



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

STATISTICS DIVISION
TRADE STATISTICS BRANCH
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS SECTION

Correlation and conversion tables used in UN Comtrade

1. The Harmonized Coding and Description System (Harmonized System or HS) is regularly updated by the World Customs Organization (WCO) to accommodate the emergence of new and disappearance of previously existing products. The fourth edition, HS 2007 (which is a substantial revision from previous versions), came into effect on 1 January 2007. Many countries provide their detailed trade data for the reporting year 2007 according to the HS 2007. On 1 January 2012 the fifth edition, HS 2012, came into affect.
2. The WCO provides correlation tables between the latest and the previous version of the HS, which are available at the WCO website.¹
3. Based on the WCO correlation tables UNSD derives so called conversion tables, which allow the conversion of data submitted by countries in a later version of the HS to earlier HS versions (and other trade classifications). UN Comtrade provides for the convenience of users the trade data submitted by countries in their original classification and, applying these conversion tables, converted to the earlier versions of HS, SITC and BEC.
4. Users might decide to use exclusively originally reported data or construct their own conversion tables more suitable for their purposes. By design, the conversion tables are imperfect, unless the correlation table already constitutes a conversion table, as it is the case for the conversion from HS2007 to SITC, Rev.4. Users should be aware of the potential shortcomings (different contents than indicated, break in series) of conversion tables and converted data. The conversion tables used in UN Comtrade have been developed based on the best judgment of the staff at the International Merchandise Trade Statistics Section (IMTSS) of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) but have no binding character whatsoever. The use of the conversion tables as well as of the converted data available on UN Comtrade is at the users' own risk. The usage agreement of UN Comtrade applies <http://comtrade.un.org/db/help/LicenseAgreement.aspx>.
5. The enclosed explanatory notes describe the methodology used by UNSD in developing these conversion tables. These notes cover the development of conversion tables for data conversion from HS 2007 to earlier version of HS, to SITC, Rev.3 and to BEC. However, the same or similar principles have been applied for the development of earlier conversion tables and are currently being applied to the development of conversion tables for HS 2012. The correlation and conversion tables are available on the UNSD website at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/conversions/HS%20Correlation%20and%20Conversion%20tables.htm>.
For further questions please contact us at comtrade@un.org.

¹ See http://www.wcoomd.org/home_hsnomenclature_2012.htm