Workshop
Compilation of International Merchandise Trade Statistics

**Organized by the United Nations Statistics Division, the United Nations Conference on
Trade and Development and the Economic Commission for Africa
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Purpose of Workshop

Identify difficulties and find solutions for a timely and high quality
compilation of international merchandise trade statistics while using
mostly automated customs systems. Clarify the roles of the Customs
office and the National Statistical Office to achieve this goal.

Issues

Six main issues were identified during the workshop meeting, namely

1. ASYCUDA as a system for Customs
2. EUROTRACE as a tool for the NSO
3. COMPLETENESS of the data
4. QUALITY (Incl. TIMELINESS) of the data
5. GENERAL TRADE SYSTEM recommendation
6. REPORTING of the trade data

These issues were discussed because of their importance for the trade
statistics and because the respective roles of Customs and NSO are not
always clearly defined.

Discussions

ASYCUDA
- ➢ Implementation of ASYCUDA ++
  - ✓ Gambia (problems with 2.7)
  - ✓ Ethiopia (partial change)
- ➢ Sensitivity checks
  - ✓ Ghana (too many high risk declarations?)
- ➢ DTI (Direct Trader Input)
  - ✓ Malawi, Ethiopia - Do traders need too much help?
- ➢ Documentary checks
  - ✓ Malawi – SA instead of ZA
  - ✓ Sudan – CH instead of CN

EUROTRACE
- ➢ Problems with DOS version
  - ✓ Gambia – Making Reports
  - ✓ Ghana – Fixed (6-digit) positions
- ➢ Problems with Windows version
  - ✓ Ethiopia – Bugs in operation, needs RDBMS knowledge
- ➢ ASYCUDA ++ does not work with DOS version

COMPLETENESS of data
- ➢ Customs data are incomplete
  - ✓ SURVEY: COMESA – USA, COMESA – EU
  - ✓ Low value trade threshold
  - ✓ Cross-Border trade
  - ✓ Remote offices
- ➢ Non-Customs sources
  - ✓ Oil (Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya)
  - ✓ Electricity (Ghana)
- ➢ Is enterprise survey necessary?
  - ✓ Malawi Exports

QUALITY of data (Including TIMELINESS)

- ➢ Timeliness
  - ✓ High Risk Declarations (Physical Examination)
  - ✓ Remote Offices
  - ✓ Non-Customs Sources
  - ✓ Data checking (feedback from Customs – Service Level Agreement)
- ➢ Quality
  - ✓ Documentary checks (Customs)
  - ✓ Validity checks (NSO)
- ➢ What is acceptable as minimum Quality in minimum Time?

GENERAL TRADE SYSTEM
- ➢ Recommendation: register and report entries into warehouse, free zones (Ethiopia)

- ➢ CPC procedures: Who decides if transaction goes into trade data? ASYCUDA could help

REPORTING of the trade data
- ➢ Software problems (Gambia)
- ➢ Provisional versus Final data
  - ✓ How quick can you produce Provisional data? (Automated data + preliminary figures for not available data?)
  - ✓ When do data become Final?
- ➢ Should NSO insist on being the only source of trade statistics? (Ethiopia)