



International Trade Statistics

Newsletter

SPECIAL FEATURE:

OUTCOMES OF THE GLOBAL FORUM ON TRADE STATISTICS

MEASURING GLOBAL TRADE - DO WE HAVE THE RIGHT NUMBERS?

2-4 FEBRUARY 2011, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

The Global Forum on Trade Statistics brought together close to 200 participants, including policy makers, economists, trade analysts and, of course, many statisticians. The Forum identified policy needs, especially regarding the need for more detailed data on trade in services, described research issues in the area of global value chains and trade in value-added, and offered solutions in connecting trade and global business statistics. The Global Forum, which was organized jointly by UNSD and Eurostat in collaboration with WTO and UNCTAD, took place from 2 to 4 February 2011 at the WTO in Geneva, Switzerland.

The outcome of the Forum consists of (i) an Annotated Vision Statement (see box on page two), (ii) the background document 'International Trade Information Systems in 2020', (iii) an outline of a proposed compendium on International Trade and Global Business Statistics, and (iv) a report which contains brief illustrations of all presentations during the six sessions. The detailed report as well as all other outcomes are available on the Global Forum website at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/s_geneva2011/outcome.htm. Below some highlights of the opening session of the Global Forum are presented:

Political leaders expressed their urgent need for more informative trade statistics

In the opening session, political leaders from WTO and UN, as well as leaders in trade analysis, research and statistics gave their views on the most prominent and urgent trade issues and their corresponding data needs. In his opening

statement, Mr. Alejandro Jara, Deputy-Director General, WTO, stated that the concept of comparative advantage in final goods, as developed by Ricardo, is no longer fully relevant to explain trade between countries. We need to have information on the inter-connectivity of national economies, not only through high frequency trade data but also through linking firm activity (production) with export activity (trade).

Similarly, in a video message, Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General of UN/DESA, stated that trade patterns have moved from country specialization in types of goods to intra-firm/network specialization in tasks, with the South greatly expanding production of manufactures. Further, the changing patterns of trade and production have important implications for trade and industrial policies in the broader context of development strategies. Current statistical data are deficient for international trade in services from the point of view of both analysis of such trade and use by negotiators.

In his keynote speech, Dr. Supachai Panatpadki, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, stated that statistics are very important as basis for econometric models and that economists cannot develop and prove their theories if they lack the appropriate data. Commodity prices are high again. To properly analyze these kinds of new trends, there is a need for the right data on trade and commodity prices, and for data on inventories of commodities. Other challenges for trade statisticians are the differences in mirror statistics between

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OUTCOMES OF GLOBAL FORUM ON TRADE STATISTICS

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trading partners, the lack of data on trade in services and a better measurement of multi-national enterprise statistics.

Panel Discussion on Measuring Global Trade – Do we have the right numbers?

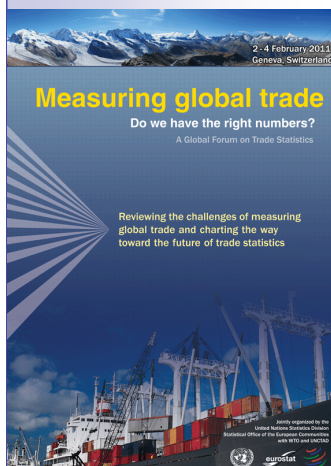
In his opening remarks the moderator Mr. Walter Rademacher, Chief Statistician of Eurostat, stated that we should get better data for trade in services as we already have for trade in goods. The challenge is to find a smarter way of collecting services data. Further, a shift in paradigm is needed not only to observe the economic activity from the perspective of the national territory, but also from an international perspective. For such a purpose there is a need for connecting international transactions with other economic statistics, like trade in relation to environment or to energy statistics.

Mr. Enrico Giovannini, President of ISTAT, the Italian Statistical Office, pointed out that we need to have the right vision. The background document 'International Trade Information Systems in 2020' is a good starting point. In terms of what needs to be done he mentioned, among other things, the development of an integrated data warehouse linking trade with other economic statistics as the right way forward; further, national authorities should legalize institutional arrangements on cooperation in trade statistics and the measurement of

quantities, prices and volumes should be improved.

Mr. Aaron Sydor, Deputy Chief Economist, Canada, pointed out that, while analyzing trade issues, we encounter many data gaps; for instance, for statistics on international trade in services there is an apparent lack of detail on modes of delivery, a lack of country detail, and a lack of matching between the BOP service components and industry categories; other gaps that exist relate for example to intra-firm trade and value-added measures of trade.

Prof. Gary Gereffi, Duke University, Durham, USA, explained that the global value chain (GVC) framework was developed over the past decade by a diverse interdisciplinary and international group of researchers who tracked the global spread of industries and their implications for both corporations and countries. Global value chain analysis provides both conceptual and methodological tools for looking at the global economy; either with a focus on lead firms and inter-firm networks, using varied typologies of industrial "governance" (top down) or with a focus on countries and regions, which are analyzed in terms of various trajectories of economic and social "upgrading" or "downgrading" (bottom up).



Further details on the forum outcomes are available online:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/s_geneva2011/geneva2011.htm

Vision of the future of international trade statistics

Responding to demands of policy makers for more information on international trade and its relation to global value chains, employment, environment and the interdependence of economies, the participants of the Global Forum on Trade Statistics identify the following points of improvement.

Improve the relevance of international trade statistics by connecting trade information and integrating it with its economic, social, environmental and financial dimensions while minimizing the response burden.

Improve the statistical production process by better defining and organizing the co-operation among national stakeholders

Improve international classifications and correspondence tables relevant for research on international trade and globalization, such as research on trade in value added, on global value chains and on outsourcing of business functions.



<http://comtrade.un.org>

DATABASES AND PUBLICATIONS:

UN COMTRADE DATA AVAILABILITY END OF 2010

Data availability increased during 2010 at a similar rate as in 2009. For 135 countries or areas detailed data for the reporting year 2009 was published by the end of 2010, compared with 141 countries or areas

as in the previous year, covering 96.6 per cent of world trade (please see table below). A total of 160 country years were published for the first time in 2009 compared with 196 for the year before.

UN Comtrade publication Statistics*

reporting year	Data availability					Newly (first time) published					Total published**				
	by end of 2010	by end of 2009	by end of 2008	by end of 2007	by end of 2006	in 2010	in 2009	in 2008	in 2007	in 2006	in 2010	in 2009	in 2008	in 2007	in 2006
2000	174	173	172	170	166	1	1	2	4		17	29	27	23	12
2001	174	173	172	168	163	1	1	4	5	1	15	29	39	28	14
2002	175	174	170	166	163	1	4	4	3	6	16	32	42	32	19
2003	175	173	169	163	159	2	4	6	4	8	18	37	39	40	28
2004	176	175	168	160	146	1	7	8	14	20	19	42	55	51	50
2005	174	173	163	150	120	1	10	13	30	120	13	48	44	61	120
2006	171	170	162	133		1	8	29	133		19	38	59	133	
2007	164	162	142			2	20	142			23	56	142		
2008	156	141				15	141				62	141			
2009	135					135					135				
Sum	1674	1514	1318	1110	917	160	196	208	193	155	337	452	447	368	243

*In terms of number of countries or areas.

** Newly published datasets plus revisions (excluding revisions within the year).

The analytical trade tables are published in the

[UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics \(MBS\)](#)



But they are also available online at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/analyticaltradetables.htm>

ANALYTICAL TRADE TABLES PUBLISHED IN THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF STATISTICS

The following analytical tables on international merchandise trade statistics have been updated since the last issue of this newsletter. They are published in the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (MBS) and are also available online at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/analyticaltradetables.htm>

Table	Description	Latest data	Published
T 18	Fuel imports, developed economies: unit values, volume indices and value	4th quarter, 2010	Mar 2011
T 19	Indicators on fuel imports, developed economies	4th quarter, 2010	Mar 2011
T 35	Total imports and exports by regions and countries or areas	4th quarter, 2010	Mar 2011
T 36	Total imports and exports: value, volume and unit value/price	4th quarter, 2010	Mar 2011
T 37	Trade indices for countries in U.S. dollars	3rd quarter, 2010	Jan 2011
T 38	External trade conversion factors by countries	4th quarter, 2010	Mar 2011
T 39	Trade indices for regions in U.S. dollars	3rd quarter, 2010	Feb 2011
T 40	Manufactured goods exports: unit values, volume indices and value	4th quarter, 2010	Mar 2011

UNSD DATA REQUEST 2011 – NEW DATA FIELDS

In February 2011 UNSD sent out its annual data request to non-OECD countries (OECD is requesting and sharing with UNSD the data for its member countries). The data request is asking for annual but also for monthly and quarterly (if only quarterly data is available) data and the inclusion of four new data fields according to the new

recommendations for merchandise trade statistics (IMTS 2010) if such data is available. These new data fields are (i) Second partner country or area, (ii) Second value for imports (FOB), (iii) Mode of transport and (iv) Custom procedure code (or applicable transaction code) – see table below.

To learn more about the new data request by UNSD, please visit

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/IMTS/datacollection.htm>

Second partner country or area	In national nomenclature; country of consignment for imports and country of consignment (destination) for exports
Second value for imports	In national currency or US dollars; FOB for imports
Mode of transport	The means of transport used when goods enter or leave the economic territory in the encouraged nomenclature provided in IMTS 2010, para. 7.2 or national nomenclature
Custom procedure code (or applicable transaction code)	Code of the customs procedure applied to individual transactions by customs; any applied procedure or transaction code if customs procedure codes are not available or if additional codes are used

For more information regarding the Annual Totals Table:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/annual%20totals.htm>

FOURTH EDITION OF THE ANNUAL TOTALS TABLE HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE

The fourth edition of the Annual Totals Table (ATT) has been issued and is available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/annual%20totals.htm>. The ATT provides annual totals of imports and exports for all countries for the years 2000 to 2009 as far as such data are available for publica-

tion. The ATT is an effort to reconcile and explain any differences in the merchandise trade data published by UNSD and an important tool to ensure the quality of the data published on UN Comtrade. A reference and link to the Common Dataset (CDS) at WTO is provided.

See this final version of IMTS 2010 on our website:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm>

INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS (IMTS 2010) SUBMITTED FOR REPRODUCTION AND TRANSLATION

IMTS 2010 has been submitted for reproduction and translation. It has been carefully edited and an index has been added. This final version is available on the UNSD website at [\[trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm\]\(http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm\). The publication is expected to become available in the coming months.](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/</p>
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COOPERATION WITH COUNTRIES AND AGENCIES:

RESULTS OF FIRST VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE EG-IMTS ON THE UPDATE OF THE IMTS COMPILERS MANUAL

In its first virtual meeting on the update of the Compilers Manual which took place from 12 January to 28 February 2011 the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (EG-IMTS) overall agreed with the annotated outline and the proposed contents of the individual chapters

of the Compilers Manual, subject to several amendments and clarifications. The report of the meeting is available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm>.

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Past reports of the
Expert Group meet-
ings are available at
the WTO website:

[http://imts.wto.org/
task_e.htm](http://imts.wto.org/task_e.htm)

WORLDWIDE CONSULTATION ON THE IMTS COMPILERS MANUAL, MARCH/APRIL 2011

The purpose of this worldwide consultation is to invite countries to review the draft annotated outline for the updated IMTS Compilers Manual and to send their comments/suggestions in order to ensure that this Manual addresses the issues and needs of compilers of merchandise trade statistics in countries to the best possible extent.

The annotated draft outline and the response form are available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm>. Countries are requested to return the completed questionnaire to the following e-mail address (comtrade@un.org) by 22 April 2011.

PROGRESS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS - SIDE EVENT DURING THE 42ND SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION

The Statistical Commission met in New York from 22 to 25 February 2011. The side-event on trade statistics "Progress in International Trade Statistics" focused on

the follow-up to the Global Forum on Trade Statistics which took place earlier in the month in Geneva.

RESULTS OF THE MEETINGS OF THE EXPERT GROUPS ON TRADE STATISTICS, LUXEMBOURG, 28 - 30 MARCH 2011

The meeting of the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (EG-IMTS), which took place from 28-29 March 2011 in Luxembourg focused on the implementation of IMTS 2010 and discussed the drafting and various specific technical issues of the IMTS Compilers Manual and UNSD's request for new data elements to be provided by countries, in particular the recording and provision of customs proce-

dures codes and the country of consignment. The subsequent joint session with the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, which met in parallel, discussed the follow-up to the Global Forum on trade statistics, the vision paper "International Trade Information Systems in 2020" and the proposal for a compendium of relevant practices and examples in linking trade and business statistics.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

WORKSHOPS ON IMTS PLANNED FOR 2011

During 2011 UNSD considers conducting at least two workshops on IMTS implementation in the second half of 2011, one for countries of Eastern Europe and Central

Asia and a second one for countries of Eastern/ South-eastern and Southern Asia. Full details will become only available later in the year.

EDITORIAL NOTE

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