

Final summary of the Joint Session of the Trade Task Forces, 30 March 2011

The joint session of the two task Forces was chaired by Andreas Lindner (OECD) and Andreas Maurer (WTO).

The outcomes of the preceding meetings of the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics and of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services were presented by the two chairs, WTO and OECD respectively. The progresses in the publication processes of the Manuals were discussed. Manuals should be available rapidly. It was in particular stressed that good coordination between both Task Forces was needed in the development of compilation guidance for cross-cutting issues (e.g. manufacturing services/goods for processing).

The group discussed the follow-up to the conclusions of the Global Forum on Trade Statistics meeting which took place 2-4 February in Geneva. The Global Forum brought together close to 200 participants, including high level policy makers, economists, trade analysts and, of course, many statisticians interested in trade statistics.

Eurostat, OECD, UNSD and WTO then submitted to the group a 2020 vision document for trade statistics. This document was extensively discussed by participants, in particular the item relating to the desire to obtain in the future detailed trade in goods and services data according to CPC. This information which would be collected from business data collection, could serve various needs, including those of trade statistics, balance of payments and national accounts. For trade in services statistics, country experts expressed their doubts as to the feasibility/reliability of collecting such detailed information. Costs and the burden on companies implied by such a data collection were also raised. Other parts of the vision document were also discussed, such as the possibility of having a joint monthly or quarterly release of merchandise, trade in goods and trade in services statistics. The four organizations will exchange on the proposed amendments to the document and attach a revised version to this report.

The meeting took note of the comprehensive document "Impact of globalisation on national accounts" which has been drafted by the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Group of Experts on the Impact of Globalization on National Accounts (GGNA) for submission to the CES in June 2011. Any comments from the members of the group should be sent to the chairs of the joint session by 15 April. These comments will then be sent to UNECE by end April.

Trade by Enterprise Characteristics (TEC): OECD and Eurostat presented their respective work. OECD stressed that it considers TEC being part of a broader, micro-type, setting. Eurostat stressed the fact that TEC data is now part of an EU regulation. Efforts are underway to include non-established (unregistered) traders, wholesale traders, and to extend the scope to services and multinationals.

UNSD reported on its plans to produce a compendium on trade and business statistics which takes a broader perspective and requires input from OECD, Eurostat and WTO. By end 2012, a final version should become available.

OECD reported on the project Trade by Value Added and stressed that a concept note would be jointly prepared by OECD and WTO.

WTO reported on its joint work with IDE-JETRO on international input-output tables. It is intended to publish an atlas type publication, This project is part of WTOs MIWI (Made in the World Initiative) initiative.

TF governance issues: Delegates had a detailed exchange of views on this. There was a quorum of delegates proposing a structure which would allow only one resource person per organisation to attend. This model was adopted and the next spring's meeting will be in the format 1+1+1 (Subject matter x on first day, cross-cutting issues on the 2nd day and subject matter y on the 3rd day). It was also agreed in principle that the TFSITS should meet only once in a year, but continues with 2 meetings for the time being. Several delegates favoured a TF meeting back to back with the WPTGS since all delegates would be there anyway. An option remains in that ½ day TF meeting could be organised after the November 2011 WPTGS meeting.

Concerning future work, it has been agreed to review the agenda points of next year's Task Force meetings at the next OECD Working Party on Trade in Goods and Services (Paris, November 2011).

Next meeting: next spring, either in Washington (IMF) or New York (UNSD).