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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

STATISTICS DIVISION  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS BRANCH

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WORKSHOP ON THE COMPILATION OF INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS  
Addis Ababa, 8-11 November 2004

## *Country Presentation*

# Statistics - Gambia

*Presentation by the Central Statistics Department of The Gambia*

## **EXTERNAL TRADE STATISTICS OF THE GAMBIA**

The External Trade Statistics of the The Gambia are published by the Central Statistics Department (CSD). The basic source of information is the Customs and Excise Department of The Gambia. The information provides statistical figures on imports, domestic exports and re-exports categorized by chapter, division, and direction of trade by principal counties. It also gives an analysis of the sector in the economy. Statistics of Gambia's External Trade are recorded on the basis of the General System of registration. The criterion for this method is the entrance of goods into or departure from the Customs area of control, The import/export statistics are compiled from the bills of entry prepared by the importers/exporters or their agents. The Customs and Excise Department sends a magnetic data medium with details of all imports and export transactions to Central Statistics Department where the data is cleared and aggregated by product and country usually on monthly basis. Computerized Customs procedures, on the other hand, help to make trade statistics available earlier, In view of the considerable volume of Customs declaration, a special software programs called EURATACE is prepared for trade Statistics. Such programs capture, clean and process the raw data and prepared standardized outputs i.e. exports and imports by product and country in trade indices such as terms of trade. Apart from Customs declaration, there are other primary data sources for External trade statistics, namely exporting farms like Hides and Skins Company, Radville farms, cotton ginnery, Fisheries Department, Groundnut exporting farm (Premier Agro Industrial) etc.

Central Statistics Department is generally bound by rather restrictive confidentiality requirements over desegregated data. We do not release data relating to a particular enterprise or data pertaining to individuals, According to the statistical act 1972, Central Statistics Department is empowered to collect all types of information at all types.

## **VALUES AND QUANTITIES**

Customs sometimes neglect information on the quantities of goods traded especially goods with supplementary quantities (e.g. pairs, numbers, liters etc). This may be partially explained by the relatively poor quality of data on export and import quantities, However all Customs entries should indicate CIF value in Gambian Dalasi and not in foreign currency.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

As an economic indicator, the government for its policy analysis relies very heavily on trade information.

1. In over all planning of the nations industrialization programs.
2. Trade statistics provide data for increasing duty and sales tax.
3. For balance of payment purposes.
4. National Accounts Estimate
5. Economic statistics, Trade by End trade use etc.

The trade data is collected from Customs and Excise Department on monthly basis, At the end of every month, Customs and Excise Department send us two diskettes Of air and sea ports. These diskettes are loaded to our Euro- trace soft ware which will then indicate and highlight errors of the data. Most of these errors are quantity missing or wrong quantities/wrong importer/exporter codes etc. The errors are then sent back for further checking and rectification.

The report contains detailed data for the calendar years. A comprehensive publication setting out the details of quantity and value imports by Harmonized Systems (H.S) and country of origin and exports from the Gambia by country of destination are always included. Data are collected for quantities, values and duties which are based on the declaration of imports and exports. The accuracy of the statistics is based an the declaration made in the document5s of entry which largely depends upon goodwill and intelligent co-operation of importers/exporTers,  
**REPORTING PERIOD**

The trade report is always compiled on monthly, quarterly and annual basis, The method of in co-operation of corrections in respect of the data already compiled and published has a significant bearing on the use and interpretation of the monthly trade data.

Correction arises because of the following reasons:

1. Information originally reported in the document is later corrected by the importers/exporters.
2. The main uses of the statistics usually reveals are error, the methods of correction of the values and quantities is a major problem to the Central Statistics Department.

### **PRESENTATION OF TRADE STATISTICS**

Trade Statistics are presented in the following

1. In the form statistical tables.
2. In the form of written analysis summarizing the nations trading position.
3. In the form of graphics and charics.

### **COUNTRY ORDER AND NOMENCLATURE**

In the tables, the countries are arranged in continental and regional order irrespective of their political status. The order followed for the continental divisions. These are Aftica, Asia, Europe; E,U countries etc.For reasons of geographical clarity, some country names in the tables have been abbreviated. These abbreviated country names are, of course, intended to be of purely geographical significance to the reader to convey no political implications.