	25 MAY 1990	
SENEGAL	JD86	R2	10 NOV. 1989	25 MAY 1990
SENEGAL	JD87	R2	10 NOV. 1989	
SINGAPORE	JD89	R2 #	20 APR. 1990	2 MAY 1990
SINGAPORE	JD89	R3	06 APR. 1990	2 MAY 1990
SINGAPORE	JJ89	R3	8 DEC. 1989	
SINGAPORE	JM89	R3	10 NOV. 1989	
SINGAPORE	JS89	R3	31 JAN. 1990	
* SINGAPORE	JD89	R1 @	2 MAY 1990	
SO. AFR. C U	JD84	R2	19 JAN. 1990	
SPAIN	JD89	R1 @	20 APR. 1990	
SPAIN	JD89	R2 #	20 APR. 1990	
SPAIN	JD89	R3	20 APR. 1990	
SYR. AR. RP.	JD86	R2	18 JAN. 1990	
TOGO	JD88	R3	29 MAR. 1990	
TURKEY	JD88	R2	2 NOV. 1989	
* TURKEY	JD88	R1 #	26 APR. 1990	
U.K.	JD88	R2 #	19 JAN. 1990	06 MAR. 1990
UK	JS89	R2 #	29 MAR. 1990	
URUGUAY	JD88	R2	18 JAN. 1990	
VENEZUELA	JD82	R2	23 FEB. 1990	
VENEZUELA	JD84 (X)	R2	10 NOV. 1989	
VENEZUELA	JD85 (X)	R2	10 NOV. 1989	
* VENEZUELA	JD86	R2	25 MAY 1990	
VENEZUELA	JD87	R2	9 OCT. 1989	
VENEZUELA	JD88	R2	18 JAN. 1990	
YUGOSLAVIA	JD88	R2 #	24 JAN. 1990	

* Country periods loaded since the last report dated 26 APR. 1990

Converted from Rev.3

\$ Converted from Rev.2

@ Converted from Rev.3/Rev.2