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Geo-nomenclatures and country groupings for use in international merchandise trade statistics (IMTS)

Report by UNSD

Geo-nomenclature used in UN Comtrade

1. When the new joint UNSD-OECD Comtrade Processing System was implemented starting 1. January 2006 UNSD and OECD agreed on a joint list of partner country codes and validity dates for processing and dissemination which accommodates the needs of both organizations.

2. The use of so called basic codes for processing of trade partner information allows coding at the most detailed level during data processing. This information is available to international partner organizations in form of so called tariff line data. For dissemination purposes certain partner information is aggregated into so called composite areas which are considered as most appropriate for dissemination. For example the individual partner entities United States (code 840), Puerto Rico (code 630) and US Virgin Islands (code 850) are aggregated into USA (code 842). While the use of basic codes is fully harmonized between UNSD and OECD, the use of composed areas can and is to a small degree different at the two organizations.

3. The introduction of a joint list of country codes was preceded by a detailed review of existing coding practices of partner information. The most notable change is the adoption of only seven “nes” (not elsewhere specified) regions as partner data for more detailed “nes” regions was not reported in a consistent manner. The remaining and partly new and redefined “nes” regions are: Asia, nes (code 490), Africa, nes (code 577), Europe, nes (code 568), North America, the Caribbean and Central America, nes (code

637), South America, nes (code 473), Oceanea, nes (code 527) and (Other) Areas nes (code 899).

4. Another major change is the introduction of the following individual territories as partner in processing and for dissemination: Antarctica (code 010), American Samoa (code 016), Bouvet Islands (code 074), South Georgia and Sandwich Islands (code 239), Guam (code 316), Heard and McDonald (code 334) and French Southern Territories (code 260). Previously, American Samoa and Guam had been included in US Miscellaneous Pacific Islands (code 849) which is now included for dissemination in the composed area US Minor Outlying Islands (code 581).

5. An important change for data from 2006 onwards is the introduction of Serbia (code 688) and Montenegro (code 499) as individual reporters and as partner territories for dissemination. Previously, partner information on these two territories (including Kosovo) had been aggregated to the composed area Serbia and Montenegro (code 891).

Country groupings for IMTS used by UNSD

4. Starting with the 2004 International Trade Statistics Yearbook UNSD introduced regional groupings according to the regions used in the Millennium Development MDG (MDG) development indicator database[1]. Most notable is the breakdown of Asia into four geographical regions (Eastern, Southern, South-Eastern and Western Asia) and the breakdown of Africa into Northern Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa (see Annex I for details).

These regional groupings are applied in the Country tables of Volume I as well as in the Commodity tables and in Special table A of Volume II of the yearbook. Special tables D to K retained for technical reasons the regional breakdown used in the previous versions of the yearbook which is based on the distinction (i) Developed countries, (ii) Developing countries and (iii) Other, which comprises the former centrally planned economies in Europe. Special table A also contains data aggregated to additional groupings. For the new 2005 International Trade Statistics Yearbook the MDG groupings were also implemented in table H.

[1] See http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Data/RegionalGroupings.htm

Annex I:

Regional grouping applied in the Country tables of Volume I as well as in the Commodity tables and in Special table A of Volume II of the yearbook:

World
Developed Countries
- Asia-Pacific
- Europe
- North America
South-eastern Europe
Commonwealth of Independent States
- CIS Europe
- CIS Asia
Northern Africa
Sub-Saharan Africa
Latin America & the Caribbean
- Caribbean
- Latin America
Eastern Asia
Southern Asia
South-eastern Asia
Western Asia
Oceania
Other