



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

STATISTICS DIVISION
TRADE STATISTICS BRANCH

TASK FORCE ON STATISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SERVICES
Paris, 2-3 February 2005
item 4(b) of the provisional agenda

UNSD ACTIVITIES IN COORDINATION, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
AND DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

Report by UNSD

1. With reference to the Report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services which has been submitted to the 36th session of the Statistical Commission (1-4 March 2005) this note gives the status of the activities of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) on issues regarding coordination, technical assistance and database development.

Coordination and technical assistance

2. As mentioned in the report of the Task Force, UNSD hosts and manages the Task Force's website which – among other things – stores the Reports of the Task Force to the Statistical Commission, training material and an archive of publications on trade in services statistics. In line with the idea of making this website a central reference point, the members of the Task Force are invited to send other background papers (both recent and historical) for a better understanding of statistics of international trade in services.

3. UNSD plans to launch the first Newsletter on behalf of the Task Force in May 2005. The members of the Task Force will be reminded on an individual basis about their commitments for submissions of material for the Newsletter.

4. UNSD held a workshop on trade in services together with other international organizations at the ESCWA office in Beirut from 14 to 17 December 2004. The workshop provided a general introduction to the framework set out in the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS) and to the provisions of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and included sessions to discuss in detail particular aspects of trade in services statistics, such as balance of payments transactions, foreign affiliate trade in services (FATS) statistics and an extended framework for the measurement of the movement of natural persons, linked to mode 4 of the GATS. The full report of the workshop will be available at the Task Force meeting as a background document. A workshop on statistics of international trade in services, focusing on data compilation as well as selected methodological issues is planned for Latin America and the Caribbean region in the second half of 2005.

Database development

5. As stated in the Report of the Task Force, UNSD is developing a worldwide database on trade in services statistics, detailed by partner country, service category and mode of supply. A large amount of available data at OECD and IMF was fed to this database. The data are distinguished by source which makes it possible to compare data for the same country, same service category and same year among different sources. Mode of supply has been added to the database using the simplified approach proposed in MSITS (para 2.72 to 2.101) . Most functionality is in place. Currently, meta-data and tools for comparing data are added to the system.
6. From the IMF source, international trade in services statistics of over 150 countries and areas have been stored for the years 1996 to 2002. These data are broken down by major EBOPS categories and some additional BOP components, namely compensation of employees, workers remittances and migrant's transfers.
7. Two kinds of OECD trade in services data have been loaded. The first kind covers many years (1970 – 1998) and is broken down by EBOPS category. The second kind covers trade in services for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001 broken down by EBOPS category and partner country.
8. It is the intention of UNSD to make this database available for testing to the members of the Task Force by mid-March. Members will be invited to submit their comments during the month of April 2005. Thereafter, a report will be prepared for the next Task Force meeting which will include (1) an analysis of the data by source, (2) a proposal for combining data sources, and (3) a review of the comments of the members of the Task Force.