



**REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS**  
**Strengthening Data Compilation and Analytical Capacity**  
11-13 September 2017, Suzhou, China

Concept note

BACKGROUND

In order to better measure international trade, new recommendations for international merchandise trade statistics were adopted by all UN member states through the UN Statistical Commission in 2010. Countries have started implementing the new elements of these international standards, notably the trade by mode of transport, trade by country of consignment, trade by inward and outward processing, reporting customs procedure codes, and imports valuation on an FOB basis. And in addition, countries are encouraged to provide the data elements to global repository of official international trade statistics database (UN Comtrade) maintained by UN Statistics Division.

Statistical offices are facing challenges to implement these new data elements, in addition to facing the practical challenges in their data compilation, such as the access to customs and other data sources, exclusion or inclusion of certain transactions, type of goods and territories, and data verification and imputation). Further, the expectations of the users of trade data have increased, and office nowadays also need to provide data analysis or data visualizations, and different skill sets are need to do so.

Finally, international merchandise trade statistics should be properly understood in conjunction with other types of economic statistics and macro-economic frameworks, such as national accounts statistics (see the System of National Accounts 2008), balance of payments statistics (see BPM6), and statistics of international trade in services (see MSITS 2010). The links with those statistics should be well understood and the 2012 Guidelines on Integrated Economic Statistics are useful in this regard.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOPS

The main objectives of the workshop are:

- a. to address any questions regarding methodology and challenges in data compilation of IMTS;
- b. to exchange country experiences with issues such as data acquisition, data compilation strategies, data dissemination, etc., related to compilation of IMTS;
- c. to establish close cooperation among institutions providing, compiling and using trade statistics; and
- d. to understand linkages between IMTS and balance of payments statistics and MSITS.

TOPICS

The topics that will be discussed in the workshop are:

- Highlights of international recommendations in the area of economic and trade statistics, notably IMTS 2010 and MSITS 2010
- Selected compilation practices (trade in goods and services) relevant for the region, notably understanding and reducing bilateral trade asymmetries, identifying and recoding e-



commerce transactions, logistical activities through storage of goods in warehousing and statistics of trade in services related to goods;

- Bridging of IMTS and BOP Trade in Goods

### PARTICIPANTS

The workshop is intended for official statisticians from national statistical offices, central banks, customs administrations and ministries in the region, as well as experts from regional and international organizations. One of the goals of seminar is to bring these communities of statisticians closer together both nationally and regionally. Within the framework of Integrated Economic Statistics, it is necessary for national stakeholders to establish good communication channels to collaborate in finding solutions for measurement problems and streamline the production of statistics. At the practical side, the central bank and the statistical office need to work together to produce high-quality trade and balance of payment statistics for evidence-based policy making.

### ORGANIZER

The Workshop is a joint undertaking by General Administration of Customs of China and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

### PLACE and DATES

The Workshop will take place in Suzhou, China from 11 to 13 September 2017.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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