



### SPECIAL FEATURE:

## RESULTS OF THE UNSD QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE PLANS OF IMTS 2010 IMPLEMENTATION

In May 2010 the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) informed countries that the United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-first session held on 23-26 February 2010 adopted the revised and new recommendations as contained in *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010* (IMTS 2010). To better assess their needs and plans, UNSD requested countries to complete a brief questionnaire on the implementation of the new recommendations.

By end of August a total of 100 countries replied to the questionnaire, 28 developed and 72 developing and transition countries. Countries provided a total of 43 comments.

UNSD is very grateful to all countries which replied to this questionnaire and which provided additional comments. UNSD will take the results of the questionnaire into account in its activities for the implementation of IMTS 2010 and share and discuss them with its partner organizations on international and regional level. Some extracts of the report are provided below.

### Awareness and plans for implementation

Two thirds of countries (63%) confirmed that the implementation of IMTS 2010 had already been discussed in their office, though this rate was higher for developed countries (82%) than for developing and transition countries (56%).

Almost a third of countries (32%) expect to implement most of the new recommendations for the reporting year 2011 and another third (34%) for the reporting year 2012. Interestingly, while more developed than developing and transition countries expect implementation to take place for the reporting year 2011 (36% vs. 31%), the percentage of countries that expect a late implementation (for the reporting year 2013 or later) is much higher for developed than developing and transition countries (25% vs. 8%).

### Factors for implementation

An overwhelming majority of developing and transition countries considered each of the four implementation factors identified in the questionnaire as highly important (rated 4 or 5 out of 5). These factors include raising awareness, mobilization of resources, cooperation with involved agencies, and guidance on implementation. By contrast, not one of the four factors was considered of high importance by a majority of developed countries.

### Materials and support

Concerning materials and support, 83% of countries viewed the availability of the updated IMTS Compilers Manual as being of high importance for their office.

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The full report is available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm>



<http://data.un.org/>

## PLANS FOR IMTS 2010 IMPLEMENTATION

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The availability of additional information resources such as website, knowledgebase and hotline was considered by 73% of countries as being of high importance.

The overwhelming majority of developing and transition countries considered activities such as workshops and study visits as being of high importance for the implementation of IMTS 2010. Developed countries, however, considered technical assistance far less important.

### Comments

Several developed countries (member countries of the European Union) pointed out that the implementation of IMTS 2010 is dependent on the respective EU legisla-

tion and the requirements of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). Several developed countries indicated that the burden on businesses can be an important obstacle for implementation.

Several developing and transition countries pointed out that advocacy (raising awareness) and interagency cooperation are critical factors for implementation; however also the burden on respondents and the need for training of data producers (and users) were viewed as critical factors. The need for capacity building and financial assistance, in particular for upgrading the existing IT systems (including at Customs) was also pointed out.

## DATABASES AND PUBLICATIONS: UPGRADE OF UN COMTRADE 2010-2013

The United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-first session held on 23-26 February 2010 adopted *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2`010* (IMTS 2010) containing the revised and new recommendations on merchandise trade statistics and endorsed an outline of the IMTS 2010 implementation programme. In this context, the Commission recognized the importance of the UN Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN Comtrade) as the global database and information platform on international merchandise trade and requested UNSD to enhance its features and metadata.

Acting on the Commission's decision and based on users' feedback, UNSD decided to undertake in 2010-2013 a special effort to upgrade UN Comtrade. The main objec-

tives of the upgrade include: (i) significant enhancement of metadata, (ii) inclusion of new data variables recommended in IMTS 2010, and (iii) adding monthly and quarterly trade data. Among the new data variables to be added are mode of transport, second partner country (country of consignment) and valuation of imports FOB (in addition to imports CIF).

The work on upgrading UN Comtrade has started. However, the inclusion of new data variables and the establishment of the collection, processing and dissemination of monthly and quarterly merchandise trade statistics require major efforts. UNSD hopes that data with the new variables as well as monthly and quarterly data can be disseminated on a regular basis starting in 2013 as part of the upgraded UN Comtrade.

## UN COMTRADE VIA WORLD INTEGRATED TRADE SOLUTION (WITS)

Users can obtain access to UN Comtrade data via the World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS) at <http://wits.worldbank.org/wits/>. WITS is a software developed by the World Bank, in close collaboration and consultation with various International Or-

ganizations including United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Trade Center (ITC), United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) and World Trade Organization (WTO). WITS

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**TOWARDS**  
**IMTS 2010**  
New recommendations for IMTS



<http://comtrade.un.org>



## UN COMTRADE VIA WORLD INTEGRATED TRADE SOLUTION (WITS)

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gives access to major international trade and tariffs data compilations such as UN Comtrade (maintained by the UNSD), TRAINS (maintained by the UNCTAD) and IDB and CTS databases (maintained by the WTO). WITS has now been made fully web based and does not require the installation of a software anymore.

UN Comtrade is free for most users and the same applies to the use of UN Comtrade via WITS. However, subscribers to UN Com-

trade premium access need to authenticate themselves on WITS in order to have unlimited data download on WITS as well. To assist UN Comtrade via WITS users, UNSD prepared a detailed guide on how to activate the WITS account and how UN Comtrade premium users can obtain their authorization code in order to authenticate themselves in WITS – see Trade Statistics Knowledgebase at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradekb/Knowledgebase/> (Search for “WITS”).

## ANALYTICAL TRADE TABLES PUBLISHED IN THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF STATISTICS

The following analytical tables on international merchandise trade statistics have been updated since the last issue of this newsletter. They are published in the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (MBS) and are also available online at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/analyticaltradetables.htm>

Table	Description	Latest data	Published
T 18	Fuel imports, developed economies: unit values, volume indices and value	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2010	Sept 2010
T 19	Indicators on fuel imports, developed economies	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2010	Sept 2010
T 35	Total imports and exports by regions and countries or areas	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2010	Sept 2010
T 36	Total imports and exports: value, volume and unit value/price	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2010	Sept 2010
T 37	Trade indices for countries in U.S. dollars	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter, 2010	July 2010
T 38	External trade conversion factors by countries	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2010	Sept 2010
T 39	Trade indices for regions in U.S. dollars	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter, 2010	Aug 2010
T 40	Manufactured goods exports: unit values, volume indices and value	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2010	Sept 2010
T41	World exports by provenance and destination, totals in U.S. dollars	2009	Jul 2010
T42	Exports by provenance and destination, developed economies by commodity in U.S. dollars	2009	Sept 2010

### YOU HAVE ASKED US:

## UN COMTRADE GRAPHS AND JAVA

**Q:** When accessing the UN Comtrade website using various browsers, certain graphical features do not seem to function properly. What could be the problem?

**A:** In our experience, this problem usually arises when the Java platform is not en-

abled or installed. We have performed various tests and have found that users who do not have a Java platform enabled will not be able to view Comtrade graphs. For questions relating to Java, please contact the provider of Java directly.

Find out more about  
WITS at:

[http://  
wits.worldbank.org/  
wits/](http://wits.worldbank.org/wits/)



The analytical trade tables are published in the

### UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (MBS)



But they are also available online at [http://  
unstats.un.org/unsd/  
trade/imts/  
analyticaltradetables.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/analyticaltradetables.htm)

## DATA CONVERSION ON UN COMTRADE

**Q:** When viewing the "As reported" import data for the United Kingdom for Chapter 88, the trade values appear to be consistent. When the same data is fetched from the HS1996 (H1) dataset, there is a very large drop in traded value between 2006 and 2007. I have looked at the correlation tables between H1, H2 and H3 data, but I cannot understand why there is such a large discrepancy when data is converted from H3 to H1.

**A:** UN Comtrade converts, for the convenience of users—and despite some inherent shortcomings—the data reported by countries into earlier versions of the Harmonized System (HS) and into the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).

This conversion takes place at the most detailed level, meaning on the 6-digit level of the Harmonized System (HS). The HS chapters and heading in the converted HS data are aggregated from the detailed converted data. The reason for the break in series observed by the user is the reporting of confidential data in chapter 88. The confidential data was allocated to chapter 88 but on detailed 6-digit level the value of this data ended up in code 999999. During data conversion the value of this confidential data stayed in 999999 and was then aggregated into chapter 99 while chapter 88 ended up to be lower accordingly. In conclusion, users are advised to carefully analyze the data for any breaks in series when using converted data.

Visit our Knowledge  
Base at:

[http://  
comtrade.un.org/kb/](http://comtrade.un.org/kb/)

Find out more about the  
Lusaka workshop at:

[http://unstats.un.org/  
unsd/trade/WS%  
20Lusaka10/  
ws\\_imts\\_lusaka10.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/WS%20Lusaka10/ws_imts_lusaka10.htm)

Find out more about the  
Istanbul Workshop at:

[http://unstats.un.org/  
unsd/trade/  
S\\_Istanbul2011/  
istanbul2011.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/S_Istanbul2011/istanbul2011.htm)

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### WORKSHOP ON IMTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, 1 – 5 NOVEMBER 2010, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

**Workshop on recommendations for IMTS and their implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1 – 5 November 2010, Lusaka, Zambia.** This workshop on the updated and new recommendations for international merchandise trade statistics (IMTS) and their implementation in countries of the Sub-Saharan African region is organized by UNSD in cooperation with the Common

Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Participants will learn about the new and updated recommendations and share their experiences in the compilation of IMTS and the implementation of the international recommendations (old and new) on IMTS, also with view on identifying issues and best practices for inclusion in the updated IMTS Compilers Manual.

#### JOINT UNSD – EUROSTAT SEMINAR ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS, 25 – 27 JANUARY 2011, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

**Joint UNSD – Eurostat Seminar: International Trade Statistics in a changing world – New challenges and opportunities, 25 – 27 January 2011, Istanbul, Turkey.** This seminar will be a global forum for reviewing challenges and good practices in the implementation of the new and updated international recommendations on trade statistics in order to ensure that the compiled trade

statistics is of the highest possible quality, policy relevant and provides a significantly improved information base for analyzing the globalization and trade policy issues. The seminar will be jointly organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). For further information please visit the website at left.

### EDITORIAL NOTE

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