

**Workshop on updated and new recommendations for
International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS 2010) and
their implementation in countries of the Sub-Saharan Africa region**

Lusaka, Zambia, 1-5 November, 2010

**Agenda item 19:
An overview of the UN Comtrade database and
IMTS Analytical Outputs
UN Comtrade enhancement programme**



Presentation by Matthias Reister
Chief, Section of International Merchandise Trade Statistics
Trade Statistics Branch, United Nations Statistics Division
E-mail: reister@un.org

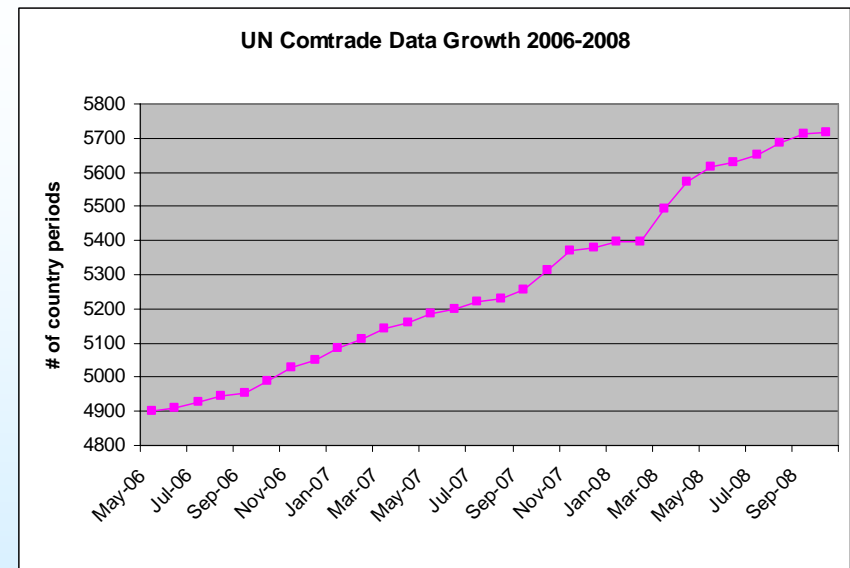
What is UN Comtrade

- The United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database
- Maintained by UN Statistics Division / Trade Statistics Branch
- Contains detailed imports and exports statistics reported by statistical authorities of close to 200 countries or areas since year 1962
- Considered the most comprehensive trade database available in Internet with more than 1.5 billion records.



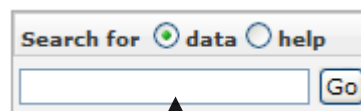
Coverage

- A typical record is – for instance – the exports of cars from Germany to the United States in 2007 in terms of value (US dollars), weight and supplementary quantity (number of cars).
- Only up to HS 6-digits
- The database is continuously updated. Whenever trade data are received from the national authorities, they are standardized by the UN Statistics Division and then added to UN Comtrade.





Main Features

Data Extraction



A search interface with the text "Search for" followed by two radio buttons: "data" (which is selected) and "help". Below this is a text input field and a "Go" button.

- Various basic extraction methods: Text search, Short Cut Query, Basic Selection, Express Selection
 - Download up to 20 millions records per query
- Comtrade data also disseminated in UNdata  
- Advanced data extraction via Web Service for large unattended data transfer

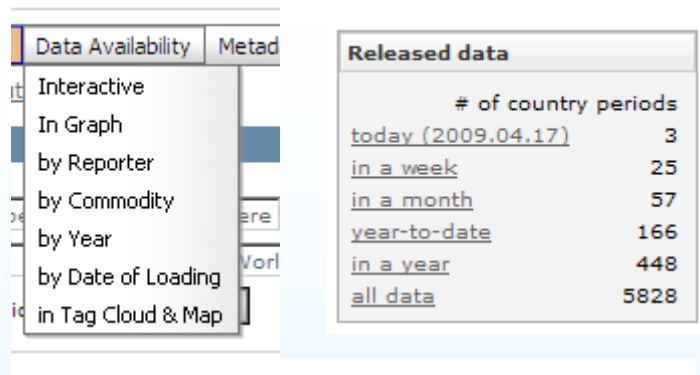
Personalization

- Save frequently used query; Set new data alert; Automated data extraction
- Create country or commodity groupings; Set frequently used countries / commodities
- Customize download/output format

Main Features (cont.)

Data Availability and Metadata

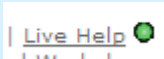
- Multiple way to view available data
- Each data release accompanied by Explanatory and Publication notes
- Individual footnote records also available



The screenshot shows a 'Data Availability' dropdown menu with options: Interactive, In Graph, by Reporter, by Commodity, by Year, by Date of Loading, and in Tag Cloud & Map. To the right is a 'Released data' table:

	# of country periods
today (2009.04.17)	3
in a week	25
in a month	57
year-to-date	166
in a year	448
all data	5828

Support and Help

- Browse Knowledge Base for any questions
- Use Community Forum for peer support
- Chat during business hours 
- Email to comtrade@un.org



The screenshot shows two sections of the Knowledge Base:

Most Popular Articles...

- ▶ [Q10062 - INFO: First Time User](#)
- ▶ [Q10173 - INFO: Commodity Trade Statistics Publications](#)
- ▶ [Q10102 - INFO: UN Comtrade Reference Tables](#)
- ▶ [Q10104 - INFO: Comtrade: Manuals & Documentations](#)
- ▶ [Q10146 - INFO: Data Query & Extraction Manual](#)

Latest Additions...

- ▶ [Q10259 - INFO: Areas NES codes redefined](#)
- ▶ [Q10050 - INFO: UN Comtrade SDMX](#)
- ▶ [Q10102 - INFO: UN Comtrade Reference Tables](#)
- ▶ [Q10256 - INFO: Areas not elsewhere specified \(Areas, NES\)](#)
- ▶ [Q10255 - FAQ: Values on different levels of HS/SITC Classification](#)

Useful FAQ

- Why our data are needed?
 - To have a complete world or regional coverage (for various analytical outputs); otherwise your data will be estimated
- How's about data confidentiality?
 - It is usually sufficient to protect confidentiality in HS 6-digits. If not, data can be suppressed as long as the chapter can still be identified (see presentation on data confidentiality)
- What are the benefits for data providers?
 - Visibility for your trade data, as UN Comtrade is used / referenced by many users, such as trade negotiation in WTO
 - Free unlimited access, can be used as a starting point in reconciliation study

Useful FAQ (cont.)

- When do you need the data?
 - Initial request is sent in February. It is preferable to have data within 6 months after the end of the reference year
- Final data is not ready within 6 months, but the preliminary data is available, do you accept it?
 - Yes, of course. If it is a preliminary data, please mention it explicitly so that the data set will be clearly flagged / noted as provisional data
- What are the required data items?
 - Annual trade by partners and detailed commodities with value, net weight and supplementary quantity. Data in HS 6-digits are required, tariff line level are preferred
- Is there any special requirement for data format?
 - No. It can be in any electronic format that can be easily transformed, such as text, excel, dbase, etc

IMTS Analytical Outputs

- Three working areas:
 - Total trade: values, indices and conversion factors
 - Trade in manufactured goods and fuel: values, unit values and volume indices
 - Trade matrix data: complete world coverage
- Publications:
 - Tables on Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (MBS)
 - International Trade Statistics Yearbook, Vol. I: Trade by Country and Vol. II: Trade by Commodity (new design for 2008 edition)
 - Annual Totals Table (Country totals compared)

IMTS Analytical Outputs (cont.)

- Frequency:
 - Total trade: monthly, quarterly and annual
 - Trade in manufactured goods and fuel: quarterly and annual
 - Trade matrix: generated in May, July, Sept, Nov, and Dec
- Data Source:
 - Total trade: IMF, MBS Questionnaire, country websites
 - Trade in manufactured goods and fuel: MBS Questionnaire, country websites, and UN Comtrade
 - Trade matrix: UN Comtrade

Thank you for your attention!