



UNITED NATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

STATISTICS DIVISION  
TRADE STATISTICS BRANCH

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TASK FORCE ON INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS  
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*item 10(c) of the provisional agenda*

## UNSD Trade Statistics Branch Web Site improvements

Report by UNSD

1. The Trade Statistics Branch recently received the UN 21 Award for its improvements of the UN Comtrade website. UN Comtrade is dynamic in its use, is frequently updated and generally offers the user a rich and interesting menu. By contrast, the Trade Branch web site (as part of the overall Statistics Division website) is not as exciting. These web pages are much more static and much less frequently updated. Responding to this situation, the branch intends to enrich the site by adding all documents officially presented by UNSD at various international bodies, including manuals, reports, background documents and other working papers.
2. With respect to the Task Force this means that the documents presented by UNSD at the current and previous meetings will become public. Starting with the most recent documents, UNSD will work its way backwards to add as much historical information to its site as it can find. Scanner technology has advanced in such a way that old publications, reports and manuals can now be archived electronically.
3. UNSD would like to turn its Trade Branch website into a repository of valuable background information. While searching for information in relation to the mandate of the Task Force, it showed that most reports dating from before 1995 are only available in hard copy. The risk is very real that a lot of this hard copy information will be lost over time. Moreover, hard copy materials were and will be very hard to find. In electronic form, however, the repository will be searchable, if perhaps not by individual text.