

UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

**4TH MEETING OF THE UN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON BUSINESS & TRADE
STATISTICS**

23 June 2021

Opening Statement
Stefan Schweinfest
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I am very happy to welcome you to the 4th Meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics. Although we have not met face to face since the second meeting held in New York in 2019, the virtual format has allowed even more people to participate and broadened the scope and inclusiveness of the meetings.

I want to thank you for joining from all different time zones. It really shows your commitment to this work. I also want to especially thank Stefano Menghinello for his leadership of the Committee since its establishment in 2018, the task team leads and the UNSD staff involved in bringing these meetings together. To advance the work, the priorities of the Committee need to reflect those of countries and relevant international and regional organizations so we can all work towards the common good and build on each other's strengths. In this regard, I would also like to recognize the strong partnerships with Eurostat, OECD, UNCTAD, UNIDO, ITU, FAO and ILO in building the global programme on business and trade statistics through co-investment and co-production in statistical infrastructure for methods, data and capacity building.

The Statistical Commission recognizes that the policy agenda for business and trade statistics is increasingly looking at the interconnectedness of different phenomena, especially the economy, businesses and jobs, international trade, information, communication, and technology, societal well-being, and the environment. And this year, the Statistical Commission endorsed the creation of a Task Team on Trade Statistics under this Committee, with the objective of advancing a joint research agenda on business and trade statistics for the revision of the trade-related standards. Therefore, I am happy to see that integrating the work of the trade statistics community features prominently on the agenda of this meeting.

The Committee has done an admirable job of promoting a coherent vision, as evidenced by working with experts in related fields and by the extensive body of knowledge already produced. The Committee has conducted a pilot consultation on a global core set of principal indicators for business and trade statistics on various thematic areas in support of the the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which will be sent out for global consultation this year, along with an accompanying Manual. There has also been substantial progress in developing a comprehensive assessment tool (the Maturity Model) in support of the implementation of a statistical business register in national statistical systems, which will also be part of a global consultation this year.

As we look ahead, I am excited by topics that will be covered in future Committee meetings, such as furthering the work on global value chains; exploring an initiative to help countries set up a registration system for businesses; advancing the international harmonization of sustainability reporting by businesses; and supporting micro-data linking to measure the impact of business activity in the COVID-19 recovery on different populations and the environment.

I am mindful that the work ahead is quite varied and complex. I am confident this is the right group to accomplish it – we are fortunate to have been able to bring together such an outstanding group of experts from different backgrounds and statistical fields. Let me conclude by wishing you fruitful deliberations in integrating the new Trade Statistics Task Team and determining new workstreams for the 2022-2025 program.