



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 5: Need for revision*

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

## **Towards the revised recommendations for international merchandise trade statistics**

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- **I. Background**
- **II. Reasons for the revision**
- **III. Organization of the revision  
process**
- **IV. Implementation**

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# I. Background

- The current recommendations for international merchandise trade statistics were adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 29th session in 1997 and published (1998) in *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, Revision 2 (IMTS, Rev.2)*.
- In 2004 *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual (IMTS:CM)* was issued to assist countries in implementation of IMTS, Rev. 2.
- Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 4 issued in 2007
- Supplement to the Compilers Manual will be finalized in December 2007

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- **Work of an inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (TFIMTS)**
- **Joint UNSD/OECD data trade collection and processing system**
- **Series of training workshops by UNSD and other TFIMTS members**
- **Improved availability of international merchandise trade statistics: UN Comtrade**

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## **II. Reasons for the revision**

- **Changes in the way international merchandise trade is conducted, e.g., increasing globalization of the production and distribution processes, expansion of intra-firm trade, transactions with the bundled goods and services components**
- **Changes in the legal environment such as adoption by the WCO Council of the Revised Kyoto Convention and new legal/administrative measures for increased security or further simplification of customs formalities**
- **Changes in the related statistical frameworks, like the 1993 System of National Accounts and the Balance of Payments Manual**

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- **Changes in user needs - increased demand for more detailed and timely data**
  - **for market access negotiations and trade policy purposes;**
  - **for market research by business community and economic analysis (e.g., linking industry and trade data);**
- **Need for further clarification of some existing concepts and improvement of the overall readability**

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### **III. Organization of the revision process**

- **Establishment of the United Nations Expert Group on International Merchandised Trade Statistics (EG-IMTS)**
  - the first EG-IMTS meeting on 3-6 December 2007 in New York.
- **UNSD report to the 39th session of the UN Statistical Commission**

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- **List of issues for the first round of a worldwide consultation in May - June 2008 (based on conclusions of EG-IMTS and TFIMTS comments)**
- **A virtual session of the EG-IMTS in November 2008 to assess how to incorporate the consultation results into the first version of the provisional draft of IMTS, Rev.3.**

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- **The first version of the provisional draft of IMTS, Rev.3 - by the end of March 2009**
- **Worldwide consultation - April-May 2009; UNSD will prepare a report summarizing results of the consultation**
- **The second version of the provisional draft (August 2009)**
- **The second meeting of EG-IMTS for review and endorsement - September/October 2009.**

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- **The final draft of IMTS, Rev.3 (by the end of November 2009) will be submitted to the Commission for adoption at its 41<sup>st</sup> session (February 2010)**
- **After the adoption, IMTS, Rev.3 will be made available on the UNSD website (English original) and countries will be notified that the revised recommendations are in effect**
- **IMTS, Rev.3 will be translated in all official UN languages and published in 2010/2011**

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## **IV. Implementation**

- **Beginning the second half of 2010 UNSD will begin its technical assistance activities to help countries in implementation of IMTS, Rev.3.**
- **The programme of technical assistance will include developing of training materials and preparation of the updated version of *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual*.**