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## **Country Paper**

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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

## **Background of CSO and Its Functions**

CSO was formed formerly as the Central Statistical and Economic Department (CSED), under “The Central Statistical Authority Act” Act No 34 of 1952, to collect, compile, analyze and disseminate statistics and related information; to constitute the Act for Myanmar government and by arrangements with various agencies providing statistical services; to formulate, and ensure compliance with, standards for the carrying out by official bodies of operations for statistical purposes and to ensure coordination of operations of all official bodies in the whole field of statistical operations.

Myanmar’s statistical system is a decentralized one. In Myanmar, all of government departments set up their own planning and statistical units to carry out their needs.

The CSED had been reorganized as the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) in 1974, with the view to functioning more effectively in statistical matters. At the same time CSO was upgraded with respect to the professional skill and strength of the organization. With close cooperation and coordination between CSO and the other statistical units, CSO is, as a focal point, producing all-round socioeconomic statistics of the country.

## **Historical Background of Foreign Trade Statistics**

In Myanmar, compilation of foreign trade statistics was made before independence of Myanmar (1948). They are organized according to the Trade Classification List (TCL) and published annually by Customs Department by the name of “Sea-borne Trade and Navigation of Burma (Myanmar)”. The last issue of the publication was for the fiscal year, 1948-49.

After independence, the responsibility of compilation of Foreign Trade data was upon CSO. CSO organized the data with the help of the Customs Department when CSO was set up in 1952, a group of staff was sent to the Customs Department for compilation of Foreign Trade Data with cooperation of the Customs Officials.

### **Foreign Trade Statistics System**

Foreign trade data are organized in all nations of the world as a by-product of Customs Import or Export Control. In Myanmar, for each and every shipment of exports, exporters must submit a set of prescribed export declaration forms. They are to be filled with necessary data and relevant H.S codes with supporting documents. Those documents are sent to Customs Department for appraisal and assessment. After that the original forms are detached from their sets. Those forms are sent to the statistical compilation section of Customs Department. When a consignment of goods arrives at a port of entry, it is unloaded into a warehouse, waiting for the importer to fill the necessary documents. Those documents are sent to the statistical compilation section of Customs Department. This section compiles the data and sends the diskette weekly and monthly to CSO for further data processing. The data on diskette contains 34 fields for Export and 24 fields for Imports. After processing the data, CSO again checks the data manually.

### **Institutional arrangements**

National methodology of compilation and dissemination of Foreign trade statistics is based on UN IMTS, Rev 2. Central Statistical Organization is the responsible agency for the compilation and dissemination of trade statistics. Customs Department is responsible for data collection based on Export and Import declaration forms, providing raw data to the CSO. CSO has set up a steering committee on Export/Import statistics head by the Director General of CSO, comprising Customs

Department, Department of Border Trade and Directorate of Trade. This committee is regularly meet to provide effective Foreign Trade Statistics.

### **Sources of Data**

Export declaration forms and import declaration forms filled by the respective exporters and importers and checked by customs officials constitute the major source of information in compiling foreign trade statistics. Up to 2000-2001, statistics on rice and rice products, timber, gem, marine products and oil and gas are obtained from the Myanmar Agricultural Product Trading (MAPT), Myanmar Timber Enterprise, Myanmar Gem Enterprise, Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited, Department of Fishery and Myanmar oil an Gas Enterprise respectively. Since 2001-2002, all exports and imports statistics are obtained from the customs department.

### **Code System**

CSO compiled foreign trade data based on Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) of the United Nation. Later this system was modified to be in line with the requirements of Myanmar. However, from 1992 to 1995, Foreign Trade Statistics were classified according to Myanmar Tariff and Statistical Nomenclature based on the Harmonized Commodities Description and Coding System 1992 Version was introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1992. And the 1996 WCO amendment to the H.S Nomenclature was implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997.

And now, a new version of the Customs Tariff of Myanmar(2003) updated with the 2002 WCO amendment to the H.S Nomenclature at 6-digit level and integrated with the AHTN(ASEAN Harmonized Tariff Nomenclature) classification at the 8-digit level. And also Myanmar Statistical requirements are here with annexed at the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> digit levels to the tariff lines at 8-digit level.

With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2003, The Customs Tariff of Myanmar (2003) replaces The Customs Tariff of Myanmar(1996 version). The H.S Codes in this tariff nomenclature based on the WCO 2002 amendment are harmonized at the 8-digit level for use by all ASEAN member countries. This new description and coding system not only contributed some extent of trade facilitation in the ASEAN region through consistent, predictable and uniform interpretation in the classification of goods but also symbolizes a major milestone in ASEAN regional economic co-operation. These are 21 sections, 98 chapters and 1241 headings.

### **Data On Border Trade**

Myanmar has border trade with four neighbouring countries. They are Bangladesh, India, China and Thailand. The prospects of border trade of Myanmar are in progress.

In Myanmar, the Department of Border Trade was established in 1996. The new system of border trade was introduced in 1987. It consisted of Normal-Trade method and Cross-Border Trade method. There are altogether 13 border trade checkpoints. The two checkpoints are between Myanmar and Bangladesh. Three checkpoints are with India. There are four checkpoints with china. Between Myanmar and Thailand, there are four checkpoints. The unit of customs-staff was attached to the checkpoints. Those staffs are responsible for keeping a record of the trade data. The customs outstations send monthly trade data to Customs Head Office. The data come to CSO through Customs Head Office. The value of commodity by country is not obtained monthly in time.

### **Problem encountered**

The most important problems encountered are as follows:

(1) Errors in customs documents

- (2) Under valuation of Import Invoice
- (3) Classification and coding error
- (4) Errors in Data Entry
- (5) Unreported local border trade
- (6) Delay in receiving Customs declarations and dealing with missing Customs declaration forms especially in Border Trade.

### **Mode of Transport**

CSO compile trade statistics by mode of transport based on Export and Import declaration form. The mode of transport is identified as follows:

- (1) Air
- (2) Sea
- (3) Road
- (4) Pipeline

### **Affiliated Trade**

CSO compiles export and import statistics by sector (government/private) and type of Trade (CMP/Drawback) for balance of payment statistics monthly.

### **Change of Ownership**

CSO compiles detailed commodity by partner trading country based on UN country code and trade with partner trading country.

### **Conclusion**

CSO has always been trying to accelerate the foreign trade sector. The data on foreign trade are being used now by the government and the wider community. According to structural changes of GDP by sector, trade sector occupies the second

place in the national accounts except Agriculture sector. Now CSO has been presenting weekly, monthly and yearly reports of foreign trade statistics.