Major New Initiatives Planned by Organizations

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Dissemination of statistics

The current redesign of the UNCTAD web site has given the opportunity of introducing a special section on statistics. The UNCTAD site will provide users with an unrestricted free access to key statistics relating to world trade, commodities, foreign direct investment and development. Time series of basic data covering years as far back as 1950 when data are available will also be at the disposal of users through the UNCTAD on-line databases.

The new UNCTAD web site will be operational soon and will be presented to member States during the next session of the Trade and Development Board to be held in October.

Statistical Methodology

In its Handbook on Statistics and Commodity Price Bulletin, UNCTAD already provides data on commodity price indices. Presently, at the request of UNCTAD economists, the secretariat is looking into the possibility of compiling indices on export prices of manufactured products exported by developing countries and elaborating a methodology enabling the calculation of manufactures terms of trade.

In connection with the project on Common Trade Data Set, more attention will be given to statistics on the Least Developed Countries' (LDCs) total exports and imports of goods. Regular updating of these figures will be implemented through close cooperation between statisticians and economists specialized in LDCs' matters. For this purpose, an exchange of data with WTO was recently introduced and coordination will be reinforced in the coming months.

A modification will be introduced concerning the base year for commodity price indices: the base year 1985 will be relinquished and the base year 2000 adopted as a result of the 1999, 2000 and 2001 data received from COMTRADE.

Thematic work

Foreign direct investment:

UNCTAD, together with ESCWA, is implementing a capacity-building technical assistance project to collect data on FDI and operations of affiliates in selected countries in the ESCWA region. The project aims at increasing FDI flows into the ESCWA region and is expected to contribute to the economic development and integration of ESCWA member countries into the global trading and financial system.

In addition, UNCTAD has launched a survey to collect data on foreign investment in banking and insurance (financial services). These include estimates of FDI, as well as measurement of foreign penetration in domestic markets (i.e. shares of foreign banks in total assets and liabilities of the banking sector, shares of foreign insurance companies in total insurance premiums).