



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

STATISTICS DIVISION
TRADE STATISTICS BRANCH

**THE UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION
SIDE EVENT OF 41ST SESSION:
SEMINAR ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS: FINDING ANSWERS FOR A CHANGING
WORLD, NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

United Nations Headquarters, New York
Thursday 25 February 2010, 3:00 – 5:00 pm, Conference Room A, TNLB

Report of the meeting

I. Purpose and organization

The seminar on international trade statistics was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division as one of the side events of the 41st session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. The main purpose of the seminar was to provide countries with additional information on what is new in the revised recommendations for international trade statistics as contained in *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, 2010* (IMTS2010) and *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010* (MSITS 2010). The seminar focused on the opportunities the revised recommendations offer to better capture globalization and to further improve trade statistics but also on the challenges in the implementation of these recommendations. The agenda of the seminar included the following items:

1. International trade statistics: achievements, challenges and opportunities;
2. Improving trade statistics and better capturing globalization;
 - a) IMTS2010
 - b) MSITS2010
3. Highlights of the UNSD current trade statistics outputs and future work;
4. General discussion.

Delegates from several countries and from regional and international organizations attended the seminar. UNSD and OECD provided presentations which are available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/sc/2010/trade_10_seminar.htm

UNSD highlighted not only the key achievements in the area of trade statistics in recent years, ranging from improved international databases and methodology to closer international cooperation, but also the future challenges and opportunities. Under agenda item 2 the new recommendations for international merchandise trade statistics (IMTS2010) were introduced with the view of how these are expected to lead to the better measurement of international merchandise trade and globalization. OECD in its presentation (which was given by the representative of WTO on behalf of OECD) highlighted the challenges and developments in international trade, the resulting statistical needs and the possible responses to these needs. UNSD detailed the process of the production of the new recommendations for statistics on international trade in services (MSITS2010) and its main elements and changes. Under agenda item 3 UNSD presented some of its outputs on merchandise trade.

A brief summary of the seminar's findings and conclusions is provided below.

II. Findings and conclusions

The seminar:

- Encouraged countries to implement the revised recommendations for international trade statistics adopted by the 41st session of the UN Statistical Commission and to provide data to users according to these standards recognizing, however, that it is the decision of each country how to organize the implementation process in terms of timing and institutional arrangements;
- Discussed in particular the new recommendations and specific data items including imports valued FOB (which countries are encouraged to compile in addition to the recommended imports CIF), trade by mode of transport, manufacturing services on inputs owned by others, data quality etc.;
- Pointed out that in future activities a due attention shall be given to linking trade and business/enterprise statistics and to the need for more micro data on trade;
- Emphasized the need for further compilation guidance in terms of best practices.