Joint Session of the inter-agency Task Forces on International merchandise trade statistics and of statistics on International trade in services.

1. Welcome and opening

   Mr. Pietro Gennari opened the meeting. The Joint session tackles cross-cutting issues of both task forces, thus, it is an ideal platform for exchanging ideas and to discuss initiatives in the field of trade which have impact on trade statistics or which it is important to influence in order to integrate trade statistics objectives in the various projects. He also mentioned that FAO, so far traditionally participating only to the merchandise trade statistics task force, would start contributing more to the services task force. Analysing the food chain, in fact requires looking at both trade in goods and trade in services issues, hence the interest in this meeting.

2. Adoption of the provisional agenda

3. Update on the OECD-WTO joint initiative on measuring trade in value added terms

   WTO updated the group on the TIVA initiative which is still work in progress. Estimates already give some strong policy messages as the importance of services and of imports for subsequent exports. It was in particular noted that it is important to improve the availability of supply and use tables especially in African and middle east countries and the quality and availability of trade in services statistics. It was noted that the work would be extended to take into account the income and employment dimensions. Coordination initiatives like the Friends of the Chair can help identify what the next steps are. The task force (TF) flagged the need for a clear communication regarding the results of this initiative. Finaly the relevance of the underlying conventional trade in services and merchandise trade was underlined as crucial input to this work and the need to harmonize basic statistics was flagged.

4. Update on linking trade and business statistics

   The link with business statistics should result in more meaningful trade statistics. The example of Costa Rica's linking of trade and business registers was presented. Such a link requires clear definition of policy needs, establishing the respective data sources and the elements to match. For trade, the characteristics of companies, their participation in trade and job creation/growth are important indicators. For business statistics and registers, the proper udate methodology and distinguishing enterprise from establishment are important aspects. In the context of GVCs, the establishment level is more relevant. Another issue is the use of non-public data providers for business registers. For trade and business registers to be useful for GVC analysis, it is important to map value chains as this is considered a complementary tool to the macro analysis using input/output tables. In addition TEC should be complemented by STEC. At national level, such linkages give insight into product diversification and ownership control. The IT support is also important for the setting up and maintenance of large micro-data warehouses (renting space/Amazon…). UNSD with the help of regional commissions is investigating other countries' willingness to join such efforts and UNIDO offered its help to assist.

5. The Guide on Global Production –Progress report

   The TF took note of the progress report on the Guide on Global production which aims at giving some guidance on unresolved conceptual issues arising from SNA 2008 and BPM6 and of the work plan for 2013-2014. Factory less producers were flagged as a difficult issue. It was noted that treating multy territory enterprises demand some interinstitutional cooperation across countries. It was noted that the presentations were available on the dedicated UNECE website.

6. The revision of the BEC classification and classification of business functions

   The best knwon dimension of the BEC is the classification of products by end use following SNA definitions. The revised BEC will continue to keep these end use categories,but this time completely separated from the broad economic categories, which have been redefined in line with current economic realities. Further disctions made are the distinctions into primary and processed goods as well as into durable and non-durable goods. The revised BEC manual will contain practical guidelines to empirically determinenational use of certain dual use products. This item should be on the agenda for the next meeting of the TFs.

7. Trade statistics and the establishment of a Friend of the Chair Group

   The TF took note of the UNSD report on International Trade Statistics, which was presented at the most recent session of the UN Statistical Commission in February 2013 and which proposes the establishment of a Friends of the Chair group to prepare a concept paper on the measurement of international trade and economic globalisation. The group covers developed and developing countries from all continents, including all 5 BRICS countries. Policy questions, information base and integration and communication would be covered. A generaldraft outline of the concept paper would be discussed end May through electronic discussion. A more detailed draft annotated outline should be prepared in June and a physical meeting could take place in October. The TF noted some communication mechanism would need to be set up to keep the TF informed of the latest developments

8. Any other business and time of next meeting

   The group was informed of a very recent report prepared by Dr. Timothy Sturgeon and commissioned by Eurostat on a new measurement framework for Global Value Chains and Economic Globalization.

   The next meeting would take place during the TF meetings from 16th-18th of October 2013 at the OECD, Paris.