



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics
First meeting
New York, 3-6 December 2007

Presentation
UNSD

Item 14: Meta Data and Data Quality

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International Merchandise Trade Statistics
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Agenda item 14

Metadata and data quality

UNSD Introduction

(by Matthias Reister)

Metadata – current situation

- IMTS, Rev2 recommends that countries publicly disseminate documentation on their sources and methods and 75% of countries confirmed to comply with this recommendation.
- Yet, based on the experience from the UN Comtrade data collection crucial metadata is **often very difficult or impossible to obtain** – also the majority of countries do not include metadata in their data submissions to international organizations.
- Also, available metadata is **often incomplete** and at times statistics appear to be not fully aware how international recommendations are implemented.

Metadata

– possible issues for discussion

- Should the international recommendations regarding the dissemination of metadata be strengthened ??
- How could the recommendations on metadata be strengthened ??

Data quality – current situation

- IMTS, Rev2 does not cover the issue of data quality.
- IMTS, Compilers Manual discusses problem areas at Customs (registration errors) and Statistics (processing errors) and makes suggestions
- National practices to ensure data quality vary significantly, often there is a lack of IT use and a lack of coordination between Customs and Statistics
→ **Clear lack of standards**
- International recommendations in other statistical areas such as Distributive Trade Statistics include a chapter on metadata and data quality

Data quality

– possible issues for discussion

- Should IMTS, Rev3 contain recommendations / a chapter on data quality ??
- Should such recommendations/ such a chapter deal with data quality on a conceptual basis and provide for example a **quality framework** or dimensions and indicators for data quality ??
- Should such recommendations/ such a chapter deal with the **practical steps**/ measures/ best practices for ensuring data quality in IMTS ??

Thank you for your attention