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# **International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010**

*(as submitted for reproduction and translation in March 2011)*

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## **Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

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## Preface

The present *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010* (IMTS 2010) have been prepared in accordance with a decision of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session, held in New York from 26 to 29 February 2008.<sup>a</sup> In that decision, the Commission endorsed the United Nations Statistics Division initiative and strategy for the revision of the recommendations for international merchandise trade statistics as contained in *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, Revision 2*,<sup>b</sup> and requested that the draft revised recommendations be presented to the Commission for adoption at its forty-first session.

The Commission further requested that the revised recommendations provide an updated conceptual framework and guidance on data compilation and dissemination, and be harmonized, to the extent possible, with the revised recommendations for statistics of international trade in services, the balance-of-payments statistics and the system of national accounts. The Commission requested that, in revising the recommendations, due consideration be given to minimizing the cost of the data collection and reporting burden.

The provisional draft IMTS 2010 was prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, in cooperation with members of the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics and the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics. It incorporated inputs from national statistical offices and international organizations received during two rounds of worldwide consultations. The draft was reviewed and endorsed by the Expert Group at its second meeting, held from 3 to 6 November 2009, and was submitted to the Commission at its forty-first session.

At its forty-first session, held in New York from 23 to 26 February 2010, the Statistical Commission adopted the draft *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010* as the new international recommendations for merchandise trade statistics.<sup>c</sup>

The preparation of IMTS 2010 has been a part of efforts by the United Nations Statistics Division to satisfy the information needs of various user groups, ranging from international trade policy makers and commodity market analysts to compilers of balance of payments and national accounts. IMTS 2010 is intended to provide recommendations which are globally applicable and operational, and follows an integrated approach to economic statistics, including the use, where applicable, of common concepts, definitions, classifications and data-compilation strategies.

IMTS 2010 provides a comprehensive methodological framework for the collection and compilation of international merchandise trade statistics in all countries, irrespective of the level of development of their statistical systems.

### Notes

<sup>a</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 4 (E/2008/24)*, chap. I, sect. B, decision 39/109.

<sup>b</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.16.

<sup>c</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2010, Supplement No. 4 (E/2010/24)*, chap. I, sect. B, decision 41/103.

## Acknowledgements

*International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010* (IMTS 2010) has been prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division in collaboration with the members of the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (EG-IMTS) as follows (in alphabetical order of countries and organizations): Belgium (F. Spagnoli), Brazil (P. Pavao), Canada (C. Kuntz, A. Torrance), Chile (S. Cooper), China (H. Jin, F. Gu), Czech Republic (V. Petraskova), France (A. Gallais, L. Gasnier), Germany (K. Geyer-Schaefer, A. Krockow), Italy (P. Anitori), Jordan (Z. Altwalbeh), Kenya (B. K. Avusevwa, W. L. Etwasi), Malaysia (S. Sabri), Mexico (G. A. Durand Alcantara), Morocco (H. Ouljour), Nigeria (L. O. Ugwu), Norway (L. Korbol), Senegal (D. Balle), Philippines (E. de Guzman), Ukraine (V. Pischeiko), United Kingdom (S. Tudor), United States of America (W. Bostic, Jr., D. Oberg, D. Dickerson), Viet Nam (T. M. T. Le), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (A. J. Walakira), Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) (A. Capek, C. Schroeter, K. Nuortila, V. Kasperuniene), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (M. Campeanu), International Monetary Fund (IMF) (T. Alexander), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (A. Lindner), World Customs Organization (WCO) (R. Heller), World Trade Organization (WTO) (A. Maurer), Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (V. Markhonko, M. Reister, R. Jansen, M. Muryawan, N. Koumtingue, W. Liu).

The United Nations Statistics Division is grateful to the members of EG-IMTS for their fruitful collaboration. Their valuable contributions throughout the drafting of the recommendations and during the two physical meetings and three virtual meetings of the EG-IMTS are highly appreciated. The Division is also grateful to the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (TF-IMTS),<sup>a</sup> which supported the revision process at its various stages.

The United Nations Statistics Division also wishes to express its appreciation to national statistical offices, customs administrations and other governmental agencies for their numerous and often very detailed comments provided during the worldwide consultations on the contents of IMTS 2010, which provided important input and guidance for the successful completion of the drafting process.

The preparation of IMTS 2010 was undertaken under the guidance and supervision of V. Markhonko. M. Reister, R. Jansen, M. Muryawan, N. Koumtingue and W. Liu were involved in the drafting of the text at various stages of the revision process. M. Reister was directly responsible for the organization of the EG-IMTS meetings, the worldwide consultation and the preparation of the final text. During meetings, the staff of the International Merchandise Trade Statistics Section, United Nations Statistics Division, provided valuable support.

### *Note*

<sup>a</sup> TF-IMTS is an inter-agency body and consists of representatives of: United Nations Statistics Division, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, FAO, IMF, WTO, International Trade Center, OECD, EUROSTAT and WCO.

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

2008 SNA	System of National Accounts 2008
BEC	Classification by Broad Economic Categories
BMP5	Balance of Payments Manual, 5th edition
BMP6	Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, 6th edition
CIF	Cost, insurance and freight
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
EG-IMTS	Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics
ESS	European Statistical System
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Communities
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FOB	Free on board
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
HS07	Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, 2007 edition
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMTS	International merchandise trade statistics
IMTS, Rev.1	International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, Revision 1
IMTS, Rev.2	International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, Revision 2
IMTS Compilers Manual	International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual
IMTS 2010	International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, 2010
INCOTERMS	Terms of delivery standardized by the ICC
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities
MSITS 2010	Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SAD	Single Administrative Document
SDMX	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange
SITC	Standard International Trade Classification
TF-IMTS	Inter-Agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics
VAT	value added tax
WCO	World Customs Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization





## Introduction

### A. Background

0.1. *Relevance of international merchandise trade statistics.* The term “international merchandise trade statistics” (IMTS) refers to a specialized multipurpose domain of official statistics concerned with the provision of data on the movements of goods between countries and areas.<sup>1, 2</sup> The continued interest in international merchandise trade is due to its crucial role in economic development because such trade binds producers and consumers located in different countries into a global economic system. In this context, the availability of timely and high-quality trade statistics becomes a precondition for in-depth analysis of production, consumption, employment, income and overall welfare at both the country and global levels.

0.2. *Users and uses of trade statistics.* Trade statistics are compiled to serve the needs of many users, including Governments; the business community; compilers of other economic statistics, such as balance of payments and national accounts; various regional, supranational and international organizations; researchers; and the public at large. Different users need different data, ranging from data sets by country and commodity at varying levels of detail to aggregated figures. The uses include:

- (a) Development of national, regional and international trade policy, including trade negotiations, monitoring trade agreements and settling trade disputes;
- (b) Establishing general economic policy, including policies on sustainable development, fiscal, monetary, structural and sectoral matters, as well as addressing issues relating to environmental and health concerns;
- (c) Market analysis to find supply sources or foreign markets and, in combination with structural business statistics, to determine economic characteristics of traders;
- (d) Establishing supply balances to monitor commodity markets, in particular in such areas as agriculture and energy;
- (e) Infrastructure planning (harbours, airports, roads etc.);
- (f) Compilation of transport statistics;
- (g) Compilation of the import component of the various price indexes (e.g., cost-of-living indexes);

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<sup>1</sup> The term “international merchandise trade statistics” refers to both foreign (or external) merchandise trade statistics as compiled by countries and international merchandise trade statistics as represented by the consolidated and standardized country data sets that are compiled and maintained by the international or regional agencies. For the purposes of the present publication, the term “trade statistics” will be used to refer to international, foreign or external merchandise trade statistics, unless otherwise indicated, and the term “merchandise” has the same meaning as the terms “goods” and “commodities”.

<sup>2</sup> The list of countries or areas for which statistical data are compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division is available on its website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49.htm>.

(h) Input into, and forecasting in the framework of, the system of national accounts and balance of payments statistics.

0.3. *A brief history of the development of the international recommendations.* Although the search for greater comparability of trade statistics has been going on for a very long time, little progress was made until the 1920s. In 1928, the League of Nations organized the International Conference Relating to Economic Statistics, which devoted a significant part of its proceedings to these statistics. The Conference formulated a number of recommendations on coverage, trade systems, valuation and partner attribution that provided a foundation for a better international comparability of country data.<sup>3</sup> In 1938, the League of Nations published the report of its Committee of Statistical Experts, entitled *Minimum List of Commodities for International Trade Statistics*,<sup>4</sup> thereby making available the first internationally agreed classification of goods for use in international trade statistics. The Statistical Commission has considered matters relevant to IMTS since its inception and worked to prepare an improved commodity classification. After preparatory work was completed, the *Standard International Trade Classification* (SITC) was adopted by the Commission and published in 1950.<sup>5</sup> Further details on SITC and recommendations on commodity classifications are provided in chapter 3.

0.4. The adoption and implementation of SITC played an important role in improving the cross-country comparability of trade data. However, further work was needed to standardize many other elements of IMTS methodology. At its thirteenth session, in 1965, the Statistical Commission initiated the preparation of a broader set of recommendations in order to improve the comparability of international trade statistics. As a follow-up to the Commission's decision, in 1970, the United Nations Statistical Office published *International Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions*.<sup>6</sup> To take into account developments in commercial practices as well as methodological developments in other areas of statistics, those recommendations were revised in 1981 and in 1997.

0.5. The 1997 version of the recommendations was adopted by the Commission at its twenty-ninth session and published in 1998 as *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, Revision 2* (IMTS, Rev.2).<sup>7</sup> To assist countries in the implementation of IMTS, Rev.2, *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual* (IMTS Compilers Manual)<sup>8</sup> was issued in 2004. Both publications were promoted by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and other agencies-members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (TF-IMTS), including at a series of training workshops for developing and transition countries. Those efforts contributed to strengthening national merchandise trade statistics programmes and to harmonizing IMTS methodologies across

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<sup>3</sup> See Proceedings of the International Conference Relating to Economic Statistics, Annex 1 – External trade statistics, League of Nations, Geneva, 1929.

<sup>4</sup> League of Nations, 1938 (II.A.14; and corrigendum, 1939).

<sup>5</sup> Statistical Papers, No. 10/Rev.1, June 1951, United Nations publication, Sales No. 51.XVII.1.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.70.XVII.16.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.16.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.XVII.17.

countries, thus improving the availability of trade data and their cross-country comparability. However, over time it became apparent that the next cycle of review and updating of the recommendations was needed.

## **B. Need for the current revision**

0.6. The need for a new revision was recognized in recent years by both country and international experts at various regional, supranational and international forums, including TF-IMTS. The new revision of the recommendations for international merchandise trade statistics became necessary, inter alia, in view of:

(a) Changes in the way international merchandise trade is conducted, e.g., increasing globalization of the production and distribution processes, expansion of intra-firm trade, transactions with bundled goods and services components;

(b) Changes in user needs, including increased demand for more detailed and timely data for market access negotiations and trade policy purposes, market research by the business community and economic analysis (e.g., linking industry and trade data);

(c) Changes in the legal environment, such as the adoption by the World Customs Organization (WCO) Council of the Revised Kyoto Convention and new legal/administrative measures for increased security and further simplification of customs formalities;

(d) Increasing use of non-customs data sources, particularly in countries that are members of a customs union;

(e) Changes in related statistical frameworks, such as the System of National Accounts and Balance of Payments;

(f) Need for additional recommendations on data-compilation strategies, quality and metadata, as well as dissemination;

(g) Need for further clarification of some existing concepts and improvement of overall readability.

## C. Organization of the revision process

0.7. *Initiation of the revision process.* During 2007, in consultation with TF-IMTS, the United Nations Statistics Division developed a strategy for the revision process, including the identification of areas where revision was particularly needed, the drafting of a timetable and the terms of reference of a proposed Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (EG-IMTS), which would assist in the revision process. The Division's proposals were submitted to the Commission for consideration at its thirty-ninth session, in February 2008. The Commission endorsed the Division's initiative and strategy, and requested that the draft revised recommendations be submitted for adoption at its forty-first session, in 2010. The Commission requested, inter alia, that the revised recommendations provide an updated conceptual framework, as well as guidance on data compilation and dissemination, in the context of an integrated approach to economic statistics. It also requested that the revised recommendations be harmonized to the extent possible with the updated recommendations for statistics of international trade in services, balance of payments statistics and national accounts, and that due consideration be given to the concern of minimizing the cost of data collection and compilation.<sup>9</sup>

0.8. *Country involvement in the revision process.* To provide a mechanism for the active involvement of countries in the revision process, the United Nations Statistics Division convened the first meeting of EG-IMTS from 3 to 6 December 2007. EG-IMTS is composed of national experts from developed and developing countries of different regions. A number of international organizations that are active in production and/or use of international merchandise trade statistics were also invited to participate. EG-IMTS agreed on the need for a new version of the recommendations and identified a set of issues for which advice was needed at the global level in order to define the scope of the future revised recommendations. Between May and July 2008, a worldwide consultation on these issues was held in which well over 100 countries participated.<sup>10</sup>

0.9. During 2008 – 2009, three virtual meetings of EG-IMTS were organized to prepare the provisional draft revised *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010* (IMTS 2010), which would contain the revised recommendations and related explanatory material. In August and September 2009, another round of worldwide consultation on the full provisional draft IMTS 2010 was conducted. More than 100 countries participated in the worldwide consultation. Their comments and suggestions provided important guidance for the revision. TF-IMTS was involved in the revision process and individual members made valuable contributions to IMTS 2010 at different stages of the revision process.

0.10. The second meeting of EG-IMTS, held from 3 to 6 November 2009, endorsed the draft IMTS 2010, subject to several amendments and clarifications, and in January 2010 the draft

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<sup>9</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 4 (E/2008/24)*, chap. I, sect. B, decision 39/109.

<sup>10</sup> For comprehensive information about the revision process, including the reports of EG-IMTS meetings and reports on the results of the worldwide consultations, see the United Nations Statistics Division website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm>.

revised recommendations were submitted by the United Nations Statistics Division to the forty-first session of the Commission for adoption.

0.11. *Approval by the Statistical Commission.* At its forty-first session, held from 23 to 26 February 2010, the Statistical Commission adopted the new recommendations for international merchandise trade statistics as contained in IMTS 2010 (see box 0.1 for details).

**Box 0.1:**  
**Decision by the Statistical Commission, at its forty-first session, in 2010<sup>11</sup>**

The Statistical Commission:

- (a) Expressed great appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Statistics Division in the organization of the efficient revision process, including the conduct of the worldwide consultation, and commended the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, and countries for their contributions;
- (b) Adopted “International merchandise trade statistics: concepts and definitions 2010” (IMTS 2010) and endorsed the implementation programme as set out in paragraphs 25 to 31 of the report of the Secretary-General on international merchandise trade statistics (E/CN.3/2010/5), including the preparation of the revised *International Merchandise Trade Statistics Compilers Manual* and continued technical assistance activities;
- (c) Requested the Expert Group and the Task Force to continue their work, focus on the implementation of IMTS 2010 and give due consideration to national circumstances, the harmonization of national and regional compilation practices and the conduct of related comparison studies;
- (d) Requested that greater attention be given to the strengthening of institutional arrangements in countries to ensure that proper national coordination mechanisms exist for the compilation of high-quality international merchandise trade statistics; also requested that cooperation with compilers of statistics on international trade in services, the balance of payments and national accounts be ensured;
- (e) Recognized the importance of the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database as the global database and information platform on international merchandise trade, and requested the United Nations Statistics Division to enhance its features and metadata;
- (f) Advised that, in the future research agenda, due consideration be given to emerging trade policy needs and globalization issues; and, in this context, advised that linkage with business statistics and measuring merchandise trade in terms of added value be further explored.

0.12. *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.* IMTS is a part of official statistics and its compilation is guided by the *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* (see box 0.2 below). Those principles were fully taken into account during the preparation of IMTS 2010.

**Box 0.2:**  
**The United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics<sup>12</sup>**

Principle 1. Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made

<sup>11</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2010, Supplement No. 4 (E/2010/24)*, chap. I, sect. B, decision 41/103.

<sup>12</sup> The United Nations *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* are available on the United Nations Statistics Division website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>.

available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honor citizens' entitlement to public information.

Principle 2. To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.

Principle 3. To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

Principle 4. The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

Principle 5. Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

Principle 6. Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

Principle 7. The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.

Principle 8. Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

Principle 9. The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

Principle 10. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.

0.13. *Additional considerations.* In addition, the preparation of the recommendations was guided, inter alia, by the following considerations:

(a) The needs of major user groups should be considered as a starting point and taken into account to the maximum extent possible to ensure that the compiled data are policy relevant, meet the needs of the business and trade community and provide a solid foundation for integration of trade statistics into the broader framework of economic statistics;

(b) The revision should be conducted in close consultation with national statistical offices, other national agencies involved in the compilation of trade statistics and the relevant international and supranational organizations;

(c) While providing recommendations on data items and their definitions, care should be taken that (i) necessary data sources are available in most countries to compile such data, (ii) collection of the recommended data will not create significant additional reporting burden, and (iii) collection procedures can be implemented by the majority of countries to ensure improved cross-country comparability;

(d) The revision should be seen in the context of promoting an integrated approach to economic statistics by national statistical systems, which requires, to the extent possible, the use of harmonized concepts, classifications and standardized data-compilation methods in order to achieve maximum efficiency and minimize the reporting burden;

(e) Additional guidance on more practical/technical matters to assist countries in the implementation of the revised recommendations should be provided in the revised *IMTS Compilers Manual*.

## D. Conceptual framework

0.14. *IMTS 2010 and other economic statistics.* International merchandise trade statistics aim to satisfy the information needs of various user groups, ranging from international trade policy makers and commodity market analysts to compilers of balance of payments and national accounts. IMTS 2010 is intended to provide recommendations that are globally applicable and operational. The conceptual framework of IMTS 2010 reflects both the multipurpose nature of these statistics and concern for availability of the adequate data sources and data-compilation procedures. IMTS 2010 follows an integrated approach to economic statistics, including the use, as applicable, of common concepts, definitions, classifications and data-compilation strategies.

0.15. It should be noted that the use of the term “trade” in the name of this statistical domain is a reflection of the dominant role of buying and selling in the generation of the cross-border flows of goods. However, many other movements of goods between countries are covered as well.

0.16. *IMTS 2010, BPM6, 2008 SNA and MSITS 2010.* IMTS 2010 was drafted after the preparation of the *System of National Accounts, 2008* (2008 SNA)<sup>13</sup> and the sixth edition of the *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual* (BPM6),<sup>14</sup> and in parallel with the revised *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010* (MSITS 2010). IMTS 2010 contains recommendations intended to make data compiled on its basis as consistent with the requirements of those systems as possible. However, giving priority to the need for statistics that reflect physical cross-border movements of goods, IMTS 2010 maintains the main elements of the conceptual framework established in the previous editions of the recommendations, which differ in several important respects from the conceptual framework adopted in the 2008 SNA and BPM6. Therefore, data compiled following the IMTS 2010 recommendations have in general to be adjusted prior to use in statistics based on balance of payments methodology (see annex F for details).

0.17. For example, scope adjustments are needed as the IMTS 2010 recommended coverage is broader than the cross-border movements of goods due to the change of ownership between residents and non-residents, which are of interest to the balance of payments compilers. On the other hand, balance of payments statistics treat as international trade all transactions where a change of ownership between residents and non-residents takes place, even if the goods do not cross the boundary of the economic territory of the compiling country. Such transactions are outside the scope of IMTS 2010. Therefore, the compilation of balance of payments and national accounts statistics necessitates the use of other data sources as well as of estimates. Also, the valuation of imported goods recommended in IMTS 2010 includes the costs of transportation and insurance needed to bring the goods to the border of the importing country (CIF-type valuation),

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<sup>13</sup> *System of National Accounts 2008* (2008 SNA), European Commission, International Monetary Fund, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations, World Bank; available in PDF format at the website of the United Nations Statistics Division at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna2008.asp>.

<sup>14</sup> *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, Sixth Edition (BPM6)*, International Monetary Fund, 2008; available electronically at the website of the International Monetary Fund at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/bop/2007/bopman6.htm>.

while balance of payment-based systems require a uniform valuation of both exported and imported goods at the border of the exporting country (FOB-type valuation).

0.18. *Change of ownership.* The national foreign merchandise trade data collections, in general, rely on administrative sources of data, and are set up to record transactions associated with the physical movement of goods across borders. The data-collection systems lack the necessary mechanisms to determine when, where and with whom change of ownership occurs. Nevertheless, since most traded commodities are crossing the border as part of a normal buying and selling operation between an importer and an exporter, the change of ownership is largely approximated by the cross-border movement of goods.<sup>15</sup> A detailed description of the relationship between IMTS 2010 and BPM6/2008 SNA is provided in annex F.

## **E. Structure of IMTS 2010**

0.19. IMTS 2010 consists of an introduction, 11 chapters and six annexes, as follows:

### Introduction

### Chapters

- I. Scope and time of recording
- II. Trade system
- III. Commodity classifications
- IV. Valuation
- V. Quantity measurement
- VI. Partner country
- VII. Mode of transport
- VIII. Data compilation strategies
- IX. Data quality and metadata
- X. Dissemination
- XI. Supplementary topics

### Annexes

- A. Basic national accounts and balance of payments concepts and definitions
- B. Definition of selected customs terms
- C. Rules of origin
- D. Rules on customs valuation as set out in the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation
- E. Terms of goods delivery
- F. Conceptual differences between IMTS 2010 and BPM6

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<sup>15</sup> See BPM6, paras. 10.26-10.27.



## F. Summary of the revised recommendations

0.20. *Recommendations and encouragements.* For the purposes of IMTS 2010, the term “recommended” refers to a standard with which countries should comply, while the term “encouraged” indicates a desirable practice that is not part of the standard. A summary of the main IMTS 2010 recommendations and encouragements, with an indication of whether they are updated or new is set out in table 0.1 (in order of appearance). With respect to issues that might be relevant to compilers and users of foreign merchandise trade statistics but are not explicitly covered in the IMTS 2010, **countries are encouraged** to develop their own treatments and clearly document them in their metadata.

**Table 0.1**  
**Summary of key IMTS 2010 recommendations and encouragements and their relationship with IMTS, Rev.2**

<i>IMTS 2010 recommendations and encouragements</i>	<i>Relationship with IMTS, Rev.2</i>
<b>Scope and time of recording (chap. I)</b>	
<b>A. General guidelines</b>	
1. As a general guideline, record all goods which add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory (para. 1.2)	Unchanged
2. Trade below customs and statistical thresholds: Estimate and include if economically significant (para. 1.3)	New encouragement
3. Change of ownership: Use as criteria for recording of certain goods only in exceptional cases when the general guideline is not applicable or not sufficient (para. 1.4)	New recommendation
4. Time of recording: As a general guideline, record goods at the time when they enter or leave the economic territory of a country (para. 1.8). In the case of customs-based data-collection systems, this time can be frequently approximated by the date of lodgement of the customs declaration (para. 2.22)	Unchanged
<b>B. Specific guidelines</b>	
5. Specific guidelines: Include certain categories of goods, include and separately identify (code) some which are of special interest for users, and exclude others (paras.1.9-1.55)	Updated recommendation
6. Exclude but record separately: Exclude certain categories of goods but record them separately for use in balance of payments and national accounts and other purposes (paras. 1.9 and 1.56-1.60)	Updated recommendation
7. Media, whether or not recorded: Include at its full transaction value, except for media used for carrying customized software or software written for a specific client or originals of any nature, which should be excluded (para. 1.18)	Updated recommendation
8. Goods for processing with or without change of ownership: Include at their full (gross) value (paras. 1.19-1.20)	Updated recommendation
9. Goods for processing as well as goods resulting from such processing where no change of ownership takes place: Include and explicitly identify (preferably by special coding) in your trade statistics (para. 1.21)	New encouragement
10. Goods which cross borders as a result of transactions between related parties: Include and separately identify (code) (para. 1.22)	New encouragement

<i>IMTS 2010 recommendations and encouragements</i>	<i>Relationship with IMTS, Rev.2</i>
11. Fish catch, minerals from the seabed and salvage; Bunkers, stores, ballast and dunnage: Include all transactions, not only those taking place inside and but also those taking place outside the economic territory where economically or environmentally significant (paras. 1.31-1.32)	Updated recommendation
12. Goods simply being transported through a country and Goods temporarily admitted or dispatched: Exclude (paras.1.41-1.44)	Updated recommendation
<b>Trade system (chap. II)</b>	
13. Use of the Revised Kyoto Convention: <sup>16</sup> Use, as far as possible, the definitions of the customs terms contained in the annexes to the Revised Kyoto Convention (para. 2.3)	Unchanged
14. Elements of the statistical territory: Make clear which elements exist and are included in the statistical territory (para. 2.3)	New recommendation
15. Reimports and re-exports: Include and identify (code) separately for analytical purposes (paras. 2.16 and 2.18)	New recommendation
16. Customs procedure codes: Make information about the customs procedure applied to individual transactions part of the dataset for trade statistics (paras. 2.19 and 8.6)	New recommendation
17. Trade system: Use the general trade system for compilation of both import and export statistics (para. 2.20); if the special trade system is used, compile or estimate, as applicable, goods imported into and exported from premises for customs warehousing, premises for inward processing, industrial free zones or commercial free zones to allow estimation of data on a general trade system basis (para. 2.28)	Unchanged
<b>Commodity classifications (chap. III)</b>	
18. Harmonized System (HS): Use HS for the collection, compilation and dissemination of international merchandise trade statistics (para. 3.11)	Unchanged
19. Standard International Trade Classification (SITC): Use SITC for the dissemination and the analysis of trade statistics according to user requirements (para. 3.19)	New recommendation
<b>Valuation (chap. IV)</b>	
20. Statistical value: Record a statistical value for all goods covered in trade statistics, whether sold, exchanged or provided without payment (para. 4.1)	Updated recommendation
21. WTO Agreement on Valuation: <sup>17</sup> Adopt the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation as the basis for valuation of international merchandise trade for statistical purposes (para. 4.4).	Unchanged
22. Statistical value of exported and imported goods: Use free on board (FOB-type) valuation for exports (border of the exporting country) and cost, insurance and freight (CIF-type) valuation for imports (border of the importing country); countries are encouraged to compile FOB-type value of imported goods as supplementary information (para. 4.8).	Updated recommendation
23. Compilation of data on freight and insurance: Countries which compile only CIF-type values of imports are encouraged to compile separate data for freight and insurance, at the most detailed commodity and partner level possible (para. 4.9)	Updated encouragement
24. Valuation of special categories of goods: Follow additional recommendations (para. 4.15)	Updated recommendation

<sup>16</sup> World Customs Organization, *International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (as amended)* (Revised Kyoto Convention), Brussels, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> See World Trade Organization, *The Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations: The Legal Texts*, Geneva, 1995: Agreement on Implementation of Article VII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994, Part I, "Rules on customs valuation" (WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation); the Rules are reproduced in annex D below.

<i>IMTS 2010 recommendations and encouragements</i>	<i>Relationship with IMTS, Rev.2</i>
25. Exchange rate for conversion: Where conversion of currency is necessary, use the rate of exchange that is duly published by the competent national authorities of the country, reflecting the current value of such currency in commercial transactions in terms of the currency of the reporting country, and which is in effect at the time of importation or exportation (para. 4.19)	Unchanged
26. Exchange rate for conversion: If a rate is not available for the time of exportation or importation, use the average rate for the shortest period applicable (para. 4.20)	Unchanged
27. Multiple official exchange rates: Where multiple official exchange rates are in effect, use the actual rate applicable to specific transactions (para. 4.21)	Unchanged
<b>Quantity measurement (chap. V)</b>	
28. Compilation and reporting of quantity information: Collect or estimate, validate and report quantity information in WCO standard units of quantity <sup>18</sup> and in net weight on all trade transactions (para. 5.5)	Updated recommendation
29. Quantity conversion factors: Provide conversion factors to the recommended standard units in the metadata if units of quantity other than the WCO standard units are used or if units of quantity different from the one recommended for the specific commodity (HS six-digit subheading) are used (para. 5.5 (d))	Updated recommendation
<b>Partner country (chap. VI)</b>	
30. Country of origin: Follow the relevant provisions of the Revised Kyoto Convention for determining country of origin (para. 6.7)	Unchanged
31. Attribution of partner country: For imports, record the country of origin; for exports, record the country of last known destination (para. 6.25)	Unchanged
32. Country of consignment: For imports, record the country of consignment as the second partner country attribution alongside country of origin; for exports, the additional compilation of the country of consignment is encouraged (para. 6.26)	Updated recommendation
33. Calculation of trade balances: Use imports by country of origin and exports by country of last known destination (para. 6.27)	New recommendation
34. Economic territory of the trading partners: Use the economic territory of the trading partners as the basis upon which the statistics on trade by partner are compiled (para. 6.28)	Updated recommendation
<b>Mode of transport (chap. VII)</b>	
35. Compilation of mode of transport: Compile and disseminate international merchandise trade statistics by mode of transport at the most detailed commodity level (as a new data dimension) (para. 7.1)	New recommendation
36. Recording of mode of transport: Record as mode of transport the means of transport used when goods enter or leave the economic territory (para. 7.1)	New recommendation
37. Classification: Clearly indicate the contents of the categories used; countries are encouraged to follow the suggested classification for the compilation and reporting of trade statistics by mode of transport (paras. 7.2-7.3)	New recommendation
<b>Data compilation strategies (chap. VIII)</b>	
38. Use of customs records: Use customs records as the main and normally preferred data source (para. 8.2)	New recommendation
39. Allocation of customs procedures: Closely cooperate with customs experts in order to correctly allocate customs procedure codes and associated trade transactions according to the general or the special trade system (para. 8.4)	New recommendation

<sup>18</sup> See World Customs Organisation, *Explanatory Notes to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System*, second edition, Brussels, 1996, annex II.

<i>IMTS 2010 recommendations and encouragements</i>	<i>Relationship with IMTS, Rev.2</i>
40. Use of non customs records: Supplement customs-based data with information obtained from other sources, as necessary, to ensure full coverage of international merchandise trade statistics. Use non-customs sources as substitutes for available customs records only if they provide a cost-effective way to improve the quality of trade statistics (para. 8.9)	Updated recommendation
41. Integrated approach to data collection: In the case of the use of non-customs data sources, such as enterprise surveys, use an integrated approach to data collection and make use of business registers and enterprise identification numbers in order to obtain the required information with minimal costs and burden on enterprises (para. 8.11)	New recommendation
42. Institutional arrangements: Consider as a matter of high priority the establishment of the institutional arrangements necessary to ensure the compilation of high-quality trade statistics and periodically review their effectiveness (para. 8.17)	New recommendation
<b>Data quality and metadata (chap. IX)</b>	
43. Systematic approach to data quality: Follow a systematic approach to data quality and develop standards and related good practices covering the institutional arrangements, the statistical processes and outputs (the entire trade statistics programme) (para. 9.4)	New recommendation
44. Standard for quality reports: Develop a standard for regular quality reports that cover the full range of statistical processes and outputs and are based on principles and standards (para. 9.5)	New recommendation
45. Frequency of quality reports: Complete or update quality reports of international merchandise trade statistics at least every five years, or more frequently if significant methodological changes or changes in the data sources occur (para. 9.6)	New recommendation
46. Contents of quality reports: Base quality reports on a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators for international merchandise trade statistics and on a checklist covering data collection, processing and dissemination in order to allow for an assessment of strengths and weaknesses in the statistical process and to identify possible quality improvement actions (para. 9.7)	New recommendation
47. Dimensions of data quality: Take the following dimensions into account when developing a quality assessment framework: prerequisites of quality, relevance, credibility, accuracy, timeliness, methodological soundness, coherence and accessibility (para. 9.10)	New recommendation
48. Quality indicators: Ensure that the defined quality indicators satisfy the following criteria: (a) they cover all dimensions of quality; (b) they are based on the consistent application of a sound methodology; (c) the indicators are easy to interpret by both internal and external users (para. 9.15)	New recommendation
49. Cross-country data comparability: Countries are encouraged to periodically conduct bilateral and multilateral reconciliation studies or implement data exchanges (para. 9.18)	Updated encouragement
50. Metadata categories: Cover at least the categories of metadata provided in para. 9.23 (para. 9.23)	New recommendation
51. Metadata as high priority: View the development of metadata as a high priority and consider their dissemination an integral part of the dissemination of international merchandise trade statistics (para. 9.25)	New recommendation
<b>Dissemination (chap. X)</b>	
52. Confidentiality rules: Use passive confidentiality as much as possible, unless the use of active confidentiality is already the established, desired and accepted practice (para. 10.3)	New recommendation
53. Reporting of confidential information: Report information deemed confidential in full detail at the next higher level of commodity and/or partner aggregation that adequately protects confidentiality (para. 10.3)	Unchanged
54. Data dissemination timetable: Announce in advance the precise dates at which the statistics will be released and revised (para. 10.5)	Updated recommendation

<i>IMTS 2010 recommendations and encouragements</i>	<i>Relationship with IMTS, Rev.2</i>
55. Publication of provisional estimates: Explore the possibility of publishing provisional estimates soon after the end of the reference period (para. 10.8)	New encouragement
56. Revision policy: Develop a revision policy that is synchronized with the release calendar (para. 10.11)	Updated encouragement
57. Data dissemination: Treat all users equally and disseminate data without preference to any national or international user group. Choose the dissemination format that best suits user needs (para. 10.13)	New recommendation
<b>Supplementary topics (chap. XI)</b>	
58. External trade indices: Produce and publish volume (quantum) indices and either price or unit value indices for total imports and exports on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Calculate and publish such indices for commodity groups of particular importance to countries on at least a quarterly and annual basis (para. 11.1)	Unchanged
59. Seasonally adjusted data: Compile and publish, where appropriate, seasonally adjusted monthly and quarterly international merchandise trade data on a regular basis; provide information on the adjustment methods, data quality etc. in the metadata (paras. 11.3-11.4)	Updated encouragement
60. Linking business and trade statistics: Integrate the trade register with the business register and take steps towards an integrated system of economics statistics for data compilation and analysis (para. 11.6)	New encouragement

## **G. Implementation**

0.21. *Implementation programme.* The United Nations Statistics Division, in cooperation with EG-IMTS and TF-IMTS, will develop a detailed programme to assist countries in the implementation of IMTS 2010. The programme will include the preparation of the updated version of *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual* (IMTS Compilers Manual), as well as the capacity-building activities such as regional training workshops, technical assistance missions and the preparation of related complementary technical materials.

0.22. *Interpretation and updating of recommendations.* It is recognized that the interpretation and updating of recommendations should be carried out in a transparent and systematic way. Any required interpretation of existing recommendations will be the responsibility of the United Nations Statistics Division, in cooperation with TF-IMTS, while any proposed substantive changes to the recommendations will be reviewed by EG-IMTS and submitted to the Statistical Commission for adoption, as appropriate.

## I. Scope and time of recording

1.1. *General and specific guidelines.* The scope<sup>19</sup> of international merchandise trade statistics is defined by the general and specific guidelines contained in sections A and B below. While the general guidelines provide the universal rule, the specific guidelines are formulated to reconfirm or clarify the statistical treatment of a limited number of categories of goods for which the application of the general guidelines may not be clear due to (a) the peculiarity of the goods, (b) the special nature or complexity of the transaction or (c) some practical considerations of data collection.

### A. General guidelines

1.2. As a general guideline, **it is recommended** that international merchandise trade statistics record all goods which add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory. The general guideline is subject to the clarifications provided in this and other chapters and, in particular, to the specific guidelines set out in section B below. Except where otherwise stated, goods should be included, in both value and quantity, under the appropriate headings of the commodity classification, with identification of the partner country and mode of transport following all applicable IMTS 2010 recommendations.

1.3. *Estimation of trade below customs and statistical thresholds.* There are flows of goods which comply with the general and the specific guidelines on the scope but are below the applicable customs or statistical thresholds for direct recording.<sup>20</sup> **Countries are encouraged** to estimate and include such flows in their foreign merchandise trade statistics following the present IMTS 2010 recommendations if they are economically significant as determined by the statistical authorities of the compiling country.

1.4. *Change of ownership.* **It is recommended** to use the criterion of change of ownership to determine whether certain goods should be recorded only in exceptional cases when the general guideline is not applicable or not sufficient.<sup>21</sup> Change of ownership of the goods entering (leaving) an economic territory is defined in accordance with 2008 SNA<sup>22</sup> and BPM6<sup>23</sup> as change of

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<sup>19</sup> The term “scope” is used in IMTS 2010 to refer to goods recommended for recording (the recommended coverage). The term “coverage” has a broader meaning and can refer to both the recommended coverage as well as the actual coverage, which refers to the trade flows actually recorded by countries.

<sup>20</sup> It is recognized that some countries make a distinction between the statistical and customs thresholds and adopt rules for their application.

<sup>21</sup> Categories of goods where the criterion of change of ownership can be applicable for the recording of international merchandise trade transactions are ships and aircraft (para. 1.29), satellites and their launchers (para. 1.33), power lines, pipelines and undersea communications cables (para 1.36) and mobile equipment that changes ownership while outside the residence of its original owner (para. 1.39).

<sup>22</sup> *System of National Accounts 2008* (2008 SNA), European Commission, International Monetary Fund, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations, World Bank; available in PDF format at the website of the United Nations Statistics Division at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna2008.asp>.

economic ownership (see annex A, paras. A.8-A.9) and represents an example of adding to (subtracting from) stocks of material resources of a country, subject to the applicable exclusions listed in section B below.

1.5. *Goods*. For the purpose of IMTS 2010 and in reference to the 2008 SNA, goods are defined as physical, produced objects for which a demand exists, over which ownership rights can be established and whose ownership can be transferred from one institutional unit to another by engaging in transactions on markets, plus certain types of so-called knowledge-capturing products stored on physical media that can cross borders physically<sup>24</sup> (see annex A, paras. A.2-A.4).

1.6. *Material resources of a country*. For IMTS 2010 purposes, the material resources of a country are those located on its economic territory, whether owned by residents or non-residents.

1.7. *Economic territory*. IMTS 2010 adopts the BPM6 definition of economic territory as the (not necessarily contiguous) area under the effective economic control of a single Government (see annex A, para. A.7, for details). The economic territory of a country has the dimensions of physical location and legal jurisdiction. Therefore, for IMTS 2010 purposes, any installation or apparatus, mobile or not, located outside the geographical territory of a country, owned by the country resident(s) and remaining under the country's jurisdiction, is treated as if it were a part of its economic territory. This applies, for example, to drilling rigs, ships, aircraft, space stations etc.

1.8. *Time of recording*. As a general guideline, **it is recommended** that goods be recorded at the time when they enter or leave the economic territory of a country. For specific recommendations on the time of recording under different trade systems, see chapter 2 below.

## **B. Specific guidelines**

1.9. With respect to certain categories of goods, the specific guidelines clarify whether those goods should be:

- (a) Included in international merchandise trade statistics;
- (b) Excluded from international merchandise trade statistics;
- (c) Excluded from international merchandise trade statistics but separately recorded to assist in the derivation of the totals of international merchandise trade for balance of payments and national accounts purposes or for other statistical needs.

For some categories of goods under paragraph 1.9 (a) above that are of special interest for users, **it is recommended** that they should not only be included under the appropriate headings of the

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<sup>23</sup> *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, Sixth Edition (BPM6)*, International Monetary Fund, 2008; available electronically at the website of the International Monetary Fund at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/bop/2007/bopman6.htm>.

<sup>24</sup> See 2008 SNA, paras. 6.15 and 6.22.

commodity classification but also be separately identified (coded) for analytical purposes. The valuation of some of these categories of goods is further elaborated in chapter 4, para. 4.15 below.

## 1. Goods recommended for inclusion

1.10. *Non-monetary gold.* IMTS 2010 adopts the definition of monetary and non-monetary gold provided in BPM6 (see box 1.1). It is recognized that it might be difficult for IMTS compilers to differentiate between monetary and non-monetary gold in practice. **IMTS compilers are encouraged** to consult with the compilers of balance of payments or monetary authorities to ensure appropriate and consistent treatment.

### *Box 1.1:*

#### *BPM6 definition of monetary and non-monetary gold*

Monetary gold is gold to which the monetary authorities (or others who are subject to the effective control of the monetary authorities) have title and is held as reserve assets. Gold bullion not held as reserve assets is not a financial asset and is included in non-monetary gold (BPM6, para 5.74).<sup>25</sup>

Non-monetary gold covers all gold other than monetary gold. Non-monetary gold can be in the form of bullion (that is, gold bullion takes the form of coins, ingots or bars with a purity of at least 995 parts per thousand, including such gold held in allocated gold accounts), gold powder and gold in other unwrought or semimanufactured forms. Jewelry, watches, etc. that contain gold are not included under non-monetary gold but under their respective goods category (see BPM6, para. 10.50).

1.11. *Banknotes and securities, and coins not in circulation.*<sup>26</sup> This item includes both banknotes, securities and coins that are unissued or that are taken out of circulation. They are regarded as goods rather than as financial items and should be included in imports or exports as any other products. Issued banknotes and securities and coins in circulation are regarded as financial items and should be excluded (see para. 1.46).

1.12. *Goods traded in accordance with barter agreements.* These are goods that are exchanged between countries without use of any means of payment.

1.13. *Goods traded on Government account.* This category refers to any goods that cross borders as a result of, for instance, regular commercial transactions of Governments, goods under Government foreign aid programmes (whether or not the goods constitute a grant, a loan, a barter

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<sup>25</sup> An equivalent definition of monetary gold is provided in the *Explanatory Notes to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System* (World Customs Organization, Brussels, 2007; see heading 7108.20). According to that definition, monetary gold is gold that is exchanged between national or international monetary authorities or authorized banks.

<sup>26</sup> HS07: part of sub-heading 4907.00 and sub-heading 7118.90.



or a transfer to an international organization) and war reparations and restitutions. These goods can be intended for either civilian or military use (see also para. 1.49(c) below).

1.14. *Humanitarian aid, including emergency aid.* This item includes food, clothing, medicaments and other goods entering or leaving a country under humanitarian aid programmes or as emergency assistance, whether provided by Governments (see also para. 1.13 above), international or non-governmental organizations. Recording full commodity and partner detail for such trade may represent disproportionate effort, and if so, its inclusion in the total of exports/imports without such detail is appropriate. However, if such trade consists of some important commodities (frequently of light weight and high value, such as medicine), those commodities should be recorded in international merchandise trade statistics in full commodity and partner detail, under the appropriate headings of the commodity classification, while the remainder should be recorded as indicated above.

1.15. *Goods for military use.* Even if recording goods for military use might pose practical difficulties, they should be included following all IMTS 2010 recommendations.

1.16. *Goods acquired by all categories of travellers, including non-resident workers, to a significant scale as defined by national law* are to be included. Such goods are often referred to as “shuttle trade” (see also para. 1.49(a)).

1.17. *Goods on consignment.* These are goods intended for sale but not actually sold when they cross the border. If reliable information exists that allows a determination of the appropriate statistical value at the time when goods cross borders, their revaluation after sale is not needed. However, in the absence of reliable information, compilers are advised to attempt to revise the data to reflect the actual transaction value of the goods when sold. Goods on consignment should be distinguished from goods being simply transported through a country or temporarily admitted or withdrawn (see paras 1.41 - 1.44 below). Goods on consignment can be returned but their identification as returned goods might be difficult (see paras. 1.23 and 4.15(f) below on returned goods and their valuation).

1.18. *Media, whether or not recorded.* As a general guideline, media, whether or not recorded is included in international merchandise trade statistics at its full transaction value, except for media used for carrying customized software or software written for a specific client or originals of any nature,<sup>27</sup> which should in principle be excluded. Such exclusions should be based on the definitions recommended in BPM6 and should be established in close cooperation with the compilers of balance of payments and international trade in services statistics (see BPM6, table 10.4; and MSITS 2010, table 3.1). It is recognized, however, that the exclusion of such media may not be possible in view of (a) the prevailing customs practice of classifying both non-recorded and recorded media in one classification heading without any further differentiation and (b) the absence of other reliable and cost-effective data sources for systematic identification.

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<sup>27</sup> See 2008 SNA, para. 10.115.

1.19. *Goods for processing with or without change of ownership.* Goods for processing are goods that are sent abroad or brought into a country under a specific arrangement between the involved parties (which may or may not include the change of ownership) and for specific operations as defined by the statistical authorities of the compiling country. Usually these operations entail further transformation that is changing the characteristics of the goods. Goods for processing without change of ownership are a subset of this general category. Goods for processing may be brought into a country under special customs procedures, such as inward processing or processing of goods for home use (see annex B for definitions of these procedures) as well as be declared for home use. Goods resulting from processing might be returned to the sending country, sold in the country of processing or sent to a third country. The choice of the customs procedure may vary from country to country and from trader to trader, depending on many factors, such as the level of customs duties, taxation, other fees and charges and the expected clearance time. In view of the decreasing of customs duties and relaxing of other administrative requirements, the emerging practice is to declare such goods for importation for home use and, subsequently, for outright exportation as this gives traders more freedom.

1.20. **It is recommended** that in all cases, goods for processing and goods resulting from such processing (compensating products in customs terminology), are to be included in the merchandise exports and imports of the countries at their full (gross) value<sup>28</sup> (see para. 4.15(e) below for details) unless those goods fall into the category of goods temporarily admitted or dispatched and goods for repair and maintenance which are excluded from merchandise trade statistics.

1.21. Taking into account the needs of international trade in services and balance of payments statistics where manufacturing services on inputs owned by others should be recorded,<sup>29</sup> **countries are encouraged** to explicitly identify in their trade statistics (preferably by special coding) goods for processing and goods resulting from such processing where no change of ownership takes place. However, it is recognized that such identification may not be all-inclusive and the obtained information may not be internationally comparable since (a) merchandise trade statistics compilers may not have adequate sources of data (especially in cases when the appropriate customs procedures are not used) and (b) national definitions of such procedures may differ significantly.<sup>30</sup>

1.22. *Goods which cross borders as a result of transactions between related parties.* These are goods in cross-border transactions between related parties, including parties related by ownership and/or control. **Countries are encouraged** to use the definition of related parties as provided in Article 15(4) of the WTO Valuation Agreement (see annex D). These goods should be included following all IMTS 2010 recommendations. **Countries are further encouraged** to separately identify (code) such goods and types of the relationships in order to be able to review their valuation and to provide information on these transactions to users. It is acknowledged, however,

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<sup>28</sup> The term “gross” is often used synonymously with the term “full”.

<sup>29</sup> See annex A below, para A.10.

<sup>30</sup> Compilers of balance of payments and statistics on international trade in services are required to estimate the manufacturing services on inputs owned by others and **it is recommended** that countries provide this estimate in their metadata on international merchandise trade statistics, preferably together, if available, with the value of imports and exports of goods for processing and goods resulting from such processing where no change of ownership takes place.

that depending on their specific data needs and overall compilation strategies, countries may find it more appropriate, rather than identifying such goods in their regular trade data compilations, to estimate their share in imports/exports by conducting periodic surveys of companies that have foreign affiliates or are affiliates of the foreign companies. Countries should describe their practices in this respect in their metadata to ensure proper use of their statistics and to assist in international comparisons.

1.23. *Returned goods.* If exported goods are subsequently returned, they should be included in imports and identified as reimports when they are returned. Similarly, goods imported and subsequently returned should be included in exports and identified as re-exports when they are returned.<sup>31</sup>

1.24. *Electricity, gas, oil<sup>32</sup> and water.* International sales and purchases of electricity, gas, oil and water, although not always recorded by the customs authorities of some countries, constitute international transactions in goods and should be included in international merchandise trade statistics. **Countries are encouraged** to establish appropriate procedures to ensure that records of this trade are as accurate as possible. It is also important that trading partners in such transactions record these flows using the same method to improve international comparability.

1.25. *Goods dispatched or received through postal or courier services.* Recording full commodity detail for such trade may represent disproportionate effort, and if so, its inclusion as a single total is appropriate.<sup>33</sup> However, if such trade consists of some important commodities (frequently of light weight and high value, such as diamonds and other precious gems), those commodities should be recorded in international merchandise trade statistics in full commodity detail under the appropriate headings of the commodity classification, while the remainder of the postal or courier trade - unclassified by commodity - should be recorded as a single total, as indicated above.

1.26. *Migrants' effects.* The recording and inclusion of the physical movements of migrants' effects is important for countries where migration is taking place on a significant scale and migrants take their personal property with them. Some countries include only the dutiable portion of these goods, while others apply value or quantity limits as criteria for their inclusion. Where migrants' effects are economically important, all goods in this category should be included (see also para. 4.16 on valuation of such goods).

1.27. *Goods transferred from or to a buffer stock organization.* A buffer stock organization is one that maintains a stock of certain commodities and sells or buys them in order to influence supply and demand on the world market.

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<sup>31</sup> There are different cases of returned goods, such as goods returned due to poor quality or goods on consignment (see para. 1.17 above) that are not sold and returned.

<sup>32</sup> The term "oil" refers to petroleum oils and oils from bituminous minerals, as defined in HS07 headings 2709 and 2710.

<sup>33</sup> Chapters 98 or 99 of the HS may be used to record this trade.

1.28. *Goods under financial lease.* There are two kinds of leases in common usage: financial leases and operating leases. Goods are considered to be under financial lease if the lessee assumes the rights, risks, rewards and responsibilities in relation to the goods and from an economic point of view can be considered as the de facto owner.<sup>34</sup> Goods under financial lease should be included in international merchandise trade statistics. An operating lease is any lease which does not have the above characteristics. Goods under operating lease should be excluded from international merchandise trade statistics (see para.1.51 below). In practice, it may be difficult to differentiate between these two types of leases.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, in some cases, the duration of the lease can be used as an indication of whether the lease is financial (one year or more) or operating (less than one year).

1.29. *Ships and aircraft.* These goods are to be included in international merchandise trade statistics when the general guideline is not applicable or sufficient based on the change of economic ownership between residents and non-residents (includes financial leasing, see para. 1.28 above). In this context, the acquisition of a ship or aircraft is treated as adding to the material resources of a country (the reverse also applies). The concerned ships and aircraft are included whether they enter/leave the economic territory of the involved countries or remain in international waters or are used in international flights (see also para. 1.54). Frequently, such transactions are not recorded by customs. In the absence of customs documents, they should be recorded using non-customs data sources, such as registry additions and deletions or enterprise surveys, as appropriate.

1.30. *Goods delivered to or dispatched from offshore installations located in the economic territory of a compiling country* (from or to the economic territory of another country) are to be included.

1.31. *Fish catch, minerals from the seabed and salvage.* These goods landed from vessels of one country in national ports of another country or acquired by vessels of one country on the high seas from vessels of another country are in the scope of IMTS 2010 for both exports and imports and should be recorded where economically or environmentally significant. It is recognized that data collection in respect of this category of goods may be challenging; however, **countries are encouraged** to develop over time the necessary data-collection and/or estimation procedures in view of the important policy needs for such data, including assessment and monitoring of the environmental impact of such trade and related activities.

1.32. *Bunkers, stores, ballast and dunnage* that are acquired by national aircraft and vessels outside the economic territory of the compiling country, or from foreign vessels and aircraft inside the economic territory of a country, or are landed in national ports from foreign vessels and aircraft, are in the scope of IMTS 2010 for imports and should be recorded where economically or environmentally significant. *Bunkers, stores, ballast and dunnage* that are supplied to foreign vessels or aircraft in the economic territory of the compiling country, or by national vessels or

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<sup>34</sup> See annex A below, para. A.11.

<sup>35</sup> See also BPM6, para, 5.57.

aircraft to foreign vessels or aircraft outside the economic territory of the compiling country, or are landed in foreign ports from national vessels or aircraft, are in the scope of IMTS 2010 for exports and should be recorded where economically or environmentally significant. It is recognized that data collection under this item may be challenging; however, such data are very important for various analytical purposes, including for assessment and monitoring of the environmental impact of international transport. In this connection, **countries are encouraged** to develop over time the necessary data-collection and/or estimation procedures.

1.33. *Satellites and their launchers.* Treatment of satellites, satellite launchers or their parts is equivalent to the treatment of ships and aircraft and depends on the kind of transactions involved. Some cases for inclusion are described below (for exclusions, see para. 1.53). *Case 1.* A satellite launcher is produced in country A and sold to country B for use. This transaction should be recorded as an export of country A and an import of country B. *Case 2.* A satellite is produced and launched in country B on behalf of country A. The satellite should be treated as an export of country B (import of country A) at launch or when control of the satellite is turned over from country B to country A. Launch and other related activities should be treated as services provided by country B to country A.

1.34. *Goods in electronic commerce.* The term “goods in electronic commerce” refers to goods that physically move across country borders as the result of transactions executed entirely, or to a significant extent, by electronic means (e.g., goods ordered and paid for via the Internet). Such goods are in the scope of IMTS 2010 for both exports and imports. It is recognized that data collection under this item may be challenging (for example, when goods are shipped through parcel or letter post or courier service; see para. 1.25 above for details and recommendations); however, **countries are encouraged** to develop over time the necessary data-collection and/or estimation procedures.

1.35. *Gifts and donations.* Such goods should be included following all applicable IMTS 2010 recommendations.

1.36. *Power lines, pipelines and undersea communications cables.* Compilers are advised to include these goods and/or parts thereof in exports/imports when they are dispatched from one country for installation in another. However, when dispatched from a country for installation in international waters (territory), they are to be treated as exports/imports only if there was a change of ownership between a resident and a non-resident. Compilers are further advised to cooperate with compilers of national accounts and balance of payments statistics to ensure proper and harmonized treatment of all such transactions, including to clearly distinguish trade in goods and trade in services.

1.37. *Used goods.* Used goods are to be included following all applicable recommendations. This category covers any used industrial equipment or consumer goods (e.g., used computers or cars) as well as used containers crossing borders under commercial recycling arrangements (e.g., empty bottles for recycling).

1.38. *Waste and scrap.* Waste and scrap, including products that are dangerous to the environment, should be recorded and classified under the appropriate commodity heading if their commercial value is positive (see also para. 1.58 below). It is recognized that data collection under this item may be challenging since, for example, the value may not be easily available when entering/ leaving the country; however, **countries are encouraged** to develop over time the necessary data-collection and/or estimation procedures.

1.39. *Mobile equipment that changes ownership while outside the country of residence of its original owner.* This category includes equipment that was initially sent for temporary use and for a specific purpose, such as for construction work, firefighting, offshore drilling or disaster relief, from one country to another, but which changes ownership as a result of, for example, the subsequent gift or sale to a resident of that country. This category of goods is in the scope of IMTS 2010 and countries **are encouraged** to collect data on such trade or estimate it.

1.40. *Goods received or sent abroad by international organizations* are included in imports of the countries receiving goods from such organizations and in exports of countries sending goods to those organizations (see also para. 1.49(c) below).<sup>36</sup>

## 2. Goods recommended for exclusion

1.41. *Goods simply being transported through a country.* Goods are considered as simply being transported through a country if they (a) enter and leave the compiling country solely for the purpose of being transported to another country, (b) are not subject to halts not inherent to the transportation and (c) can be identified when both entering and leaving the country.

1.42. Goods simply being transported include goods under "in transit" or "in transshipment" customs procedures but are not limited to them.<sup>37</sup> It may be administratively easier for traders to declare goods, not as being in transit, but as regular imports on arrival and exports on departure. Irrespective of the customs procedure applied when goods cross the compiling country's border, if it is known that their destination is a third country the goods should be treated as simply being transported through the country and excluded. However, goods that are not under "in transit" or "transshipment" customs procedure and change ownership after entering the economic territory of a country should be recorded as imports and re-exports if they leave the country in the same state as imported. **Countries are encouraged** to make efforts to identify such movements, using both customs and non-customs sources of data, and to exclude them from trade statistics (see para. 2.18

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<sup>36</sup> Such goods are not included in trade statistics of the host country, which is the country where the international organization is located.

<sup>37</sup> See annex B below, paras. B.21-B.22, for definitions.

below for related recommendations on re-exports). To ensure data consistency, **it is recommended** that the statistical authorities treat good movements as being simply transported only if reliable criteria are established.

1.43. *Goods temporarily admitted or dispatched.* **It is recommended** that goods are considered as temporarily admitted/dispatched if at the time of admission/dispatch it is known that their intended stay in the receiving country is temporary (as defined by the statistical authority of a country) and after their stay they can be withdrawn/returned in the same state (except for normal wear and tear). This category includes, but is not limited to, goods identified in the Kyoto and Istanbul Conventions<sup>38</sup> as goods covered by the "temporary admission subject to re-exportation in the same state" customs procedure. Such goods include display equipment for trade fairs and exhibitions; art exhibits, commercial samples and pedagogic material; animals for breeding, show or racing; packaging, means of transport, containers and equipment connected with transport; and equipment for the working of lands adjacent to the border by persons resident abroad. In cases where movements of goods are not covered by a specific customs procedure, the statistical authorities should establish criteria for determining whether the goods movement should be considered temporary. Goods for processing and goods on financial lease are not covered by this recommendation (see paras 1.19-1.20 and 1.28) (see also paras. 1.51 and 1.57 below for exclusion of goods under operating lease and goods for repair or maintenance).

1.44. It may be not known whether admitted or dispatched goods are expected to be brought back within a limited time period. In this case, goods should be treated as exports (imports) and imports (exports) when returned. It is recognized that customs records may not exist or may not provide enough information to allow reliable identification of temporary admission/dispatch. Therefore, **countries' statistical authorities are encouraged** to establish criteria for the identification of such goods. For example, countries may wish to use one year (or less) of stay as an approximation for temporary admission. Such criteria should be developed in cooperation with customs or other authorities, as required, especially for the goods admitted to and dispatched from the premises for customs warehousing or customs free zones. To ensure data consistency, **it is recommended** that statistical authorities treat goods movements as temporarily admission/dispatch only if reliable criteria are established.

1.45. *Monetary gold.* IMTS 2010 adopts the definition of monetary and non-monetary gold provided in BPM6 (see para. 1.10 above; and box 1.1). Monetary gold is gold to which the monetary authorities (or others who are subject to the effective control of the monetary authorities) have title and is held as reserve assets. Gold bullion not held as reserve assets is not a financial asset and is included in non-monetary gold. (BPM6, para 5.74).<sup>39</sup> Since monetary gold is treated as

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<sup>38</sup> See World Customs Organization, *International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (as amended)* (Revised Kyoto Convention), Brussels, 2006, Specific Annex G/ Chapter 1, para. 22; and Convention on Temporary Admission (Istanbul Convention) of 26 June 1990. See also annex B, para B.24 below.

<sup>39</sup> An equivalent definition of monetary gold is provided in the *Explanatory Notes to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System* (World Customs Organization, Brussels, 2007; see heading 7108.20). According to this definition, monetary gold is gold that is exchanged between national or international monetary authorities or authorized banks.

a financial asset rather than a good, transactions pertaining to it should be excluded from international merchandise trade statistics. The identification of both monetary and non-monetary gold should be determined in cooperation with the balance of payments compilers or monetary authorities.

1.46. *Issued banknotes and securities and coins in circulation*<sup>40</sup> represent evidence of financial claims and are excluded from international merchandise trade statistics.

1.47. *Goods consigned to and from the territorial enclaves.* The movement of goods between a country and its enclaves abroad is considered as an internal flow and should be excluded.

1.48. *Non-financial assets, ownership of which has been transferred from residents to non-residents without crossing borders.* Such assets include land, structures, equipment and inventories. Such a transfer of ownership of non-financial assets is considered to be a financial operation and is therefore excluded from international merchandise trade statistics.

1.49. *Goods treated as part of trade in services.* This category comprises:

(a) Goods acquired by all categories of travellers, including non-resident workers and carried across the border in amounts or values not exceeding limits established by national law (if amounts or values of such goods exceed legal limits, however, they should be included in international merchandise trade statistics; see para. 1.16 above);

(b) Newspapers and periodicals sent under direct subscription (see, for example, BPM6, paras. 10.23 (h) and 10.146);

(c) Goods supplied by and to enclaves of foreign Governments, such as embassies, military bases etc., and international organizations located in the economic territory of a host country are excluded since they are included in BPM6 under services (see BPM6, paras 10.17(o) and 10.173-10.177).

(d) Media used for carrying software customized or written for a specific client or originals of any nature, where identified (see para. 1.18).

1.50. *Goods under merchanting.* Merchanting is defined as the purchase of goods by a resident of the compiling economy from a non-resident combined with the subsequent resale of the same goods to another non-resident without the goods being present or crossing the border of the compiling country. Such goods are excluded from international merchandise trade statistics.<sup>41</sup>

1.51. *Goods under operating lease.* This category comprises goods shipped under operating (i.e., non-financial) - leasing arrangements. In the absence of other information, the duration of a lease of less than one year can be taken as an indication that the lease is an operating lease (see para. 1.28 above).

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<sup>40</sup> HS07: part of sub-heading 4907.00 and sub-heading 7118.90.

<sup>41</sup> See BPM6, paras. 10.41-10.49.



1.52. *Goods lost or destroyed after leaving the economic territory of the exporting country but before entering the economic territory of the intended importing country are to be excluded from imports of the intended importing country* (but are included as exports of the exporting country). If, however, the ownership of such goods has already been acquired by the importer, their value should be separately recorded by the intended importing country so that the detailed data may be adjusted to derive totals of merchandise imports for national accounts and balance of payments purposes (see para. 1.60 below).

1.53. *Satellites (and their launchers as applicable) moved to and launched from another country without change of ownership.* If a satellite produced in country A is moved from there to country B for launching without change of ownership, it is to be considered in country A as an internal operation not constituting external trade (similar to ships going to and remaining in international waters). The same satellite entering country B should be considered a temporary admission and not included in imports. Launch and other related activities can be treated as services provided by country B to country A (see also para. 1.33 above).

1.54. *Goods functioning as means of transport.* This category of goods includes a wide range of items, from ships and aircraft (other than ships and aircraft as defined in para. 1.29) and containers used to transport cargo in ship/rail/road supply chains to empty bottles that are returned to be refilled.

1.55. *Content delivered electronically.* The electronic delivery (downloading, e-mailing, streaming etc.) from one country to another of any content (e.g. online books, newspapers and periodicals, directories and mailing lists, musical audio downloads, streamed audio content, films and other video downloads, streamed video content, system software downloads, application software downloads, online games etc.) is explicitly excluded from the scope of international merchandise trade statistics. (For recommendations on the treatment of the cases where similar content is delivered via material media crossing country borders, see para. 1.18 above).

### **3. Goods recommended for exclusion but to be separately recorded**

1.56. Certain categories of goods that are recommended to be excluded from IMTS for conceptual and practical reasons are required to be included in the totals of international merchandise trade compiled under BPM6 and the 2008 SNA. In addition, information on certain categories of goods is required for other purposes. **Countries are encouraged** to undertake efforts to collect the relevant data to the extent possible or to make estimates of trade in such goods for use in balance of payments and national accounts and other purposes. The cooperation of several agencies may be required to obtain such data or estimates.

1.57. *Goods for repair or maintenance.* This category comprises goods temporarily crossing borders for repair or maintenance abroad. Such activities reinstate or maintain the quality of the goods and do not result in the creation of a new product. This category does not include goods

temporarily admitted or dispatched (see paras. 1.43 and 1.44 above) and goods for processing (see paras. 1.19-1.21 above). The identification of goods for repair or maintenance should be determined in cooperation with balance of payments compilers.

1.58. *Waste and scrap.* Waste and scrap having no commercial value are to be excluded but should be separately recorded using appropriate quantity units (see also para. 1.38 above).

1.59. *Goods entering or leaving the economic territory of a country illegally.*<sup>42</sup> This category includes, for example, smuggling, trade in stolen vehicles and shipments of narcotic substances, the use or possession of which is illegal in one or both of the compiling countries.

1.60. *Goods lost or destroyed after leaving the exporting country but before entering the importing country and after ownership has been acquired by the importer.* Such goods are excluded from the detailed import statistics of the intended importing country but recorded for adjustment purposes. They are included in the detailed export statistics of the exporting country (see para. 1.52 above).

Box 1.2:

Goods for separate recording

In chapter 1, section B, above, it is recommended, or countries are encouraged, to record separately certain categories of included or excluded goods. For ease of reference, those categories of goods are listed below.

The following goods are included under IMTS 2010 and are encouraged to be separately recorded (identified):

- (a) Goods for processing where no change of ownership has taken place (paras. 1.19-1.21);
- (b) Goods which cross borders as a result of transactions between related parties (para. 1.22).

The following goods are excluded under IMTS 2010 but are encouraged to be separately recorded:

- (a) Goods for repair or maintenance (para. 1.57);
- (b) Waste and scrap having no commercial value (para 1.58);
- (c) Goods entering or leaving the economic territory of a country illegally (para. 1.59);
- (d) Good lost or destroyed after ownership has been acquired by the importer (para. 1.60).

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<sup>42</sup> This may include legal as well as illegal goods.

## II. Trade system

### A. An overview of basic terms

2.1. *Statistical territory.* The statistical territory of a country is the territory with respect to which trade data are being compiled. The definition of the statistical territory may or may not coincide with the economic territory of a country or its customs territory, depending on the availability of data sources and other considerations. **It is recommended** that countries provide a detailed description of their statistical territory and make that description publicly available as a part of their metadata to ensure a transparent identification of the flows of goods recorded in their trade statistics.<sup>43</sup>

2.2. *Customs territory.* In the majority of countries, trade data collection is based on customs procedures, and many of these countries adopt the boundary of their customs territory as the boundary of their statistical territory. The customs territory is the territory in which the customs law of a State applies.<sup>44</sup> However, a growing number of cross-country flows of goods are not captured by customs or are captured inadequately (e.g., flows between member States of customs unions and shipments of goods into and out of customs free zones). Therefore, in many cases, the statistical territory is defined more broadly than the customs territory and compilers of trade statistics are obliged to use non-customs sources (e.g., non-customs administrative sources and sample surveys of traders) to approximate the trade transactions related to the statistical territory.

2.3. *Elements of statistical territory.* The statistical authorities of a country may define its statistical territory by listing various elements of its economic territory which belong to it. These elements are usually described with reference to the country's customs legislation and may vary from country to country. However, **it is recommended** that countries use, as far as possible, the definitions of the customs terms as contained in the annexes to the Revised Kyoto Convention. For the purposes of international comparison, **it is recommended** that countries make clear whether or not the following territorial elements exist in their country, and whether or not they are included in their statistical territory:

- (a) Islands;
- (b) Territorial waters;
- (c) Continental shelf;
- (d) Offshore and outer space installations and apparatus;
- (e) Commercial free zones;
- (f) Industrial free zones;

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<sup>43</sup> The results of a survey on statistical territories of countries (or areas) have been made available in the publication *Statistical Territories of the World for Use in International Merchandise Trade Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 01.XVII.8), which is available on the United Nations Statistics Division website at [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/stat\\_terr\\_e.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/stat_terr_e.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> See Revised Kyoto Convention, General Annex/ Chapter 2/ E12. Instead of the term "State", the Revised Kyoto Convention uses the term "Contracting Party", which refers to a contracting party to the Convention.

- (g) Customs warehouses;
- (h) Premises for inward processing;
- (i) Territorial enclaves of the compiling country in other countries;
- (j) Territorial exclaves, that is, enclaves of other countries in the compiling country.

2.4. *Commercial and industrial free zones.* The term “free zone” (or “customs free zone”) means a part of the territory of a State where any goods introduced are generally regarded, insofar as import duties and taxes are concerned, as being outside the customs territory.<sup>45</sup> With reference to two kinds of authorized operations specified in the Revised Kyoto Convention, a distinction may be made between commercial and industrial free zones, as follows:<sup>46</sup>

(a) “Goods admitted to a free zone shall be allowed to undergo operations necessary for their preservation and usual forms of handling to improve their packaging or marketable quality or to prepare them for shipment, such as breaking bulk, grouping of packages, sorting and grading, and repacking.”<sup>47</sup>

(b) “Where the competent authorities allow processing or manufacturing operations in a free zone, they shall specify the processing or manufacturing operations to which goods may be subjected in general terms and/or in detail in a regulation applicable throughout the free zone or in the authority granted to the enterprise carrying out these operations.”<sup>48</sup>

2.5. Customs free zones exist, inter alia, in such forms as investment promotion zones, export processing zones, foreign trade zones, commercial free zones or industrial free zones. In some cases, such zones are not delineated geographically but may involve only different tax, subsidy or customs treatment. A large and growing number of customs free zones are onshore manufacturing enclaves that have been created to attract foreign direct investment, stimulate local industry and provide employment to the local labour force. The legal status of such zones ranges from extraterritorial, whereby they are exempt from all customs laws, to varying degrees of customs control.

2.6. *Premises for inward processing.* These can be any premises where goods can be conditionally relieved from payment of import duties and taxes (under the customs procedure known as inward processing; (see annex B, para. B.12). Such goods must be intended for re-exportation within a specific period after having undergone manufacturing or processing. Depending on the customs regulations, premises for inward processing may be specially designated areas or any premises, provided that other conditions for inward processing are complied with.

2.7. *Customs warehouses.* A customs warehouse is a designated place where imported goods brought into the country under the customs warehousing procedure are stored under customs

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<sup>45</sup> See Revised Kyoto Convention, Annex D/ Chapter 2/ E1; see also annex B, para. B.11, below.

<sup>46</sup> The terms “commercial” and “industrial” free zone were used in the 1973 version of the Kyoto Convention and are still used by many countries.

<sup>47</sup> See Revised Kyoto Convention, Annex D/ Chapter 2, para. 11.

<sup>48</sup> See Revised Kyoto Convention, Annex D/ Chapter 2, para. 12.

control without payment of import duties and taxes.<sup>49</sup> Warehoused goods can undergo usual forms of handling to improve their packaging or marketable quality or to prepare them for shipment, such as breaking bulk, grouping of packages, sorting and grading and repacking. However, operations that may change the essential character of the goods are not normally allowed.

2.8. *Territorial waters and continental shelf* include the areas over which jurisdiction is exercised and over which fishing rights and rights to fuels or minerals exist.

2.9. *Offshore and outer space installations and apparatus*. These include any installation or apparatus, mobile or not, located outside the geographical territory of a country, owned by the country's resident(s) and remaining under the country's jurisdiction.

2.10. *Territorial enclaves and exclaves*. Enclaves are clearly demarcated land areas (such as embassies, consulates, military bases, scientific stations, information or immigration offices, aid agencies, central bank representative offices with diplomatic immunity etc.) that are physically located in other territories and are used by the Governments that own or rent them for diplomatic, military, scientific, or other purposes, with the formal agreement of the Governments of the territories where the land areas are physically located.<sup>50</sup> An enclave of a given country is an exclave from the perspective of the country where that enclave is located.

2.11. *Domestic and foreign goods*. In their trade statistics, countries usually distinguish between flows of domestic and foreign goods. However, country practices differ with respect to the definition of these two concepts. To increase the international comparability of country trade data, **it is recommended** that "domestic goods" be defined as goods originating in the economic territory of a country. In general, goods are considered as originating in the country if they have been wholly obtained in it or were substantially transformed (criteria for determination of origin of goods are discussed in more detail in chapter 6 below). Goods normally originate in such parts of an economic territory as the free circulation area, industrial free zones or premises for inward processing. It is assumed that goods do not originate in customs warehouses or commercial free zones, which are also parts of an economic territory, since operations normally permitted in these zones do not constitute production or substantial transformation of goods. "Foreign goods" are goods which originate from the rest of the world (including foreign goods in transit through the compiling country) or are obtained under the outward processing procedure, when such processing confers foreign origin (compensating products which changed origin).

2.12. *Trade systems*. Depending on what parts of the economic territory are included in the statistical territory, the trade data-compilation system adopted by a country (its trade system) may be referred to as general or special. A detailed description of the two trade systems is provided in sections B and C below. Recommendations on data-compilation strategies are provided in chapter 8 below.

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<sup>49</sup> See Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex D/ Chapter 1/ E1; see also Annex B, para. B.10, below.

<sup>50</sup> See Annex A, para A.7.

## B. General trade system

2.13. *Statistical territory under the general trade system.* The general trade system is in use when the statistical territory coincides with the economic territory. Consequently, **it is recommended** that the statistical territory of a country applying the general trade system include all applicable territorial elements (a) to (h) as listed in para. 2.3 above.<sup>51</sup>

2.14. *General imports and exports* are flows of goods entering/leaving the statistical territory of a country applying the general trade system (see Figure 2.1) and recorded in compliance with the general and specific guidelines on scope provided in chapter 1 above.

2.15. *General imports* consist of:

(a) *Imports of foreign goods* (including compensating products after outward processing which changed their origin from domestic to foreign) entering the free circulation area, premises for inward processing, industrial free zones, premises for customs warehousing or commercial free zones;

(b) *Reimports* of domestic goods into the free circulation area, premises for inward processing or industrial free zones, premises for customs warehousing or commercial free zones.

2.16. *Reimports* are imports of domestic goods which were previously recorded as exports. **It is recommended** that reimports not only be included in total imports but also be separately identified (coded) for analytical purposes. This may require the use of supplementary sources of information in order to determine that the goods in question are indeed reimports rather than (a) goods withdrawn after being temporarily dispatched without being previously recorded as exports, or (b) domestic goods that have acquired foreign origin through processing and which, therefore, should be recorded as imports of foreign goods under para. 2.15(a) above, but not identified as reimports.

2.17. *General exports.* General exports consist of:

(a) *Exports of domestic goods* (including compensating products after inward processing which changed their origin from foreign to domestic) from any part of the statistical territory, including free zones and customs warehouses;

(b) *Re-exports* of foreign goods from any part of the statistical territory, including free zones and customs warehouses.

2.18. *Re-exports* are exports of foreign goods which were previously recorded as imports. **It is recommended** that re-exports not only be included in total exports but also be separately identified (coded) for analytical purposes. This may require the use of supplementary sources of information in order to determine that the goods in question are indeed re-exports rather than (a) goods temporarily admitted without being previously recorded as imports or (b) the export of foreign

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<sup>51</sup> Transactions in goods between a country's enclaves in other countries with the host or third countries are treated as international trade in services (see para. 1.49(c) above).

goods that have acquired domestic origin through processing and which, therefore, should be recorded as exports of domestic goods under para. 2.17(a) above, but not identified as re-exports.

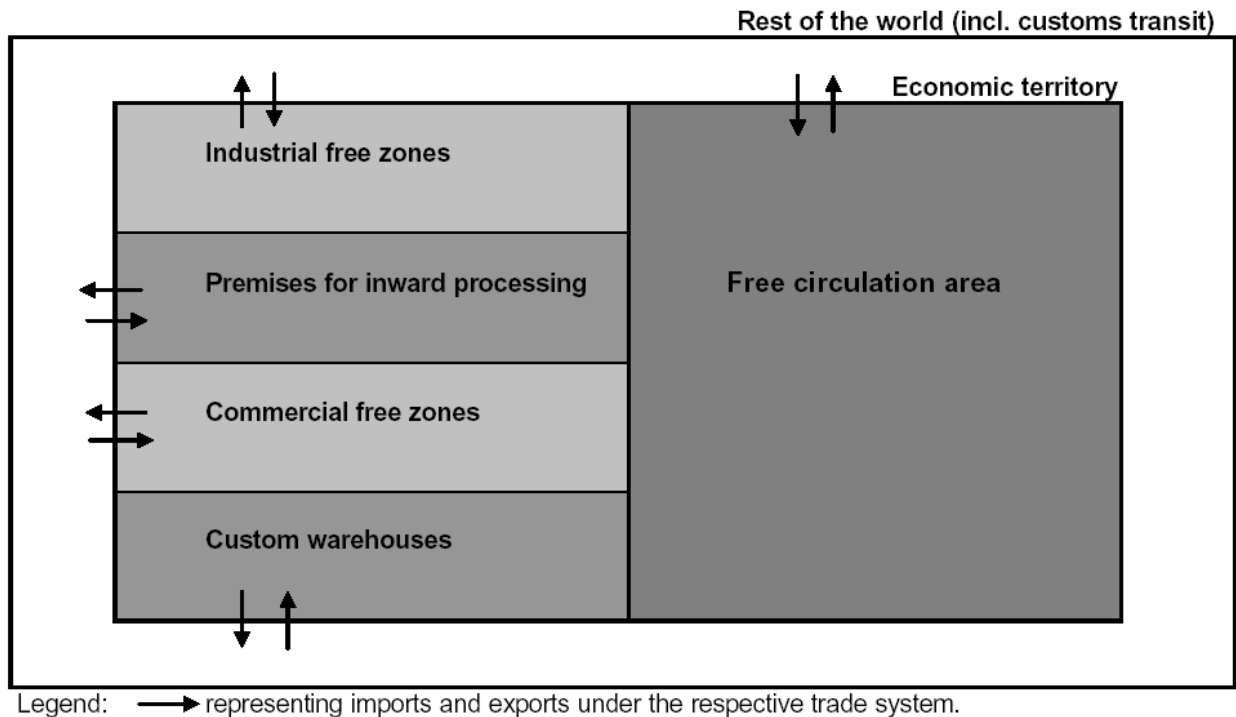
2.19. *Information about applied customs procedures.* **It is recommended** that information about the customs procedure applied to individual transactions (or the nature of transaction) be included in the dataset for trade statistics in order to facilitate the identification of re-exports and reimports but also of other types of trade, such as goods for processing, trade between related parties, goods on consignment etc. as far as possible. Further, **it is recommended** that, if the customs is not the agency compiling trade statistics, this information be regularly included in the dataset provided by customs to the agency responsible for the compilation of trade statistics of a country.

2.20. *Use of the general system.* General imports provide the most comprehensive record of the goods entering the economic territory of a compiling country and increasing the stock of its material resources, while general exports provide the most comprehensive record of the goods leaving its territory and thus decreasing that stock. **It is recommended**, therefore, that countries use the general trade system for compilation of both their import and export statistics.

2.21. It is acknowledged that countries may find the compilation of data according to the general trade system difficult, in particular if there is no customs recording for some parts of the economic territory, such as free zones, or if those recordings are not detailed enough. In such cases, countries may wish to adopt the special trade system (see also para. 2.28).

2.22. *Time of recording under general trade system.* Under the general trade system, the time of recording should be the time when goods enter or leave the economic territory of the compiling country. In the case of customs-based data-collection systems, this time can often be approximated by the date of lodgement of the customs declaration (that is, the date when customs accepts the declaration for processing). If such dates differ considerably from the date when goods actually cross the border of the economic territory (e.g., if goods are cleared well before or after their arrival) or non-customs data sources are used (e.g., enterprise surveys) then more appropriate dates should be identified and used (e.g., the date of arrival/departure of the goods carrier as indicated in the transportation documents). It is the responsibility of countries' statistical authorities to identify (or estimate) the best proxy date of the general guideline on time of recording by taking into account the peculiarity of national rules on administrative procedures and the need in consistency in the application of the selected method.

Figure 2.1:  
Territorial elements and potential imports and exports  
under the general trade system



### C. Special trade system

2.23. *The special trade system* is in use when the statistical territory comprises only a particular part of the economic territory, so that certain flows of goods which are in the scope of IMTS 2010 are not included in either import or export statistics of the compiling country. Countries may apply various definitions of special trade. Traditionally, the “strict” and the “relaxed” definitions of the special trade are differentiated, as described below.

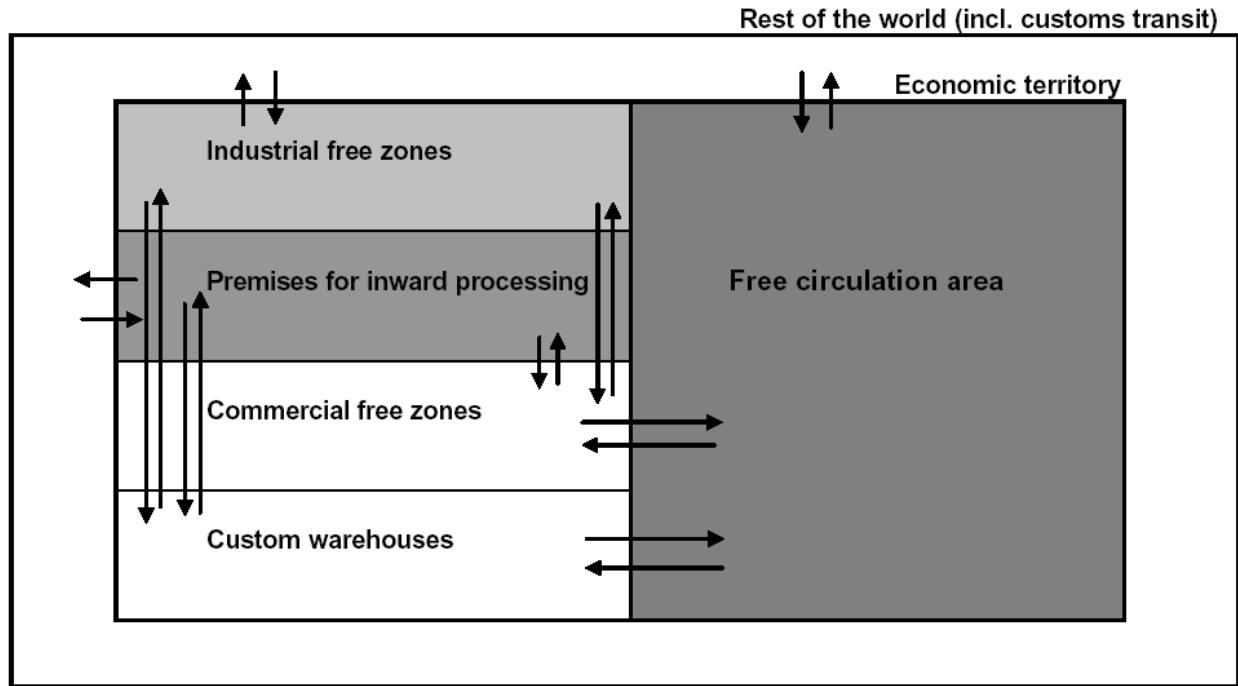
2.24. *The strict definition of the special trade system* is in use when the statistical territory comprises only the free circulation area, that is, the part within which goods “may be disposed of without customs restriction” (see annex B, para. B.4). Consequently, in such a case, imports include only goods entering the free circulation area of a compiling country and exports include only goods leaving the free circulation area of a compiling country. Under the strict definition, goods imported for inward processing and goods that enter or leave an industrial or commercial free zone or customs warehouses would not be recorded since they would not have been cleared through customs for home use. The compensating products after inward processing also would not be included in exports.

2.25. *The relaxed definition of the special trade system* is in use when (a) goods that enter a



country for, or leave it after, inward processing, as well as (b) goods that enter or leave an industrial free zone, are also recorded and included in international merchandise trade statistics (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2:  
Territorial elements and potential imports and exports  
under the special trade system in its relaxed definition



Legend: —→ representing imports and exports under the respective trade system.

2.26. *Limitations of the special trade system.* The use of the special trade system narrows the coverage of the statistics because not all goods that are in the scope of international merchandise trade statistics are covered. Moreover, its application is not uniform across countries and creates serious incomparability. For instance, some countries base their recording on the concept of the strict special trade system, while many other countries adopt the different variants of the relaxed definition, including adding to their statistical territories certain (but not all) customs free zones.

2.27. *Time of recording under special trade system.* Under the special trade system, the time of recording should be the time when goods enter or leave the statistical territory of the compiling country. As in the case of the general trade system, this time may be approximated by the dates associated with the lodgement of the customs declaration or other dates, as appropriate, depending on the circumstances (see also para. 2.22 above).

2.28. *If the special system is used.* The lack of territorial coverage and the lack of uniformity in the application of the special trade system has a negative impact on the usefulness of trade data for policy analysis purposes and for the compilation of national accounts and balance of payments statistics. Therefore, countries using this system **are encouraged** to develop plans to introduce the general trade system. However, it is recognized that a change from the special to the general trade system would require important administrative restructuring that may be impractical for some countries. Therefore, **it is recommended** that countries which continue to use the special trade system should compile or estimate the following statistics on at least an annual and a quarterly basis, with full geographical and commodity breakdowns (unless such trade is insignificant):

(a) When the strict definition is used, statistics on goods imported into and exported from premises for customs warehousing, premises for inward processing, industrial free zones or commercial free zones;

(b) When the relaxed definition is used, statistics on goods imported into and exported from premises for customs warehousing or commercial free zones.

This compilation or estimation will facilitate the necessary adjustments for the estimation of data on a general trade system basis for use in balance of payments statistics and national accounts.

### III. Commodity classifications

3.1. *The need for a detailed goods classification.* The basic reason for the use of detailed commodity classifications is to be able to identify and compile details of the commodities in an internationally consistent way for various customs, statistical and analytical purposes and trade negotiations. Since data-compilation and analytical needs vary, different commodity classifications have been developed that feature different levels of detail and different classification criteria. Nevertheless, all those classifications are closely related, as described below.

3.2. The complex nature of basic customs and statistical needs makes it necessary to have a detailed commodity classification. The *Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System* (Harmonized System or HS) (see sect. A below), and its extended versions, such as the Combined Nomenclature<sup>52</sup> used by the countries that are members of the European Union, provide such details. Classification using these nomenclatures is based on the nature of the commodity. However, for analytical purposes, such a division of products is not always the most appropriate. Commodity categories more suitable for economic analysis are provided by the *Standard International Trade Classification* (SITC)<sup>53</sup> (see sect. B below), which takes into account the stage of production and other factors. The *Classification by Broad Economic Categories* (BEC)<sup>54</sup> (see sect. C below) groups large economic classes of goods with reference to their end use. Nomenclatures have also been elaborated with the primary aim of classifying productive economic activities. The *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities* (ISIC)<sup>55</sup> (see sect. E below) is an example of such a nomenclature: it classifies according to the principal industry of origin of products. The *Central Product Classification*<sup>56</sup> (see sect. D below) combines the main classification principles of ISIC with criteria applied in HS. For the purposes of balance of payments statistics, trade flows are broken down into the three broad categories: general merchandise, goods under merchanting and non-monetary gold (see BPM6, paras. 10.13-10.54). For other analytical purposes, sub-groupings of elements of HS and SITC are established.<sup>57</sup>

3.3. *Correspondence tables.* Correspondence tables describe the relationship between different classifications or different versions of the same classification by providing the relationship between the elements (codes) of the two classifications at the detailed level. It is common practice that correspondences to the previous edition and to other classifications that are directly related are

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<sup>52</sup> See Official Journal of the European Communities, No. L256 (7 September 1987), Council Regulation No. 2658/87, annex 1; amended annually by European Commission regulations.

<sup>53</sup> The fourth revision of SITC was issued in 2006 and contains a description of its origin and development; see United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.XVII.10.

<sup>54</sup> The fourth revision of BEC was issued in 2003; see United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.XVII.8.

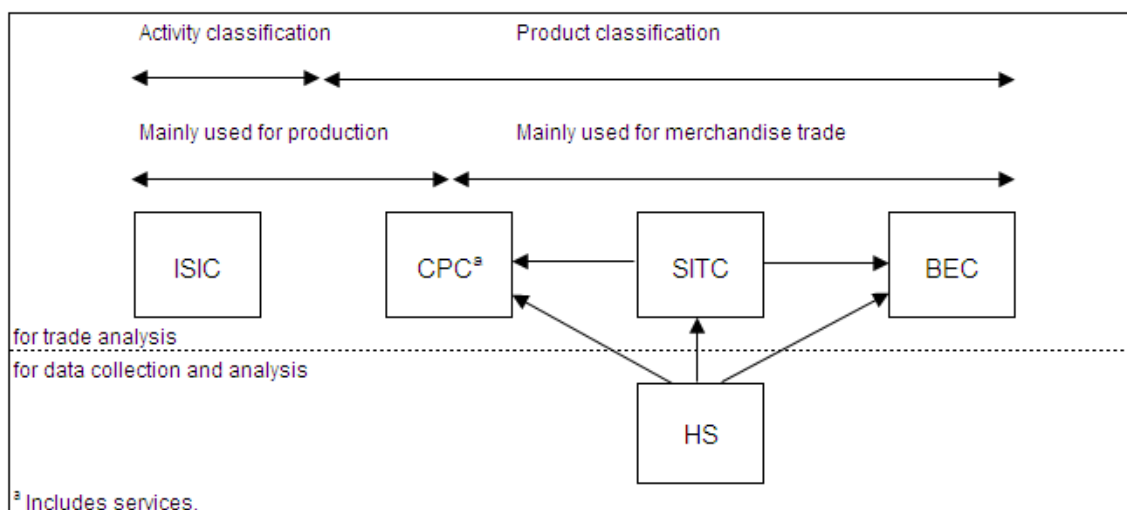
<sup>55</sup> The fourth revision of ISIC was issued in 2008; see United Nations publication, Sales No. E.08.XVII.25.

<sup>56</sup> The latest version of CPC is available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/cpc-2.asp>.

<sup>57</sup> For example, the OECD Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society proposed a classification of information and communication technology (ICT) goods in terms of 6-digit HS codes (DSTI/ICCP/IIS(2003)1/REV2, OECD, 2003).

issued together with a new classification. For example, SITC, Rev. 4 contains a detailed correspondence to the 2007 edition of HS, on which it is based (using its elements as building blocks), as well as a correspondence to SITC, Rev.3. An important application of correspondence tables is the conversion of data from the classification in which they are compiled and reported to other classifications, usually for analytical purposes.<sup>58</sup>

Figure 3.1:  
Relationship between different classifications



## A. Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System

3.4. *Adoption of the Harmonized System.* The Harmonized System was adopted by the Customs Co-operation Council in June 1983 and the International Convention on the Harmonized System (HS Convention) entered into force on 1 January 1988 (HS88).<sup>59</sup>

3.5. At its twenty-seventh session (22 February to 3 March 1993), the Statistical Commission recommended that countries adopt HS for the compilation and dissemination of their trade statistics.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> The United Nations Statistics Division website provides access to the classifications relevant to international merchandise trade statistics, including correspondence and conversion tables, at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/methodology/imts.htm> and <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regot.asp> or <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regdnld.asp>.

<sup>59</sup> See Customs Co-operation Council, *The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System*, Brussels, 1989. As of 31 March 2010, there were 137 Contracting Parties to the Convention, and another 31 countries or territories that were not contracting parties but were using HS for customs/statistical purposes. The proper classification of goods is a legal obligation of the Contracting Parties to the HS Convention. HS, when incorporated in the country's tariff, becomes a national law. Entering wrong codes in the goods declaration may entail legal consequences.

<sup>60</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 6 (E/1993/26)*, para. 162 (d).

3.6. *Regular updates.* In accordance with the preamble to the HS Convention, which recognized the importance of ensuring that HS is kept up to date in the light of changes in technology or patterns of international trade, HS is regularly reviewed and revised. At its twenty-seventh session, the Statistical Commission recommended that the Customs Co-operation Council take fully into account the statistical implications of any changes proposed for HS and the statistical needs and capacities of developing countries.<sup>61</sup>

3.7. *Interpretative rules.* The headings and subheadings of HS are accompanied by interpretative rules and section, chapter and subheading notes, which form an integral part of HS and are designed to facilitate classification decisions in general and to clarify the scope of the particular headings or subheadings.

3.8. *Fourth edition of the HS.* Four amended editions of HS have come into force, the latest (HS07) as of 1 January 2007.<sup>62</sup> The amendments took account of technological progress and trade patterns, clarified the text to ensure the uniform application of HS and provided a legal basis for decisions taken by the Harmonized System Committee. HS07 has 5,052 subheadings, of which 4,208 are subheadings from the original HS88; 844 non-original subheadings (17 per cent) have been introduced in subsequent HS editions (1 in 1992, 267 in 1996, 316 in 2002, and 260 in 2007).<sup>63</sup> The fifth amended edition of HS (HS12) is currently being discussed and is expected to be effective as of 1 January 2012.

3.9. The 5,052 subheadings of HS07 are grouped in 1,221 headings, 97 chapters and 21 sections.<sup>64</sup> As a general rule, goods are arranged in order of their degree of manufacture: raw materials, unworked products, semi-finished products and finished products. For example, live animals fall under chapter 1, animal hides and skins under chapter 41 and leather footwear under chapter 64. The same order also exists within the chapters and headings.

3.10. The general structure of HS is as follows:

Sections I to IV	Agricultural products
Sections V to VII	Minerals, chemical and related products, plastics, rubber and articles thereof
Sections VIII to X	Animal products, such as hides, skins and furskins, as well as

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<sup>61</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 6 (E/1993/26)*, para. 162 (e).

<sup>62</sup> Some minor revisions to the 1988 HS (HS88), which also resulted in the deletion of one six-digit code, were made in 1992 (HS92). A more comprehensive set of amendments were adopted in 1993 and entered into force on 1 January 1996 (HS96). The amendments that became effective on 1 January 2002 (HS02) were relatively minor, while the amendments of 1 January 2007 (HS07) entailed significant changes. For more information, see [http://www.wcoomd.org/home\\_wco\\_topics\\_hsoverviewboxes\\_tools\\_and\\_instruments\\_hsnomenclature.htm](http://www.wcoomd.org/home_wco_topics_hsoverviewboxes_tools_and_instruments_hsnomenclature.htm).

<sup>63</sup> Revisions of HS entail the creation of new or the deletion of existing headings (four digit codes) and subheadings (six-digit codes). In order to facilitate the maintenance and use of data in different versions of HS, codes for commodities that have been deleted should not be reused.

<sup>64</sup> HS chapter 77 is reserved for possible future use and HS chapters 98 and 99 are reserved for special use by Contracting Parties. Countries should avoid, where possible, the use of chapters 98 and 99. The revised IMTS Compilers Manual will contain more information on the practices of countries regarding the use of chapters 98 and 99.

Sections XI and XII	wood, cork, pulp, paper, and articles thereof
Sections XIII to XV	Textiles, footwear and headgear
	Articles of stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, mica and the like, ceramic products, glass, pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, jewellery, base metals and articles thereof
Section XVI	Machinery, mechanical appliances and electrical equipment
Section XVII	Vehicles, aircraft, vessels and associated transport equipment
Section XVIII	Optical, photographic, cinematographic, measuring, checking, precision, medical or surgical instruments and apparatus, clocks and watches, musical instruments
Section XIX	Arms and ammunition
Sections XX and XXI	Miscellaneous manufactured articles, such as furniture, lighting fittings, prefabricated buildings, sports requisites, works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques

3.11. *Recommendation to use HS.* **It is recommended** that countries use HS at the most detailed level for the collection, compilation and dissemination of international merchandise trade statistics. **Countries are encouraged** to use the most current version of HS.

## **B. Standard International Trade Classification**

3.12. *History of the Standard International Trade Classification.* At its third session, in 1948, taking into account the needs of countries, intergovernmental bodies and international agencies for greater international comparability of trade data, the Statistical Commission recommended that a revision of the League of Nations' Minimum List of Commodities for International Trade Statistics<sup>65</sup> be prepared. In cooperation with Governments and with the assistance of expert consultants, the United Nations Secretariat drew up the 1950 edition of the United Nations Standard International Trade Classification (referred to below as the "original" SITC).<sup>66</sup> In its resolution 299 B (XI) of 12 July 1950, the Economic and Social Council, upon the recommendation of the Statistical Commission at its fifth session held in May 1950, urged all Governments to make use of the Standard Classification by adopting it. By 1960, many countries were compiling international merchandise trade data according to the original SITC or the national classifications correlated to it and major international organizations had adopted SITC as a basis for the reporting of international trade statistics.

3.13. The first revision of SITC was issued in 1961, after being considered by the Statistical Commission at its eleventh session.<sup>67</sup> In 1974, the Statistical Commission adopted SITC, Revision

<sup>65</sup> League of Nations, 1938 (II.A.14; and corrigendum, 1939).

<sup>66</sup> Statistical Papers, No. 10/Rev.1, June 1951 United Nations publication, Sales No. 51.XVII.1.

<sup>67</sup> Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 34, 1961, United Nations publication, Sales No. 61.XVII.6.

2, which was issued in the following year.<sup>68</sup> At its twenty-first session, in 1981, the Statistical Commission took note of the fact that a third revision of SITC would have to be made available when HS came into force in 1988.<sup>69</sup> Employing the subheadings of HS88 as building blocks, in consultation with experts from Governments and interested international organizations and with the assistance of expert groups, the United Nations Statistics Division produced SITC, Rev.3, taking account of the need for continuity with the previous versions of SITC, as well as the following considerations:

- (a) The nature of the merchandise and the materials used in its production;
- (b) The processing stage;
- (c) Market practices and the uses of the product;
- (d) The importance of the commodity in terms of world trade.

3.14. *Previous recommendation to use SITC.* The final draft of SITC, Revision 3, was approved by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-third session, in February 1985.<sup>70</sup> In its resolution 1985/7 of 28 May 1985, the Economic and Social Council recommended that Member States report internationally data on external trade statistics according to SITC, Revision 3.<sup>71</sup>

3.15. In 1993, the Statistical Commission endorsed the use of HS at the national level in the compilation and dissemination of international merchandise trade statistics,<sup>72</sup> and in 1999, the Commission confirmed the recognition of SITC as an analytical tool.<sup>73</sup>

3.16. *SITC, Revision 4.* In the past, the United Nations Statistics Division had issued appropriate correspondence tables between SITC, Revision 3, and each new edition of HS. However, a strict period-to-period comparability was being lost for a growing number of series owing to significant changes in the HS classification scheme. At the same time, the majority of countries and international organizations continued to use SITC for various purposes, such as the study of long-term trends in international merchandise trade and the aggregation of traded commodities into classes more suitable for economic analysis. At its thirty-fifth session (2-5 March 2004), the Statistical Commission agreed with the conclusion of the inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics that a fourth revision of SITC was needed in view of the accumulated changes in HS.<sup>74</sup> SITC, Revision 4, was issued by the United Nations in 2006.<sup>75</sup>

3.17. The scope of SITC, Revision 4 remains the same as that of SITC, Revision 3, that is to say

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<sup>68</sup> Statistical Papers, No. 34/Rev.2, United Nations publication, Sales No. E 75.XVII.6.

<sup>69</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1981, Supplement No. 2* (E/1981/12), para. 41 (a).

<sup>70</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1985, Supplement No. 6* (E/1985/26), chap. IV, para. 57 (d).

<sup>71</sup> Statistical Papers, No. 34/Rev.3 (United Nations publication Sales No. E.86.XVII.12 and corrigenda).

<sup>72</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993 Supplement No. 6* (E/1993/26), chap. XI, para. 158.

<sup>73</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 4* (E/1999/24), chap. II, para. 24 (c).

<sup>74</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 4* (E/2004/24), chap. V, para. 4 (i).

<sup>75</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.XVII.10.

SITC, Revision 4 covers all goods classifiable in HS except for monetary gold, gold coin and current coin. All SITC, Revision 4 basic headings (except for 911.0 and 931.0) are defined in terms of HS07 subheadings. Since SITC is now recommended for analytical purposes only, there was no need - except in several special cases - to create new basic headings in SITC, Revision 4, that would be in a one-to-one correspondence with the new HS07 subheadings.

3.18. SITC, Revision 4 retains the overall structure of SITC, Revision 3 and consists of the same number of sections, divisions and groups. The changes made were at the level of basic headings and some subgroups. It contains 3,993 basic headings and subheadings assembled in 262 groups, 67 divisions and 10 sections. The sections are listed as follows:

- 0 Food and live animals
- 1 Beverages and tobacco
- 2 Crude materials, inedible, except fuels
- 3 Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials
- 4 Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes
- 5 Chemicals and related products, not elsewhere specified
- 6 Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material
- 7 Machinery and transport equipment
- 8 Miscellaneous manufactured articles
- 9 Commodities and transactions not classified elsewhere in SITC

The coverage of the sections in all revisions of SITC is very close, so that historical series of data are largely comparable at this level of aggregation. The historical comparability is also preserved for numerous series at the more detailed levels of the classification.

3.19. *Recommendation for use of SITC.* **It is recommended** that, in addition to HS, countries can use SITC for the dissemination and analysis of trade statistics according to user requirements.



### C. Classification by Broad Economic Categories

3.20. *History of the Classification by Broad Economic Categories.* The original version of the Classification by Broad Economic Categories (BEC)<sup>76</sup> was devised mainly for use by the United Nations Statistics Division for the summarization of data on international trade by large economic classes of commodities and as a means for converting trade data compiled in terms of SITC into end-use categories that were meaningful within the framework of System of National Accounts (SNA),<sup>77</sup> namely, categories approximating the three basic classes of goods in SNA: capital goods, intermediate goods and consumption goods.<sup>78</sup> BEC has 19 basic categories that can be aggregated to approximate these three basic classes of goods, thus permitting trade statistics to be considered jointly with other sets of general economic statistics, such as national accounts and industrial statistics, for national, regional or global economic analysis.

3.21. The Statistical Commission expected the BEC to serve as a guideline for the development of national classifications of imports according to broad economic categories.<sup>79</sup> However, at its sixteenth session (5 - 15 October 1970), the Statistical Commission recognized that countries might wish to adapt BEC for national purposes in different ways to meet national requirements, and concluded that consequently, it was not to be regarded as a "standard" classification in the same sense as, for example, SITC.<sup>80</sup>

3.22. *Revisions of BEC.* The original BEC was defined in terms of the divisions, groups, subgroups and basic headings of the Standard International Trade Classification, Revised<sup>81</sup> and was issued in 1971.<sup>82</sup> It has since been revised four times. The first revision defined BEC in terms of the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 2<sup>83</sup> and was issued in 1976.<sup>84</sup> The second revision defined BEC in terms of the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3 (SITC, Rev.3)<sup>85</sup> and was issued in 1986.<sup>86</sup> A third revision was issued in 1989 to provide full details of the SITC, Rev. 3 headings corresponding to BEC categories 41\* and 62\*, which were incomplete in the second revision due to the omission of one page; it also incorporated a corrigendum and a revised introduction.

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<sup>76</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.71.XVII.12.

<sup>77</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 10 (E/4471)*, paras. 116 and 118.

<sup>78</sup> See United Nations, *A System of National Accounts* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.69.XVII.3), para. 1.50.

<sup>79</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 10 (E/4471)*, para. 123.

<sup>80</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/4938)*, para. 95.

<sup>81</sup> Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 34, 1961 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 61.XVII.6).

<sup>82</sup> Classification by Broad Economic Categories (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.71.XVII.12).

<sup>83</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.XVII.6.

<sup>84</sup> *Classification by Broad Economic Categories Defined in Terms of SITC, Revision 2* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.XVII.7).

<sup>85</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XVII.12.

<sup>86</sup> *Classification by Broad Economic Categories Defined in Terms of SITC, Revision 3* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XVII.24).

3.23. In 2003, the fourth BEC revision was issued to take into account the more detailed description of commodities provided by the 2002 edition of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS02).<sup>87</sup>

#### **D. Central Product Classification**

3.24. *History of the Central Product Classification.* The Central Product Classification (CPC) originated from initiatives in the early 1970s to harmonize international classifications. The new classification was intended to cover both goods and services (products) and used the detailed subheadings of the Harmonized System as building blocks for the part dealing with transportable goods.

3.25. The first release of CPC, the Provisional Central Product Classification, was approved by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-fifth session, in 1989,<sup>88</sup> and published by the United Nations in 1991.<sup>89</sup> CPC, Version 1.0 was adopted by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-ninth session, in 1997,<sup>90</sup> and published in 1998.<sup>91</sup> In 2003, CPC, Version 1.1 was released,<sup>92</sup> taking into account the update to its goods sections according to the 2002 edition of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS02).

3.26. *CPC, Version 2.0.* In 2008, the work on CPC, Version 2.0 was completed. This version of CPC is divided into 10 sections, 71 divisions, 324 groups, 1,267 classes and 2,738 subclasses. Sections 0 to 4 are based on HS07<sup>93</sup> and aggregate the HS codes into product categories suitable for various types of economic analysis within the national accounts framework. This part of the classification, like SITC, provides for the rearrangement of HS-based international merchandise trade statistics for analytical purposes. Sections 5 to 9 of CPC, Version 2.0 go beyond HS categories to provide a classification of service products.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.XVII.8.

<sup>88</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 3* (E/1989/21), paras. 95(b) and (f).

<sup>89</sup> *Provisional Central Product Classification*, Statistical Papers Series M, No. 77 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.XVII.7).

<sup>90</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 4* (E/1997/24), para. 19 (d).

<sup>91</sup> *Central Product Classification (CPC) Version 1.0*, Statistical Papers Series M, No. 77, Ver.1.0 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.5).

<sup>92</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.XVII.3.

<sup>93</sup> The correspondences between HS07 and CPC, Version 2.0 can be accessed at the United Nations Statistics Division website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/class>.

<sup>94</sup> The CPC is used by many countries as the basis for development of their national product classifications. For example, the Statistical Classification of Products by Activity (CPA) was created at the level of the European Union (EU) by assigning CPC products to one single activity category.

## **E. International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities**

3.27. *Purpose of ISIC.* Unlike HS, SITC, BEC and CPC, which are product classifications, the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) is the international reference classification of productive activities. Its main purpose is to provide a set of activity categories that can be utilized for the collection and reporting of statistics according to such activities. Since the adoption of the original version of ISIC in 1948,<sup>95</sup> ISIC has provided guidance to countries in developing national activity classifications and has become an important tool for comparing statistical data on economic activities at the international level. Wide use has been made of ISIC, both nationally and internationally, in classifying data according to kind of economic activity in the fields of economic and social statistics, such as for statistics on national accounts, demography of enterprises, employment and others.

3.28. *Revisions of ISIC.* The original ISIC has been revised four times. The structure of the current fourth revision of ISIC was considered and approved by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-seventh session, in March 2006,<sup>96</sup> as the internationally accepted standard. It contains 21 sections, 88 divisions, 238 groups and 419 classes.

3.29. *Correspondence tables.* Since ISIC has been used for the collection and presentation of statistics in many areas, there has been a strong need for correspondence tables between ISIC and other classifications. When drafting ISIC, Rev.4, and simultaneously CPC, Version 2, a strong link was established between the two classifications. By rearranging the CPC categories according to their industrial origin and using the link between CPC, SITC and HS, a detailed correspondence table between HS, SITC, CPC and ISIC was established.<sup>97</sup> Countries may find this correspondence useful when analyzing trade flows by activity categories. However, the alternative approach to obtaining information on trade flows by activity - to identify the activity of the trader (see paras. 11.5 and 11.6 below) and perform appropriate aggregation - should be given preference whenever possible.

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<sup>95</sup> *Statistical Papers*, No. 4, Lake Success, New York, 31 October 1949.

<sup>96</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No.4 (E/2006/24)*, chap. I, para. 3, item 37/105 (a).

<sup>97</sup> These and other correspondence tables are available in electronic format only and can be accessed at the United Nations Statistics Division website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/class>.

## IV. Valuation

### A. Statistical value of imports and exports

4.1. *Statistical value.* **It is recommended** that for all goods covered in international merchandise trade statistics, whether sold, exchanged or provided without payment, a statistical value is recorded following the specific rules defined below.

4.2. *Customs valuation and statistical value.* The main source of information for establishing the statistical value is the customs value, which is placed on goods by customs administrations in accordance with national legislation and other relevant regulations. National practices of customs valuation, especially for goods that are not subject to ad valorem duties, often vary from country to country, and consequently the trade statistician needs to be aware of those practices to understand the customs values and to be in a position to make necessary adjustments while compiling statistical value of the goods.<sup>98</sup>

4.3. *Transaction value.* Since the adoption of article VII (Valuation for Customs Purposes) of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1947, a series of agreements have led to a standardization of the customs approach to valuation, culminating in the Agreement on Implementation of article VII of GATT 1994 (WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation).<sup>99</sup> This Agreement adopts the transaction value (the price actually paid or payable for goods, including some adjustments) as the customs value of imported goods, provided that certain conditions for a fair, uniform and neutral valuation are met. The rules as set out in the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation are reproduced in annex D below.

4.4. *WTO Agreement on Valuation.* **It is recommended** that countries adopt the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation as the basis for valuation of their international merchandise trade for statistical purposes (whether a country is a WTO member or not). This recommendation applies to both imports and exports.

4.5. The WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation allows countries to include in or exclude from the customs value, in whole or in part, such components as:

- "(a) The cost of transport of the imported goods to the port or place of importation;
- (b) Loading, unloading and handling charges associated with the transport of the

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<sup>98</sup> An increasing number of countries include in their customs declarations a provision for statistical value; for example, many countries have adopted the Single Administrative Document (SAD), which contains a special entry for statistical value.

<sup>99</sup> See World Trade Organization, *The Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations: The Legal Texts*, Geneva, 1995: Agreement on Implementation of Article VII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994, Part I, "Rules on customs valuation" (WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation), which is reproduced in annex D below. The WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation is one of the multilateral agreements on trade in goods annexed to the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization, and is obligatory for all WTO members.

imported goods to the port or place of importation;

- (c) The cost of insurance."<sup>100</sup>

4.6. *FOB-type and CIF-type values.* In principle, under the Agreement, countries can choose two different approaches to the valuation of goods, namely free on board (FOB)-type or cost, insurance and freight (CIF)-type values. FOB-type values include the transaction value of the goods and the value of services performed to deliver goods to the border of the exporting country. CIF-type values include the transaction value of the goods, the value of services performed to deliver goods to the border of the exporting country and the value of the services performed to deliver the goods from the border of the exporting country to the border of the importing country (see paras. 4.10 and 4.11 for further details).

4.7. *Country practices.* Countries almost universally apply FOB-type values for the valuation of exports. In the case of imports, most countries use the CIF-type values because customs administrations usually determine the customs value of the goods on this basis. The CIF-type value of imported goods is important for various purposes, such as monitoring prices of goods available on the domestic market, compilation of supply table for use in input-output analysis etc. The FOB-type values of imports are more difficult to compile and are systematically applied by only a limited number of countries. However, FOB-type values provide a uniform basis for goods valuation (in the sense of giving a single point of valuation for exports and imports, namely, the border of the exporting country's statistical territory) and are, therefore useful for the compilation of national accounts and balance of payments statistics at the aggregate level.<sup>101</sup> The FOB-type values of imported goods at the detailed level are very important for reconciliation studies, the examination of bilateral trade balances and trade negotiations since they provide a comparable valuation of the exports and imports of trading partners.

4.8. *Statistical value of exported and imported goods.* To promote the comparability of international merchandise trade statistics, while taking into account various analytical needs and the commercial and data-reporting practices of the majority of countries, **it is recommended** that:

- (a) *The statistical value of exported goods* be a FOB-type value;
- (b) *The statistical value of imported goods* be a CIF-type value; however, **countries are encouraged** to compile FOB-type value of imported goods as supplementary information;

4.9. Countries that compile only CIF-type values for imported goods **are encouraged** to compile separate data for freight and insurance, at the most detailed commodity and partner level possible.<sup>102</sup> It is recognized that the compilation of imports on the FOB-type basis and the separate compilation of data for freight and insurance may entail a significant additional burden for

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<sup>100</sup> See WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation, article 8, para. 2.

<sup>101</sup> See 2008 SNA, para. 26.19, and BPM6, paras. 10.30-10.36 on valuation. The balance of payments and national accounts require the valuation of imports on a FOB-type basis but many more adjustments are needed to derive imports required for balance of payments and national accounts purposes (see annex F below for details).

<sup>102</sup> The separate collection of data on freight and insurance can improve data quality.

respondents and merchandise trade statistics compilers and should be undertaken based on national situations and needs. However, **countries are encouraged** to explore additional methods which can facilitate the compilation of FOB-type values of imports (examples will be provided in the updated IMTS Compilers Manual).

## 1. Compilation of FOB-type and CIF-type values

4.10. *Terms of delivery.* Customs administrations generally require that the FOB- or CIF-type value be placed on the customs declarations by traders or, if necessary, they calculate those values themselves based on the various documents submitted by traders. Such supporting documents may include the contract of sale,<sup>103</sup> which normally contains the terms of delivery of goods and the price of the goods, and the invoice issued by the seller of the goods to the buyer. The price of the goods negotiated between traders and reflected in the invoice (also referred to as invoice price) depends on the terms of delivery. The terms of delivery are an agreement between the seller and the buyer as to who is responsible for the cost and risk of delivering the goods to the agreed place. Types of terms of delivery used in international commerce, including FOB and CIF, are defined by the International Chamber of Commerce and are described in annex E below. Compilers have to make appropriate adjustments to the invoice price to obtain CIF- or FOB-type values of goods if such values are not available from customs or other sources.

4.11. The delivery term "free on board"(FOB) applies only when goods are dispatched from the exporting country by sea or inland waterway and the term "cost, insurance and freight" (CIF) applies only when goods are delivered by sea or inland waterway to the port of importation. When other means of transport are used for exports and FOB is not applicable, the term "free carrier" (FCA) at port of export can substitute for it; if neither FOB nor FCA is applicable (e.g., exports by railroad or pipeline), the term "Delivered at frontier" (DAF) of the exporting country may be used. Since the invoice prices of the goods delivered under the FOB, FCA and DAF terms reflect the costs of delivery of goods to the border of the exporting country, they are similar and are referred to as FOB-type values. If, in the case of imports, CIF is not applicable, the goods can be delivered on the basis of "carriage and insurance paid to" (CIP) at port of importation. Since the invoice prices of the goods delivered under the CIF and CIP terms reflect the costs, including freight and insurance, of goods delivery to the border of the importing country, they are similar and are referred to as CIF-type values. If other kinds of terms of delivery are used (such as "ex works", "free alongside ship" etc.), other sources of data need to be used to establish the FOB-type or CIF-type value by adding to or subtracting certain cost items from the invoice price.<sup>104</sup> Additional guidance on the compilation of the FOB- or CIF-type values is provided in the IMTS Compilers Manual.

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<sup>103</sup> For international guidelines on the content of contracts of sale, see United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods of 11 April 1980, in *Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods*, Vienna, 10 March - 11 April 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 81.V.5), pp. 178 - 190.

<sup>104</sup> For ease of reference, the word "type" may be omitted and the terms "CIF value" and "FOB value" may be used as generic names instead.

4.12. *Establishing the statistical value.* Commercial practices in international merchandise trade display a variety of detail in the terms of delivery of goods. Statisticians should carefully examine available data sources and information, including the terms of goods delivery, in order to derive the recommended FOB/CIF values. In addition, they should establish a close cooperation with customs and other primary data collectors in order to provide guidance on the methodology regarding the statistical value and to ensure the availability of adequate data. **It is recommended** that the customs value, when established in compliance with the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation, form the basis of the statistical value.

4.13. Compilers should be aware that values placed on goods by customs authorities may not necessarily comply with statistical requirements. If the customs values of economically significant shipments of goods are established with a clear deviation from those requirements, trade statistics compilers should use values derived from non-customs sources or estimated values, if deemed more accurate. This might be especially important in the case of exports. Therefore, **compilers are encouraged** to contact the exporters of major commodities and, if necessary, to conduct special studies to determine the statistical value on the basis of cost of production, including the cost of materials and compensation of employees and other relevant information.

4.14. *Use of additional sources of information.* Most of the goods covered by trade statistics cross borders as a result of commercial transactions (purchases/sales) and their statistical value can be established using their customs values or contracts of sale. However, customs values may not be available and contracts of sale may not be available as well or they may not contain all the necessary information. In such cases, the data compiler should resort to other commercial documents, such as invoices, contracts of carriage and insurance contracts.

## **2. Selected issues of valuation**

4.15. Some international transactions present special difficulties for the valuation of the categories of goods involved due to the complexity of the transaction or the peculiarity of the goods. In other cases, transactions may not require goods valuation by the parties involved and are not accompanied by the movement of currency or credit. However, all categories of goods should be valued on the basis of the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation and the present IMTS 2010 recommendations (see paras. 4.8 and 4.9 above). In addition, **it is recommended** that:

(a) *Banknotes and securities and coins not in circulation* be valued at the transaction value of the printed paper or stamped metal rather than at their face value (see para. 1.11 above);

(b) *Media, whether or not recorded* be valued at their full transaction value (and not at the value of unrecorded media, such as empty diskettes, blank CD-ROMs, DVDs, paper etc.). The transaction value may fully or partially include the value of certain services and countries should provide details on how the transaction value is established in specific cases. Media carrying customized software or software written for a specific client or originals of any nature, if identified, are to be excluded (see para.1.18 above);

(c) *Electricity, gas, oil and water* (see para 1.24 above) be valued net of any delivery charges not included according to FOB- or CIF type valuation. Such charges may or may not appear separately on the invoice. In the absence of adequate customs records, **it is recommended** that countries obtain the transaction value of these goods directly from the buyer and seller. However, if only the overall value inclusive delivery charges is available, such charges should be identified (e.g., using other sources of information and estimation) and subtracted in order to obtain the statistical value of these goods. Delivery charges should be valued at market prices, but it is acknowledged that markets for such services often do not exist and prices for such services are either set administratively or based on some cost calculation. **It is recommended** that trading partners in such transactions value and record these flows in a uniform way to improve international comparability.

(d) *Goods under financial lease* (see para 1.28 above) that cross borders be valued on the basis of the prices of similar goods crossing borders as the result of sale. The value of any services supplied under the lease (e.g., training, maintenance, finance charges etc.) should be excluded. If the goods are not normally offered for sale, they should be valued following the general guidelines on valuation.

(e) *Goods for processing with or without change of ownership* (see paras 1.19-1.21 above) be valued as follows: where the transaction value of goods for processing entering or leaving the compiling country without change of ownership is not available, the trade compilers should apply the appropriate methods contained in the WTO Agreement on valuation in order to derive the statistical value (see annex D below). Goods for processing should always be valued at their full (gross) value (see also annex A, para. A.10 below).

(f) *Returned goods* (see para 1.23 above), if identifiable, be valued as at the initial transaction. Returned goods are a special case of reimports and re-exports and the valuation at the initial transaction value applies only in this special case. In all other cases, reimports and re-exports should be valued as any other goods on the basis of their transaction value.

(g) *Goods bundled with services* be valued as follows: the statistical value applies to goods and the value of any services associated with them should be excluded, except for the services that are included according to the FOB- and CIF-type valuation of goods. However, this may not be possible in practice (see para. 1.18 above).

4.16. *Transactions without valuation.* In some cases, an international transaction in goods may not require goods valuation by the parties involved and is not accompanied by a corresponding movement of currency or credit, such as trade and barter agreements based on quantities without stated prices (see para. 1.12 above), food and other humanitarian aid (see para. 1.14 above), goods on consignment (see para. 1.17 above), goods for processing (see para. 1.19-1.21 above), migrants' effects (see para. 1.26 above), cross-border movements of unsold articles and gifts, and donations made by private agencies or persons. In such cases, following the general recommendation, the



value of the goods should be established in accordance with the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation (including the use of transaction value of identical or similar goods, or a computed value) and the present IMTS 2010 recommendations on statistical value (see paras. 4.8 and 4.9 above).

4.17. *Cooperation in valuation.* The appropriate valuation of goods is very important for the accuracy of international merchandise trade statistics. Consequently, the agency responsible for the overall compilation of trade statistics and the agencies that collect data should cooperate to provide reliable valuation of goods in all cases, especially for problem categories and irrespective of whether their prices are available.

## **B. Currency conversion**

4.18. *The unit of account.* The value of trade transactions may be expressed initially in a variety of currencies or other standards of value. Compilers are required to convert these values into a single (reference) unit of account in order to produce consistent and analytically meaningful national statistics suitable, inter alia, for measuring trade flows and the compilation of national accounts and balance of payments statistics. From the perspective of the data compiler, the national currency unit is the preferable reference unit of account. However, if the national currency is subject to significantly larger fluctuations than other currencies, the analytical value of the data may be diminished. In those circumstances, it might be appropriate to use another more stable unit of account so that the values of international transactions expressed in that unit would not be significantly affected by appreciation or depreciation (relative to the unit of account) of the currencies in which the given transactions occur.

4.19. *Exchange rate for conversion.* In accordance with the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation, **it is recommended** that:

"(a) Where the conversion of currency is necessary for the determination of the customs value, the rate of exchange to be used shall be that duly published by the competent authorities of the country of importation concerned and shall reflect as effectively as possible, in respect of the period covered by each such document of publication, the current value of such currency in commercial transactions in terms of the currency of the country of importation;<sup>105</sup>

(b) The conversion rate to be used shall be that in effect at the time of exportation or the time of importation, as provided by each Member."<sup>106</sup>

4.20. An equivalent approach to conversion should apply for both imports and exports. In cases when both buying and selling (official/market) rates are available, the rate to be used is the midpoint between the two, so that any service charge (i.e., the spread between the midpoint and those rates) is excluded. If a rate is not available for the date of exportation or importation, **it is**

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<sup>105</sup> The term "document of publication" is to be understood to refer to any form of official publication.

<sup>106</sup> See WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation, article 9.

**recommended** that the average rate for the shortest period applicable be used.

4.21. *Multiple official exchange rates.* Some countries use a regime of multiple exchange rates, under which different exchange rates are applicable to different categories of traded goods, favouring some transactions and discouraging others. **It is recommended** that trade transactions be recorded using the actual rate applicable to specific transactions, noting which official rate was used for each currency.

4.22. *Parallel or black market exchange rates.* Transactions that involve parallel or black market rates should be handled separately from those that involve official rates. Compilers of trade statistics should attempt to estimate the exchange rate actually used in transactions in such markets, and should use that rate for conversion.

## V. Quantity measurement

5.1. *The need for quantity information.* Quantity is an important dimension of international trade statistics that is indispensable for various policy and analytical purposes including for the planning of transport infrastructure, the compilation of energy, agricultural and other commodity balances, the assessment of the impact of international trade on environment, and the verification of trade values and the construction of trade index numbers.

5.2. *Quantity units* refer to physical characteristics of goods. Since they are free of the valuation problems discussed in chapter 4 above, quantity data, if compiled with care, provide a reliable indicator of international movements of goods. The use of appropriate quantity units may also result in more internationally comparable data on these movements, because differences in quantity measurements between the importing country and the exporting country can be less significant than in value measurements. Therefore, quantities are often used in checking the reliability of the value data via the calculation of so-called unit values (value divided by quantity).

5.3. *The standard units of quantity recommended by the World Customs Organization (WCO).* In 1995, WCO adopted a recommendation on the use of standard units of quantity to facilitate the collection, comparison and analysis of international statistics based on the Harmonized System.<sup>107</sup> The WCO standard units of quantity are:<sup>108</sup>

Weight <sup>109</sup>	kilograms (kg) carat (carat)
Length	metres (m)
Area	square metres (m <sup>2</sup> )
Volume	cubic metres (m <sup>3</sup> ) litres (l)
Electrical power	1,000 kilowatt-hours (1,000 Kwh)
Number (units)	pieces/items (u) pairs (2u) dozens (12u) thousands of pieces/items (1,000u) packs (u (set/pack))

5.4. In the WCO recommendation, one of the above standard units of quantity is specified for

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<sup>107</sup> See World Customs Organisation, *Explanatory Notes to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, second edition*, Brussels, 1996, Annex II - Recommendation of the Customs Co-operation Council on the Use of the Standard Units of Quantity to facilitate the Collection, Comparison and Analysis of International Statistics Based on the Harmonized System (WCO Recommendation on Quantity Units).

<sup>108</sup> See WCO Recommendation on Quantity Units, introduction, para. 4.

<sup>109</sup> Weight units (kilograms) can be expressed on a net or a gross basis, and can be used to meet a variety of needs. For instance, net weight units (excluding packaging) are very useful for economic analysis; gross weight units (including packing) are more appropriate for analysis of transportation.

each HS six-digit subheading.<sup>110</sup>

5.5. **It is recommended** that countries collect or estimate, validate and report quantity information in the WCO standard units of quantity and in net weight<sup>111</sup> on all trade transactions.<sup>112</sup> Specifically, **it is recommended** that:

(a) Countries use the applicable WCO standard units of quantity when collecting and reporting international merchandise trade on the basis of the Harmonized System;<sup>113</sup>

(b) In the case of the HS headings (subheadings) where the standard unit is other than weight, a net weight also be compiled and reported;

(c) Weight figures be reported on a net weight basis; however, if only gross weight is available, it should be recorded and used for estimation of net weight;

(d) Countries that use units of quantity other than the WCO standard units or use units of quantity different from the one recommended for the specific commodity (HS six-digit subheading) provide the conversion factors to the recommended standard units in their metadata.

5.6. *Uniformity in the application of quantity units.* In order to establish a greater uniformity in the application of quantity units and the availability of comparable quantity information, **it is recommended** that:

(a) The same quantity units be applied for all transactions under individual six-digit HS subheadings and more detailed basic headings of the used commodity classification, unless there is a compelling reason for applying different units of quantity measurement;

(b) A clear description of the used quantity units and the applicable conversion factors (including the methodology for their calculation) be provided in the metadata.

5.7. *Estimated (or ‘imputed’) quantities.* **It is further recommended** that countries identify estimated and imputed quantities, as deemed necessary and appropriate, taking into account the needs of users, and that they provide information about the methodology used for estimation in their metadata.

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<sup>110</sup> See latest WCO recommendation on quantity units: World Customs Organization, *Recommendation of the Customs Co-operation Council on the Use of the Standard Units of Quantity to facilitate the Collection, Comparison and Analysis of International Statistics Based on the Harmonized System*, 1 July 2006, Annex. This WCO recommendation takes into account the amendments contained in HS07 and revokes the previous recommendation on the use of standard units of quantity. Further, it is recommended that member administrations and contracting parties to the Harmonized System Convention report international trade data to the United Nations and other international organizations, in terms of standard units of quantity specified in the annex to this WCO recommendation, employing as many as possible, but not less than 90 per cent of the HS subheadings.

<sup>111</sup> Net weight is useful for economic analysis, such as the calculation of unit values. To the extent that gross weights (including packaging) are also desired by a country, they should be collected directly. However, given that collection of gross weight data presents difficulties in many countries, countries may wish to obtain gross weights from net weights through sampling and estimation.

<sup>112</sup> A few exceptions may apply; e.g., net weight does not apply to HS sub-heading 271600 “Electrical energy”.

<sup>113</sup> It is acknowledged that WCO standard units of quantity do not necessarily reflect industry norms for trade in certain subheadings in all countries.

## **VI. Partner country**

### **A. General**

6.1. *The need for trade statistics by partner country.* Trade statistics by partner country, both for the total value of trade in goods and for the value and quantity of trade in individual commodities, are of significant analytical value. They are used for a number of purposes, including the analysis of economic trends and regional trade patterns; the calculation of trade shares; market analysis; business decisions; trade policy monitoring and negotiations; the compilation of national accounts; balance of payments; and checking the accuracy and reliability of trade data. Trade-by-partner statistics are frequently used by analysts to estimate imports and exports of a country that does not report trade data (or does so only after substantial delay). Where a country's reported data are considered questionable by a user or when the user is seeking indications of any under- or over-reporting of imports or exports, a country's trade data, both at the aggregate level and at the level with detailed commodity breakdowns, are frequently compared with the data of its partners, although the limitations of such comparison should be recognized. In this context, further harmonization of the partner attribution applied by countries will contribute to better international comparability of trade data (for further discussion of the issue of data comparability, see para. 9.18 below).

6.2. Section B below describes the different types of partner country attribution used in international merchandise trade statistics by various countries; section C below provides a brief comparison of their advantages and disadvantages; and section D below contains the IMTS 2010 recommendations.

### **B. Types of partner country attribution<sup>114</sup>**

#### **1. Imports**

6.3. *Country of purchase.* The country of purchase is the country where the seller of the goods (the purchaser's co-contractor) resides. The term "resides" should be interpreted in accordance with the 2008 SNA and BPM6 (see annex A, para. A.6 below). If both countries collect data on a purchase/sale basis, the country of purchase will record goods as exports to the country of sale and the country of sale will record the same goods as imports from the country of purchase.

6.4. *Country of consignment.* The country of consignment (in the case of imports) is the country from which goods were dispatched to the importing country, without any commercial transactions or other operations that change the legal status of the goods taking place in any intermediate country. If, before arriving in the importing country, goods enter one or more further countries and

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<sup>114</sup> Definitions presented in the paragraphs below are derived from definitions used by countries and the 1982 revision of *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, Revision 1* (IMTS, Rev.1) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.XVII.14), paras. 127-137.

are subject to such transactions or operations, that last intermediate country where such transactions or operations took place should be taken as the country of consignment.

6.5. *Country of shipment.* The country of shipment (in the case of imports), is the country from which goods are shipped, whether or not commercial transactions or any other operations that change the legal status of the goods occur after the goods are dispatched from the exporting country. If such transactions do not occur, the country of shipment is the same as the country of consignment.

6.6. *Country of origin.* The country of origin of a good is determined by rules of origin established by each country.<sup>115</sup> Generally, rules of origin consist of two basic criteria:

(a) The criterion of goods "wholly produced" (obtained) in a given country, where only one country enters into consideration in attributing origin;

(b) The criterion of "substantial transformation", where two or more countries have taken part in the production of the goods.

6.7. The international guidance on these criteria is currently provided by the Revised Kyoto Convention.<sup>116</sup> **It is recommended** that countries follow the relevant provisions of the Revised Kyoto Convention in international merchandise trade statistics for determining the country of origin of goods.

6.8. *Harmonization of rules of origin.* Since the WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin<sup>117</sup> came into force, the Technical Committee on Rules of Origin, under the auspices of the World Customs Organization (Brussels) and the Committee on Rules of Origin, under the auspices of WTO (Geneva), have been undertaking the harmonization work programme on rules of origin in non-preferential trade, under which both Committees are to:

(a) Develop definitions of wholly obtained goods and of minimal operations or processes that do not by themselves confer origin to a good;

(b) Elaborate upon substantial transformation expressed by change in HS tariff classification;

(c) In cases where the exclusive use of the HS nomenclature does not allow for the expression of substantial transformation, develop supplementary criteria, such as ad valorem percentages and/or manufacturing or processing operations.

6.9. The substantial transformation criteria are being elaborated on a product-specific basis and are to be applied to a good when more than one country is involved in its production. These rules

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<sup>115</sup> There are also a number of countries that have no rules of origin at all.

<sup>116</sup> See Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific annex K/ Chapter 1, parts of which are reproduced in annex B, paras. B.28-B.33 below.

<sup>117</sup> See World Trade Organization, *The Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations: The Legal Texts*, Geneva, 1995: Agreement on Rules of Origin (WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin).

will provide updated international guidelines in this area, and will allow the determination of origin of each internationally traded commodity classified in the Harmonized System.<sup>118, 119</sup>

## 2. Exports

6.10. *Country of sale.* The country of sale is the country where the purchaser of the goods (the seller's co-contractor) resides. As mentioned above, the term "resides" should be interpreted in accordance with the 2008 SNA and BPM6 (see annex A, para. A.6 below). If both countries collect data on a purchase/sale basis, the country of purchase will record goods as exports to the country of sale, and the country of sale will record the same goods as imports from the country of purchase.

6.11. *Country of consignment.* The country of consignment<sup>120</sup> (in the case of exports) is the country to which goods are dispatched by the exporting country, without - as far as it is known at the time of exportation - being subject to any commercial transactions or other operations that change the legal status of the goods taking place in any intermediate country. If there are several intermediate countries, then the first intermediate country after leaving the exporting country should be recorded as country of consignment or destination.

6.12. *Country of shipment.* The country of shipment (in the case of exports), is the country to which goods are shipped, whether or not commercial transactions or any other operations that change the legal status of the goods are expected to take place before arrival of the goods in that country.

6.13. *Country of last known destination.* The country of last known destination is the last country - as far as it is known at the time of exportation - to which goods are to be delivered, irrespective of where they have been initially dispatched to and whether or not, on their way to that last country, they are subject to any commercial transactions or other operations that change their legal status. For instance, if all what is known at the time of exportation is that goods are to be delivered to country A but have been initially dispatched to a third country (country B) where they are subject to commercial transactions or other operations that change their legal status, that third country (country B) is the country of consignment and country A is the country of last known destination. If goods are delivered to country A without any such transactions or operations occurring, country A is both the country of consignment and the country of last known destination.

6.14. *Country of consumption.* The country of consumption of goods (for exports) is the economic complement to the concept of country of origin for imports. The country of consumption is the country in which the goods are expected to be used for private or public consumption or as inputs in a production process.

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<sup>118</sup> A recent significant development has been the completion of a draft document on the non-preferential rules of origin. See World Trade Organization, Committee on Rules of Origin, *DRAFT Consolidated Text of Non-Preferential Rules of Origin*, G/RO/W/111/Rev.3 as of 2 December 2008.

<sup>119</sup> See annex C below for further information on rules of origin.

<sup>120</sup> Often referred to as "country of destination" in the case of exports.

## **C. Comparison of different methods of partner country attribution**

### **1. Country of purchase or of sale**

6.15. The method of compiling data by country of purchase or of sale is clear enough conceptually, but it leads to inconsistencies in collected data since most of the data are recorded on the basis of goods crossing borders. To illustrate these inconsistencies, let assume that:

(a) Country A produces goods that are sold to a resident of country B, who in turn sells them to a resident in country C;

(b) Goods are shipped directly from country A to country C.

6.16. If all countries record goods on the basis of crossing their border and at the same time use a purchase/sale basis of partner country attribution, then the statistics of country A would record these goods as exports to country B, and the statistics of country C would record the same goods as imports from country B. However, the statistics of country B will show neither imports from country A nor exports to country C since the goods did not cross its borders. No exact comparability of trade statistics between partners can be expected if statistics are based on a combination of border-crossing and purchase/sale principles. In addition, crossing borders as the result of purchases/sales comprises only a part of the international movements of goods covered by trade statistics.

6.17. The compilation of statistics on a purchase/sale basis also presents a country with the problem of how to obtain the required information when the goods are sent to a recipient in a country other than the country where the buyer is located and when the goods are received from a country other than the country where the seller is located (see example in paras. 6.15-6.16 above). The compilation of trade statistics on a purchase/sale basis is a relatively expensive operation, requiring substantial effort to determine the residence of the purchaser (for exports) and seller (for imports) for each external trade transaction. Surveys can contribute relevant information, especially when linked to value-added tax declarations; however, in general, the compilation of international merchandise trade statistics on a purchase/sale basis cannot be recommended as the standard.

### **2. Country of consignment**

6.18. In general, the method of compiling data by the country of consignment (or destination) offers the possibility of obtaining consistent statistics and reasonable comparability since it promotes the recording of the same transactions by importing and exporting countries. This approach should result in symmetrical data sets since goods recorded as imports by one country are to be recorded as exports by another.

6.19. However, there can be a lack of knowledge about the destination of goods at the time of



export because goods can be redirected while at sea or goods can be trans-shipped from the original country of consignment and, therefore, not included in that country's imports, thus creating incomparability in partner statistics. In practice, export statistics are rarely revised to reflect the change in country of consignment. Also, data on a consignment basis do not provide the information required for quota and tariff purposes.

### **3. Country of shipment**

6.20. The method of compiling data by country of shipment has the advantage that, for the majority of transactions, the trading partner can be easily determined from shipping documents. However, the shipment of goods between countries does not necessarily reflect a trade relationship between them. The transportation of goods from the country of consignment to the country of last destination may involve the use of multiple shippers and passage through several countries, so that, at the time of goods importation, the country of consignment and the country of shipment may or may not coincide. The country identified by the importer as the partner country will often be the country where the last shipment arrangements were made, rather than the country from which the goods were originally dispatched. It follows that the recording of a partner country on a shipment basis will result in a distorted picture of the international merchandise trade flows, and cannot, therefore, be recommended.

### **4. Country of origin and country of consumption**

6.21. The recording of imports by country of origin and country of consumption has the advantage of showing the direct relationship between the producing country (the country in which goods originate) and the country where goods are actually used. The information about goods origin is regarded as indispensable for matters of trade policy and negotiations, for administering import quotas or differential tariffs and for related economic analysis. The WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin, which is obligatory for all WTO members, emphasizes the importance of such information in the context of application for most-favoured-nation treatment, anti-dumping and countervailing duties, safeguard measures, origin-marking requirements, quantitative restrictions and quotas. The Agreement specifically provides that the WTO rules of origin, after their adoption, will "include rules used for government procurement and trade statistics".<sup>121</sup>

6.22. However, there are limitations to the use of data compiled on a country-of-origin basis; most notably, such an approach does not permit a symmetrical recording of the same trade transactions by the exporting country and the importing country if the goods were not directly imported from the country of production. Suppose goods were produced in country A, sold and shipped to country B, and afterwards resold and dispatched to country C. The statistics of country B will show exports to country C but the statistics of country C will not attribute its imports to country B; it will indicate that goods were imported from country A (country of origin). This fact complicates the issue of the comparability of data and detracts from their usefulness for some types of economic analysis, especially in compilation of balance of payment statements by

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<sup>121</sup> See WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin, article 1, para. 2.

partner countries or regions.

6.23. Difficulties can also arise in actually determining the country of origin. The information on origin for different transactions may not have the same quality because of variations in the requirements to produce documentary evidence. The requirement to present a certificate of origin of goods is defined by the tariff law of the countries and does not apply to all goods entering or leaving a country.<sup>122</sup> In the case of customs union countries, the union's external trade statistics (extra-union trade), as far as imports are concerned, is generally based on origin; statistics of trade between member States (intra-union trade), however, may record only the country of consignment (or the state of dispatch/arrival).<sup>123</sup>

6.24. The compilation of country of consumption for exports would be analytically useful, but the country of consumption is rarely known with certainty at the time of exportation and in practice is not frequently used for export statistics.

#### **D. Recommendations**

6.25. Although no single method of attributing partner country is ideal, attribution by origin for imports meets what is considered to be a priority application of international merchandise trade statistics, namely, matters of trade policy and related economic analysis. Consequently, **it is recommended** that:

- (a) In the case of imports, the country of origin be recorded;
- (b) In the case of exports, the country of last known destination be recorded.

6.26. *Country of consignment.* Since the partner data compiled on the basis of the country of origin (for imports) and the country of last known destination (for exports) are very often not comparable and in view of the needs for internationally comparable partner data for analytical purposes as well as for trade data reconciliation studies, **it is recommended** that country of consignment be recorded for imports as the second partner country attribution, alongside country of origin. Considering, in the case of exports, that countries often do not differentiate the country of last known destination and the country of consignment and that their separate recording could create a significant additional data-reporting and data-processing burden, the compilation of export statistics on the country of consignment basis is only **encouraged**, depending on a country's needs and circumstances. It is recognized that the compilation of country of consignment for exports may be considered by some countries as a longer-term objective.

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<sup>122</sup> According to the Revised Kyoto Convention, "documentary evidence of origin should be required only when it is necessary for the application of preferential customs duties, of economic or trade measures adopted unilaterally or under bilateral or multilateral agreements or of measures adopted for reasons of health or public order" (see Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex K/ Chapter 2, para. 2).

<sup>123</sup> See *Official Journal of the European Communities*, No. 102/7 (2004), European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) 638/2004, Annex.

6.27. *Calculation of trade balances.* For the calculation of trade balances in the context of the analysis of international merchandise trade statistics, **it is recommended** to use imports by country of origin and exports by country of last known destination. For specific purposes such as balance of payments, reconciliation studies etc., trade balances using a different partner attribution may be used.

6.28. *Economic territory of the trading partners.* **It is recommended** that the economic territory of trading partners constitute the basis upon which the statistics on trade by partner are compiled.<sup>124</sup> **Countries are encouraged** to use the United Nations standard country or area codes for statistical use as guidance for the identification of trading partners.<sup>125</sup>

6.29. *Trade with itself and trade with free zones.* It is possible that in the case of reimports (imports of domestic goods which were previously recorded as exports; see para. 2.16 above) and the use of country of origin, a country may register trade (imports) with itself. Yet, it is neither recommended nor is it common practice to record exports to itself as the country of last known destination, even if the return of the goods may be almost certain (i.e., after minor processing that does not change the country of origin). Countries applying the strict or relaxed definition of the special trade system may record trade (imports or exports) from and to their free zones (or premises for inward processing or customs warehouses). The recording of trade with its free zones (or premises for inward processing or customs warehouses) clearly indicates that the country does not use the general trade system.

6.30. *Detailed partner breakdown.* Countries may wish, in national publications, to group countries together for analytical purposes. However, **it is recommended** that in their databases and in reporting to regional and international organizations, countries make their data available with complete and most detailed partner breakdown. This will allow both national and international users to aggregate countries into economic and geographical groupings according to their own analytical requirements, and will facilitate the estimation of trade for late-reporting or non-reporting countries.

6.31. *Country of origin for certain types of goods.* The recommendation for the recording of the country of origin in the case of imports applies to all goods. **It is further recommended** that countries provide in their metadata information on how the partner country is determined for the purpose of their trade statistics, in case a different partner attribution is used for certain types of

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<sup>124</sup> Some countries may find it useful for the analysis of trade flows to identify trade with the special territories, such as free zones, of their trading partners, in particular when those follow the special trade system. To assist compilers in other countries and users in knowing how countries define their statistical territory and how the statistical territory relates to the customs territory, UNSD has published *Customs Areas of the World*, the latest revision of which was issued in 1989 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XVII.12). The results of a new survey on the statistical territories of countries (or areas) in 1999 have been made available in the publication *Statistical Territories of the World for Use in International Merchandise Trade Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 01.XVII.8), which is available on the UNSD website at [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/stat\\_terr\\_e.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/stat_terr_e.pdf).

<sup>125</sup> See *Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use, Revision 4* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 98.XVII.9); see also the continuously updated online version of this publication at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49.htm>.

imports, such as used goods (used cars, used ships, used aircraft, etc.), which often have a high transactions value.

## VII. Mode of transport

7.1. *Compilation of mode of transport.* The availability of trade data by mode of transport is very important for many purposes, including the monitoring of international transport routes, the formulation of transportation policy, the assessment of the impact of trade on the environment etc. **It is recommended** that countries compile and disseminate international merchandise trade statistics by mode of transport at the most detailed commodity level (as a separate data dimension) in order to provide information on transportation arrangements and for other analytical purposes.<sup>126</sup> **It is further recommended** that the mode of transport that should be recorded is the means of transport used when goods enter or leave the economic territory of a country. Diversions from this recommendation, which can, for example, be related to the application of the special trade system, should be indicated in the country's metadata.

7.2. *Classification.* To allow international comparability to the best possible extent, **countries are encouraged** to use the main categories (1-digit) and, if countries wish to do so, the detailed (2- or 3-digit) categories of the following classification for the compilation and reporting of the trade statistics by the mode of transport.

1. Air
2. Water
  - 2.1 Sea
  - 2.2 Inland waterway
3. Land
  - 3.1 Railway
  - 3.2 Road
4. Not elsewhere classified
  - 4.1 Pipelines and cables<sup>127</sup>
    - 4.1.1 Pipelines
    - 4.1.2 Cables
  - 4.2 Postal consignments, mail or courier shipments
  - 4.3 Self-propelled goods
  - 4.4 Other

7.3. *National practices.* Depending on their national requirements countries may wish to compile mode of transport at the one-, two- or three-digit level or create even more detailed breakdowns. The above classification is not intended to limit the flexibility of countries to implement a detailed classification according to their own requirements, but **it is recommended** that countries clearly indicate the contents of the categories used, in particular whether postal consignments, mail or courier shipments and self-propelled goods are separately classified or included in the three main categories of air, water and land. The category "4.4 Other" is to be used

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<sup>126</sup> This recommendation was introduced for the first time in IMTS, Rev. 1, para. 148.

<sup>127</sup> Breakdown of the category "4.1 Pipelines and cables" into "4.1.1 Pipelines" and "4.1.2 Cables" may be applied if countries find it desirable and feasible.

when the available information does not allow a transaction to be attributed to any of the specific mode of transport category.

7.4. Taking into account their national requirements and circumstances, countries may wish to compile mode of transport not only according to the means of transport when crossing the border but also according to other criteria, such as the predominant mode of transport. Predominant mode of transport, for example, can be defined as the mode of transport that accounts for the majority of transportation costs or the longest part of the route by distance. Countries should define such different criteria and record multiple modes of transport, as necessary (e.g., in the case of landlocked countries), taking into account their data needs and circumstances, but **it is recommended** that detailed information about this additional recording of mode of transport be provided in the metadata.

## VIII. Data compilation strategies

### A. Data sources

8.1. The collection of data on international merchandise trade through customs administrations has a long history, although the primary purpose of customs activity has not been for the collection of statistical data. In a growing number of cases, the full coverage of international merchandise trade statistics cannot be achieved by use of customs records only and **countries are encouraged** to review their current data compilation practices and to develop a long-term strategy for dealing with the emerging issues in order to ensure uninterrupted availability of high-quality and timely trade statistics.

#### 1. Use of customs records

8.2. **It is recommended** that statisticians use customs records as the main and normally preferred data source since they reflect the physical movement of goods across borders that international merchandise trade statistics aims to record and are, in general, reliable, detailed and readily available in most countries.

8.3. *Customs declarations.* Statistical information is mostly derived directly from customs declarations. A customs declaration is “any statement or action, in any form prescribed or accepted by the customs, giving information or particulars required by the customs”.<sup>128</sup> The customs declaration indicates the customs procedures under which goods enter, move within or leave the country.

8.4. *Customs procedures.* A customs procedure is a “treatment applied by the customs to goods which are subject to customs control”.<sup>129</sup> The customs procedure is the basis for the correct identification of the flows of goods for inclusion or exclusion under general or special trade. Customs usually apply a system of codes that allows flows of goods to be identified and prevents double recording of the goods which have undergone several customs procedures. It is **recommended** that statisticians closely cooperate with customs experts in order to correctly allocate customs procedure codes and associated trade transactions according to the general or the special trade system. The annexes to the Revised Kyoto Convention identify a set of customs procedures, and provide standards and recommended practices regarding those activities.

8.5. *Customs procedures under the Revised Kyoto Convention covering goods to be included in or excluded from trade statistics by countries applying the general trade system.* Countries may not always strictly follow the standards and recommended practices of the Convention and/or have

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<sup>128</sup> See World Customs Organization, *Glossary of International Customs Terms* (WCO Glossary), Brussels, 2006, p. 7. See also Revised Kyoto Convention, General annex/ Chapter 2/ E19 and Annex B, para. B.3.

<sup>129</sup> See WCO Glossary, p. 10. For the definition of ‘Customs control’, see Revised Kyoto Convention, General annex/ Chapter 2/ E7.

other procedures in addition to those identified in it. Therefore, compilers should decide on the inclusion and exclusion of any given procedures, following the IMTS 2010 recommendations on the scope of recording contained in chapter 1 above. As a general guideline, goods crossing borders under the following procedures:

- (a) *Should be included in trade statistics as follows:*
- (i) Clearance for home use (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex B/ Chapter 1);
  - (ii) Reimportation in the same state (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex B/ Chapter 2);
  - (iii) Outright exportation (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex C, Chapter 1);
  - (iv) Customs warehouses (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex D/ Chapter 1);
  - (v) Free zone (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex D/ Chapter 2);
  - (vi) Inward processing (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex F/ Chapter 1);
  - (vii) Outward processing (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex F/ Chapter 2);
  - (viii) Drawback (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex F/ Chapter 3);
  - (ix) Processing of goods for home use (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex F/ Chapter 4);
  - (x) Carriage of goods coastwise (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex E/ Chapter 3) provided that the goods have been admitted and respective records exist;
  - (xi) Customs offences (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex H/ Chapter 1), only in respect of seized goods sold or otherwise disposed of by customs into the economic territory of the importing country;
  - (xii) Travellers (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 1), only in respect of goods covered in para. 1.16 above;
  - (xiii) Postal traffic (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 2);
  - (xiv) Stores (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 4), as specified in para. 1.32 above;
  - (xv) Relief consignments (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 5), parts of it, according to the specific recommendations contained in chapter 1 above;
- (b) *Should be excluded from trade statistics as follows:*
- (i) Customs transit (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex E/ Chapter 1);
  - (ii) Transshipment (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex E/ Chapter 2);
  - (iii) Carriage of goods coastwise (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex E/ Chapter 3), provided that the goods have not been admitted;
  - (iv) Temporary admission (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex G/ Chapter 1);



- (v) Travellers (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 1), only in respect of goods covered in para. 1.49(a) above;
- (vi) Means of transport for commercial use (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 3);
- (vii) Relief consignments (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 5), parts of it, according to the specific recommendations contained in chapter 1 above.

8.6. *Information about customs procedures.* **It is recommended** that information about the customs procedures applied to individual transactions be part of the dataset provided by customs to the agency responsible for the compilation of international merchandise trade statistics.

8.7. *Access to supportive documentation and additional information at customs.* Information available at customs is not limited to the customs declaration since supportive documentation, such as the commercial invoice, transport documents, import licenses and certificate of origin, usually accompanies the customs declaration. Compilers should make arrangements with customs authorities to have access to these documents, as required (e.g., to solve gaps and quality concerns) and as permitted by law and to use them as additional sources of information.

8.8. Depending on the national legislation and practices, customs records can include or exclude transactions of certain goods, such as electricity, gas, oil, ships and aircraft, goods sent by parcel and letter post etc. Compilers should be aware of the coverage of the customs recording and should use additional data sources when necessary. Customs authorities may also have valuable information about transactions in goods carried out within the economic but outside the customs territory, such as about goods entering and leaving free zones. Compilers should be aware of such information and obtain access to it in order to compile international merchandise trade statistics to the fullest possible extent as recommended in herein.

## 2. Use of Non-customs records

8.9. The full coverage of international merchandise trade flows cannot be achieved by the use of customs records only, either because the relevant transactions are not or no longer subject to customs controls or customs surveillance (e.g., within customs unions or when customs authorities move to system-based<sup>130</sup> rather than transaction-based customs control) or because record-keeping may not be adequate from a statistical point of view. **It is recommended that** in such cases, customs-based data be supplemented with information obtained from other sources, as necessary, to ensure full coverage of international merchandise trade statistics. **It is recommended** to use non-customs sources as substitutes for available customs records only if they provide a cost-effective way to improve the quality of trade statistics. A description of the non-customs sources used, including how they were used, as well as an assessment of their quality, should be provided in the metadata.

8.10. *Non-customs data sources.* There are various non-customs sources of data. Foreign shipping manifests can be used for cross-checking and supplementing information gathered from customs declarations. Many countries utilize enterprise surveys as a means to collect data on transactions, which may not be captured by customs authorities (e.g., trade in electricity, water, gas, oil and goods for military use). The member States of the European Union have developed, for the purposes of intra-Union merchandise trade statistics, a data-collection system (Intrastat) that relies on monthly reporting by enterprises; additional information is supplied via the fiscal authorities through the value-added tax-collection system. Surveys are also used to capture so-called shuttle trade and border trade. Currency exchange records and records of monetary authorities often provide timely information about international transactions, including merchandise flows. Aircraft and ship registers may be utilized to capture trade in aircrafts and ships in case customs records are incomplete or non-existent. Parcel post and letter post records are used to ensure that the merchandise flows via parcel and postal services are adequately covered. Reports from commodity boards may supplement and help to cross-check customs recording of trade in certain goods.

8.11. *Integrated approach to data collection.* In the case of the use of non-customs data sources, such as enterprise surveys **it is recommended** that countries take an integrated approach to data collection and make use of business registers and enterprise identification numbers in order to obtain the required information with minimal costs and burden on enterprises. The integrated approach to data collection is of particular importance for the fulfillment of additional information requirements, such as for goods for processing (including obtaining information on change of ownership), intra-firm trade etc., which often cannot be satisfied by the use of customs declarations only.

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<sup>130</sup> System-based customs control uses, for example, company records rather than custom records alone. Further information on system-based customs control is expected to be provided in the updated IMTS Compilers Manual.

### 3. Comparison of customs and non-customs data sources

8.12. Both customs and non-customs sources have their specific merits and shortcomings. Compilers should be aware of them when deciding what data sources are the most appropriate to use. Customs records, for example, may not provide full coverage of all transactions, may not be subject to adequate statistical quality control at customs, or may not be made available to statistics compilers in a comprehensive and unrestricted manner. The use of non-customs data sources may increase the burden on data providers and compilers. Also, these sources may suffer from a lack of a consistent classification (e.g., of goods, countries), undercoverage (e.g., non-responses in surveys) and may not follow standards recommended for valuation, time of recording and partner country attribution. Trade statistics compilers should pay special attention to these issues in order to obtain information from customs and non-customs sources that fulfils the requirements of trade statistics.

8.13. *Reconciliation and integration of customs and non-customs data.* The reconciliation and integration of customs and non-customs data is a complex and time-consuming activity and includes merging and cross-checking large amounts of collected data. Compilers need to be aware of the conceptual and practical difficulties in reconciling and integrating data from different sources and users should be informed accordingly.<sup>131</sup>

#### B. Institutional arrangements

8.14. *Laws and regulations.* The compilation of IMTS is organized on the basis of the statistical and other applicable national laws and regulations of countries, which, to different degrees, specify the rights and responsibilities of the agencies involved. The data sources for IMTS (in terms of their contents and availability) are subject to their own laws and regulations. In particular, customs records, the main data source for IMTS, are subject to customs laws and regulations. The national agency responsible for the overall compilation and dissemination of IMTS should, whenever appropriate, actively participate in the discussion of respective national legislation or relevant administrative regulations in order to establish a solid foundation for the high quality and timeliness of trade statistics.

8.15. *Institutions involved in compilation.* In most countries, several institutions and agencies are involved in the compilation of trade statistics. Typically, the most important are national statistical offices, customs administrations and central banks. In some countries, the ministry of trade or other specialized governmental bodies may be assigned responsibility for trade statistics or may play an important role, for example, by providing additional information.

8.16. *Effective institutional arrangements.* It is recognized that different institutional arrangements (depending on the structure of a country's Government and other considerations) can

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<sup>131</sup> Best practices on the integration and reconciliation of customs and non-customs sources are expected to be provided in the updated IMTS Compilers Manual.

result in acceptable trade statistics provided that the agency responsible for the overall IMTS compilation follows internationally recognized methodological guidelines, utilizes all available statistical sources and applies appropriate compilation procedures. Effective institutional arrangements are usually characterized by (a) the designation of only one agency responsible for the dissemination of official trade statistics, (b) a clear definition of the rights and responsibilities of all agencies involved, and (c) the establishment of formalized working arrangements between agencies including agreements on holding inter-agency working meetings, as needed, and on the access to micro-data that those agencies collect. Formal arrangements should be complemented by informal agreements between the involved agencies and institutions, as required.

8.17. **It is recommended** that countries consider the establishment of the institutional arrangements necessary to ensure the compilation of high-quality trade statistics as a matter of high priority and periodically review their effectiveness.

8.18. Whatever the institutional arrangement, the national agency responsible for the overall IMTS compilation should periodically review the definitions, and methods used and the trade statistics themselves to ensure that they are compiled in accordance with relevant international recommendations and recognized good practices, are of high quality and are made available to users in a timely fashion.

## IX. Data quality and metadata

9.1. Data on international merchandise trade statistics are the end-product of a complex process comprising many stages, from the collection and processing of basic records to the compilation and dissemination of official statistics. Recommendations on how to approach the issue of data quality in a systematic and comprehensive way are provided in section A below.

9.2. *Objectives of quality measurement.* The objective of quality measurement of international merchandise trade statistics can be twofold: to provide producers with the appropriate information to monitor and further enhance data quality and to provide users with sufficient information to judge whether the data are adequate for their intended use (to judge their “fitness for use”). Quality is a multidimensional concept that is difficult to measure. The dimensions of quality are described in section B below, approaches to their measurement are outlined in section C below and the issue of cross-country comparability is treated in section D below. Metadata is covered in section E below.

### A. Enhancing the quality of international merchandise trade statistics

9.3. *Enhancing the data quality of international merchandise trade statistics.* Enhancing data quality is a process covering all stages of the statistical production process and cuts across all issues covered in the present IMTS 2010 recommendations. It starts with validation of the data provided by the trader or broker when completing the customs declaration, requires appropriate institutional arrangements, for example, in order to allow adequate access to different data sources, and implies the appropriate use of information and communication technology among many other relevant activities.

9.4. *Systematic approach to data quality.* Actions for enhancing data quality are often focused on individual elements of the data, such as reported commodity, value, quantity, quantity unit and trading partner (or combinations thereof), but must also address more general issues of coverage and comprehensiveness of recording. The systematic approach to data quality implies that all aspects of the entire trade statistics program be examined and evaluated against certain principles and standards in order to more effectively identify and implement appropriate action to further improve data quality. **It is recommended** that countries develop such standards and related good practices covering institutional arrangements, statistical processes and outputs.<sup>132</sup>

9.5. **Further, it is recommended** that countries develop a standard for regular quality reports that cover the full range of statistical processes and their outputs and use the above-mentioned principles and standards as its basis. Such reports can be either producer-oriented, with the aim of identifying strengths and weaknesses of the statistical process and leading to or containing the

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<sup>132</sup> Countries may wish to review and consider use of the European Statistics Code of Practice as an example in such an exercise and are also encouraged to share their own established practices.

definition of quality improvement actions, or user-oriented, with the aim of keeping users informed on the methodology of statistical process and the quality of statistical output.

9.6. **It is recommended** that quality reports of international merchandise trade statistics be completed or updated at least every five years, or more frequently if significant methodological changes or changes in the data sources occur. For monitoring the quality of the processes and effectiveness of quality-improvement actions, reviews should be conducted more frequently.

9.7. **It is recommended that** countries base their quality reports on a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators for international merchandise trade statistics, as well as on a checklist covering data collection, processing and dissemination, in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses in the statistical process and to identify possible quality-improvement actions.

## **B. Measuring the quality of international merchandise trade statistics**

9.8. *Data quality assessment frameworks.* Most international organizations and many countries have developed definitions of quality, outlining the various dimensions (aspects) of quality and quality measurement, and have integrated them into quality-assessment frameworks.<sup>133</sup> Although existing quality-assessment frameworks differ to some extent in their approaches to quality, including in number, name and scope of quality dimensions, they complement each other and provide comprehensive and flexible structures for the quality assessment of a broad range of statistics. For example:

(a) The *IMF Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF)* takes a holistic view of data quality and includes governance of statistical systems, core statistical processes and statistical products. The Framework is organized as a cascading structure covering the prerequisites and five dimensions of quality: assurances of integrity, methodological soundness, accuracy and reliability, serviceability and accessibility;

(b) The *European Statistical System (ESS)* adopted a Code of Practice that provides a broad conceptual framework for viewing quality and it sets standards for the institutional environment, statistical processes and statistical outputs. The European Statistics Code of Practice is formulated in terms of 15 principles, of which the following five relate to statistical output: relevance, accuracy and reliability, timeliness and punctuality, coherence and comparability, accessibility and clarity;

(c) The *OECD quality measurement framework* views quality as a multifaceted concept. As with the Eurostat approach, quality characteristics depend on user perspectives, needs

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<sup>133</sup> See, for instance, International Monetary Fund, *Data Quality Assessment Framework* (<http://dsbb.imf.org/Applications/web/dqrs/dqrsdqaf/>); Eurostat Working Group - Assessment of quality in statistics, "Definition of quality in statistics" (document Eurostat/A4/Quality/03/General/Definition), prepared for the sixth meeting (Luxembourg, 2 and 3 October 2003); Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Statistics Directorate, "Quality framework for OECD statistics", Paris, June 2002.

and priorities, which vary across groups of users. Quality is viewed in terms of 7 dimensions: relevance, accuracy, credibility, timeliness, accessibility, interpretability and coherence.

9.9. The overall aim of the three quality-assessment frameworks is to standardize and systematize statistical quality measurement and reporting across countries. They allow an assessment of national practices to be made against internationally (or regionally) accepted statistical approaches for quality measurement. Quality assessment frameworks may be used in a number of contexts, including for (a) guiding countries' efforts towards strengthening their statistical systems by providing a self-assessment tool and a means of identifying areas for improvement, (b) technical assistance purposes, (c) reviews of particular statistical domains as performed by international organizations, and (d) assessments by other groups of data users.

9.10. *Dimensions of quality.* National statistical offices and other agencies responsible for the compilation and dissemination of international merchandise trade statistics may decide to implement one of the existing frameworks for quality assessment or develop on their basis national quality-assessment frameworks that best fit their country's practices and circumstances. **It is recommended** that the following dimensions of quality are taken into account while developing such frameworks: prerequisites of quality, relevance, credibility, accuracy, timeliness, methodological soundness, coherence and accessibility. These dimensions may be briefly defined as follows:

(a) *Prerequisites of quality.* Prerequisites of quality refer to all institutional and organizational conditions that have an impact on the quality of international merchandise trade statistics. The elements within this dimension include the legal basis for the compilation of data; the adequacy of data-sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies; assurance of confidentiality; the adequacy of human, financial and technical resources for implementation of international merchandise trade statistics programmes and the implementation of measures to ensure their efficient use; balancing of the costs to data providers with user needs, especially where use of non-customs sources of data is considered; and quality awareness;

(b) *Relevance.* The relevance of international merchandise trade statistics reflects the degree to which they meet user needs;

(c) *Credibility.*<sup>134</sup> The credibility of international merchandise trade statistics refers to the confidence that users place in those data, based on the image of the statistical office or agency that produces the data. The confidence of users is built over time. One important aspect of credibility is trust in the objectivity of the data, which implies that the data are perceived to be produced professionally in accordance with appropriate statistical standards, and that policies and practices are transparent. For example, data should not be manipulated, nor should their release be timed in response to political pressure;

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<sup>134</sup> This dimension is referred to as assurances of integrity in the IMF Data Quality Assessment Framework.

(d) *Accuracy.* The accuracy of international merchandise trade statistics refers to the closeness of the disseminated statistics to the true (yet unknown) characteristics of the trade flows and can be assessed only indirectly. It has many facets and in practice there is no single aggregate for or overall measure of accuracy (see sect. C below for indicators of accuracy);

(e) *Timeliness.* The timeliness of international merchandise trade statistics reflects the time between the end of the reference period to which the data pertain and the date on which the data are released. Timeliness is closely tied to the existence of a publication (including revisions) schedule. A publication schedule may comprise a set of target release dates or may entail a commitment to release international merchandise trade data within a prescribed time period following their receipt. This factor usually involves a trade-off with respect to accuracy. The improved timeliness of statistics enhances their relevance;

(f) *Methodological soundness.* Methodological soundness is a dimension that encompasses the application of the available international standards, guidelines and good practices in the production of international merchandise trade statistics.

(g) *Coherence.* The coherence of international merchandise trade statistics reflects the degree to which the data are logically connected and mutually consistent, as well as the degree to which they can be successfully brought together with other statistical information within a broad analytical framework and over time.

(h) *Accessibility.* The accessibility of international merchandise trade statistics refers to the ease with which they can be obtained from the statistical office, including the ease with which the existence of information can be ascertained, as well as the suitability of the form or the media of dissemination through which the information can be accessed. Accessibility also includes the availability of metadata and the existence of user-support services, and requires the development of an advance release calendar so that users will be informed in advance when and where data will be available and how to access them.

9.11. These dimensions of quality are overlapping and interconnected. Actions taken to address or modify one aspect of quality will tend to affect other aspects. For example, there may be a trade-off between aiming for the most accurate estimation of the value of a country's total exports and imports and providing that information in a timely manner.

9.12. *Developing a quality-assessment framework.* **Countries are also encouraged** to develop their own quality-assessment frameworks based on the above-mentioned dimensions, taking into account the specific circumstances of their countries. The adoption of a quality-assessment framework offers the compiling agency a practical approach for a self-assessment of the statistical programme and for the assessment of whether the data provided meet the needs of users. Also, the publication of quality reports allows users to judge for themselves whether a data set meets their particular quality requirements.



9.13. *Use of quality measures and indicators.* The measurement of quality of any statistical data, including international merchandise trade statistics data, is not a simple task. Problems arise from the difficulties involved in quantifying the levels of individual dimensions and in aggregating the levels of all dimensions. Under these circumstances, deriving a single quantitative measure of quality is not possible. In the absence of such a single measure, **countries are encouraged** to use a system of quality measures and indicators following the recommendations contained in section C below.

### **C. Quality measures and indicators**

9.14. *Quality measures.* Quality measures directly reflect a particular aspect of quality. For example, the time lag from the end of the reference period to the release of particular international merchandise trade statistics is a direct quality measure. However, in practice, quality measures can be difficult or costly to calculate. Instead, quality indicators may be used for the quality assessment.

9.15. *Quality indicators.* Quality indicators provide summarized quantitative or qualitative evidence about the quality of the data. They are generally defined with respect to some reference point and can assist in making different types of comparisons. When countries define the quality indicators for their international merchandise trade statistics, **it is recommended** that they ensure that the indicators satisfy the following criteria: (a) they cover all dimensions of quality as defined in section B above; (b) are based on the consistent application of a sound methodology; and (c) the indicators are easy to interpret by both internal and external users.

9.16. **It is recommended** that countries maintain a balance between the different dimensions of quality and the number of indicators. The objective of quality measurement is to have a limited set (minimum number) of indicators that can be used to measure and follow over time the quality of international merchandise trade statistics and to ensure that users are provided with a useful summary of overall quality, while not overburdening respondents with demands for unrealistic amounts of quality metadata.

9.17. *Suggested quality measures and indicators.* Table 9.1 below presents a possible set of indicators (and measures) that countries may wish to consider using to measure the quality of international merchandise trade statistics. Their utilization provides users with a clear and up-to-date overview of the overall quality of international merchandise trade statistics.

**Table 9.1:**  
**Suggested indicators for measuring the quality of international merchandise trade statistics**

<i>Quality dimension</i>	<i>Quality measure and indicator</i>
Relevance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gaps between key user interests and compiled international, merchandise trade statistics in terms of concepts, coverage and detail.</li> <li>2. Results of users' satisfaction surveys and meetings with user groups.</li> </ol>
Accuracy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Application of reporting thresholds.</li> <li>2. Undercoverage (percentage of non-reporting due to thresholds, percentage of non-reporting due to non-response).</li> <li>3. Characteristics and frequency of revisions (e.g., as percentage of total value).</li> <li>4. Application of confidentiality and its impact.</li> <li>5. Use of data validation techniques and their impact.</li> </ol> <p><i>In the case of sample surveys-based international merchandise trade estimates, the accuracy can be measured using the following indicators:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Sampling errors.</li> <li>7. Non-sampling errors:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Unit response rate;</li> <li>(b) Item response rate.</li> </ol> </li> <li>8. Number and average size of revisions of international merchandise trade data.</li> </ol>
Timeliness	Time lag between the end of the reference period and the date of the first release (or the release of final results) of international merchandise trade data.
Methodological soundness	Number and degrees of divergences from the relevant international statistical standards in concepts and measurement procedures that are used in the collection and compilation of international merchandise trade statistics (preferably in terms of the amount of data affected).
Coherence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of common concepts, classifications, data sources and methods.</li> <li>2. Availability of appropriate bridging tables.</li> </ol>
Accessibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number and types of means used for dissemination of international merchandise trade statistics.</li> <li>2. Degree to which all detailed data sets are made available, as a percentage of total international merchandise trade statistics data sets produced.</li> <li>3. Dissemination of complete metadata used.</li> </ol>

#### **D. Cross-country data comparability**

9.18. *Cross-country data comparability.* Cross-country data comparability remains an important issue. Non-comparability is caused, inter alia, by differences in coverage, different methods for the treatment of certain goods (e.g., military goods, ship's stores, confidential data), value increases in intermediary countries, differences in classification of goods, time lags in reporting, differences in valuation, including CIF/FOB differences, currency conversion, methods of partner country attribution, and trade via third country intermediaries. Such non-comparability may be substantially reduced by the adoption of the recommended IMTS 2010 concepts and definitions. Nevertheless, a certain amount of non-comparability will remain because of differences resulting from following the recommended approaches to valuation and partner country attribution for imports and exports, as well as variations in data sources, reporting errors, errors in data collection or the processing and forwarding of results, the use of fraudulent documents or the inability of traders to furnish accurate information. **Countries are encouraged**, therefore, to periodically conduct bilateral and multilateral reconciliation studies or implement data exchanges so that their statistics can be made more accurate and useful for both national purposes and for international comparisons.

## E. Metadata on international merchandise trade statistics

9.19. *Types of statistical data.* Generally, statistical data consist of the following:

- (a) *Microdata:* data on the characteristics of individual transactions collected by customs or other sources (such as administrative records or surveys) or estimated;
- (b) *Macrodata:* data derived from microdata by grouping or aggregating them, such as total exports of goods classified in a particular HS subheading;
- (c) *Metadata:* data that define or describe the microdata, macrodata or other metadata.

9.20. *Metadata.* The term metadata defines all information used to describe other data. In other words, metadata is “data about data.” Metadata encompasses administrative facts about data (who has created them and when), a definition of the concepts applied and a description of how data were collected and processed before they were disseminated or stored in a database.<sup>135</sup>

9.21. *Statistical metadata.* Statistical metadata describe or document statistical data, that is to say, microdata, macrodata or other metadata. They facilitate sharing, querying and understanding of statistical data over the lifetime of the data. They also refer to any methodological descriptions on how data are collected and compiled. There is a bidirectional relationship between metadata and quality. On the one hand, metadata describe the quality of statistics. On the other hand, metadata are themselves a quality component, which improves the availability and accessibility of statistical data.

9.22. *Required metadata.* Taking into account many types of users and uses for any given set of data, a broad spectrum of metadata requirements must be addressed. In particular, the responsible agency must make sufficient metadata available to enable the least and the most sophisticated users to readily assess data and their quality. As a minimum segmentation, metadata at the following two levels are **recommended**:

- (a) *Reference metadata* should be presented in the form of a detailed explanatory note describing the scope, coverage and quality of a data set. It should be made available electronically alongside the database or in a special publication;
- (b) *Structural metadata* should be presented as an integral part of the international merchandise trade statistics database that can be extracted together with any data item; it may be published as part of a statistical table.

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<sup>135</sup> See for example the websites of IMF, Eurostat and OECD, which have developed metadata standards and collected metadata for different areas of statistics; see also the definition of metadata in OECD, *Glossary of Statistical Terms*, available at <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/index.htm>.

9.23. *Metadata categories of international merchandise trade statistics.* **It is recommended** that countries at least cover the following categories of metadata for their international merchandise trade statistics:

- (a) A description of all underlying concepts and definitions, including the trade system used and deviations from international standards, if any;
- (b) The legal framework, institutional arrangements and description of data sources;
- (c) A description of data-collection and data-processing procedures;
- (d) A description of estimation methods;
- (e) A data-dissemination policy, including release and revision schedules;
- (f) A description of all data fields/ variables (reference period, trade flow, commodity classification used, valuation, currency, quantity (net weight), weight unit used, supplementary quantity, supplementary quantity unit used, partner country (origin, last known destination, consignment) (this applies to all forms of data dissemination);
- (g) Explanations and footnotes concerning the data, as required, e.g., informing users about revisions, break in series and application of confidentiality etc;
- (h) Quality reporting.

9.24. *Purposes of international merchandise trade statistics metadata.* The primary purpose of metadata is to help the users of international merchandise trade statistics to interpret, understand and analyze the data. International merchandise trade statistics metadata should help users to transform statistical data into information. Metadata is also crucial for conducting bilateral reconciliation studies, and allows countries to compare their practices and to learn from each other.

9.25. **It is recommended** that countries view the development of metadata as a high priority and consider their dissemination an integral part of the dissemination of international merchandise trade statistics. Moreover, **it is recommended** that this is done in compliance with the approach adopted by a given country to metadata across all areas of economic statistics. **Countries are encouraged** to take advantage of the metadata standards proposed by various international organizations<sup>136</sup> while developing their metadata in general and trade metadata in particular. Further guidance on metadata for purposes related to international merchandise trade statistics will be elaborated and presented in the updated version of the IMTS Compilers Manual.

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

## X. Dissemination

10.1. *Data and metadata dissemination.* Trade statistics should comply with the United Nations *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* and be made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour the entitlement of citizens to public information.<sup>137</sup> The dissemination of data and metadata, therefore, should be treated as an integral part of the national programme of trade statistics and carried out with great care and attention to the needs of users, while at the same time ensuring adequate confidentiality of data providers.

### A. Statistical confidentiality<sup>138</sup>

10.2. *Statistical confidentiality.* In general, statistical confidentiality is applied to protect against the disclosure of information about individual natural or legal persons, and is necessary in order to gain and keep the trust of both those required to provide data and those using the statistical information. Legal provisions governing statistical confidentiality at the national level are set forth in countries' statistical laws or other supplementary governmental regulations and are, as a rule, consistent with the principle 6 of the United Nations *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* (see para. 0.12, and box 0.2 above). It is recognized, however, that statistical confidentiality needs to be balanced against the need for public information in cases where the application of statistical confidentiality would limit or make it impossible to provide sufficient or meaningful information, and that the ways statistical confidentiality is applied may differ from one statistical domain to another.

10.3. *Confidentiality rules for international merchandise trade statistics.* The customs and other documentation upon which trade statistics are based is often designed for use for non-statistical purposes, such as clearing goods into and out of the country, and contains detailed information about individual transactions. Such information, even when aggregated by commodity and partner may, potentially, disclose some information about individual traders. For trade statistics, it is common practice that trade data are made confidential only when the trader so requests and the statistical authority finds the request justified based on confidentiality rules. This approach to confidentiality is called "passive confidentiality" as opposed to "active confidentiality", which aims to systematically prevent the identification of any statistical unit in the disseminated data, thereby disclosing individual information. In view of the high demand for detailed trade statistics and the burden and potential difficulties of applying active confidentiality to trade statistics, **it is recommended that** passive confidentiality be applied as much as possible unless the use of active

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<sup>137</sup> See United Nations *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* which is available on the UNSD website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx> (see para. 0.12, and box 0.2 above).

<sup>138</sup> Statistical confidentiality refers to the protection of information of individual statistical units and should be differentiated from other forms of confidentiality under which information is not provided due to other considerations, such as national security concerns. Nevertheless, international merchandise trade statistics compilers should always strive for full coverage of all trade transactions, while applying appropriate methods to keep certain information confidential, as mandated.

confidentiality is already the established, desired and accepted practice. **It is further recommended that** in suppressing data due to confidentiality, any information deemed confidential (suppressed) be reported in full detail at the next higher level of commodity and/ or partner aggregation that adequately protects confidentiality. Countries may develop other measures that can serve the same purpose of protecting confidentiality, while making information available to the best possible extent.

## **B. Reference period and data dissemination timetable**

10.4. *Reference period.* **It is recommended** that countries make their data available on a calendar period basis, according to the Gregorian calendar and consistent with the present IMTS 2010 recommendations.

10.5. *Data-dissemination timetable.* In producing statistical information, there is usually a trade-off between the timeliness with which the information is prepared and the accuracy and level of detail of the published data. Developing and adhering to an appropriate data-compilation and release schedule is therefore crucial for maintaining good relations between the producers of international merchandise trade statistics and the user community. **It is recommended** that countries announce in advance the precise dates at which those statistics will be released and revised. This advance-release calendar should be posted before the beginning of each year on the website of the national agency responsible for the dissemination of official trade statistics.

10.6. Important considerations that should be taken into account in determining the compilation and release schedule of international merchandise trade statistics include:

- (a) User requirements, such as the requirements of policy makers, the business community and the general public;
- (b) Timing of the collection of initial data by customs administrations and other source agencies;
- (c) The extent and timing of data revisions of the major data sources;
- (d) Modes of data dissemination (press release, online access or hard copy).

10.7. *Timeliness.* Timeliness is the length of time between the event (the end of the reference period) and the availability of statistical information about that event. The timeliness of the release of monthly, quarterly and annual international merchandise trade data varies greatly from country to country, mainly reflecting different perspectives on the timeliness-reliability-accuracy trade-off but also reflecting differences in available resources and the efficiency and effectiveness of the statistical production process. Since processing customs declarations in most countries is automated and the records relevant to statistics are edited and consolidated on a monthly basis, **countries are encouraged** to issue their first releases of data as follows:

- (a) Monthly totals of exports and imports within 45 days after the end of the month, at least by major trading partners and basic commodity breakdown;
- (b) Quarterly data within 60 days after the end of the quarter;
- (c) Annual data within 90 days after the end of the year.

10.8. In view of the importance of the timeliness of totals of exports and imports, **countries are encouraged** to explore the possibility of publishing their provisional estimates soon after the end of the reference period. Such estimates, by definition, would be based on relatively limited data content and would be replaced by more accurate but less timely figures at a later date.

10.9. *Coherence of monthly, quarterly and annual data.* If countries use additional information for the compilation of annual international merchandise trade statistics, the data for the fourth quarter (or for the twelfth month) need to be compiled and disseminated in their own right and should not be derived as the difference between the annual totals and the sum for the first three quarters (or 11 months) in order to provide undistorted data for all months and quarters. **Countries are encouraged** to disseminate all revised monthly, quarterly and annual data to ensure the consistency of data available to users.

### C. Data revision

10.10. *Data revisions.* Revisions are an essential part of country practices in the compilation of international merchandise trade statistics. Their production is a consequence of the trade-off between the timeliness of published data and their reliability, accuracy and comprehensiveness. To resolve those issues, many countries compile provisional data that are later revised when new and more accurate information becomes available. Such a practice **is encouraged** if countries can ensure consistency between provisional and final data. Although, in general, repeated revisions may be perceived as reflecting negatively on the reliability of official international merchandise trade data, the attempt to avoid them by producing accurate but very untimely data will ultimately fail to satisfy user needs. It is important to emphasize that the revisions of international merchandise trade data are produced for the benefit of users in order to provide them with data that are as timely and accurate as possible. The revisions affect both annual and short-term international merchandise trade statistics but they are often more significant for short-term data.

10.11. *Reasons for revisions of data.* Reasons for revisions can be classified in many ways. In general, two types of revisions are differentiated: (a) routine, normal or concurrent revisions that are part of the regular statistical production process and aim to incorporate new or updated data or correct data or compilation errors; and (b) major or special revisions that are not part of the regular revision schedule and are conducted in order to incorporate major changes in concepts, definitions, classifications and changes in data sources. For normal statistical data revisions, **countries are encouraged** to develop a revision policy that is synchronized with the release calendar. Statistical offices may decide to carry out a special revision, in addition to the normal statistical data



revisions, for the purpose of reassessing data or investigating in depth some new economic structures. Such revisions are carried out at longer, irregular intervals of time. Often, they may require changes in the time series going as far back as the beginning of the series to retain methodological consistency. Such revisions should be subject to prior notification to users to explain why they are necessary and provide information on the possible impact of such revisions on data.

10.12. *Revision policy.* **Countries are encouraged** to develop a revision policy that is well designed, carefully managed, transparent and well coordinated with other areas of statistics, and hence allows users to cope with revisions in a systematic manner. The absence of coordination and planning of revisions is considered a quality problem by users. Essential features of a well established revision policy are a predetermined release and revision schedule, reasonable stability from year to year, openness, information on reasons and effects, easy access of users to sufficiently long time series of revised data, and adequate documentation of revisions in the statistical publications and databases. A sound revision policy is recognized as an important aspect of good governance in statistics, because it will not only help the national users of the data but also promote international consistency.<sup>139</sup>

#### **D. Dissemination strategy**

10.13. *Data dissemination.* A key to the usefulness of trade statistics is its broad dissemination. **It is recommended that** all users are treated equally and data are disseminated without preference to any national or international user group. Data can be disseminated both electronically and in paper publications. **It is recommended** that countries choose the dissemination format that best suits their user needs. For example, press releases of international merchandise trade statistics should be disseminated in ways that facilitate redissemination by mass media; more comprehensive or detailed statistics need to be disseminated in electronic and/or paper formats. **It is further recommended** that international merchandise trade statistics be accessed through the electronic dissemination databases maintained by the responsible agency. Regular data dissemination should satisfy most if not all user needs. It is advisable that countries ensure that users are clearly made aware of the procedures and options for obtaining required data.

10.14. *Dissemination of metadata.* Provision of adequate metadata and quality assessment of international merchandise trade statistics are as important to users as the provision of data itself. **Countries are encouraged** to follow the recommendations provided in chapter 9 above on data quality and metadata for international merchandise trade statistics, and to develop and disseminate

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<sup>139</sup> For examples of good practices, see Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Data and Metadata Reporting and Presentation Handbook* (OECD Data and Metadata Handbook), Paris, 2007, chapter 7, “Guidelines on key reporting practices.”

metadata in accordance with the recommendations provided. Countries may wish to consider developing different levels of detail of metadata so as to facilitate its access and use.<sup>140</sup>

10.15. *International reporting.* **Countries are encouraged** to cooperate with international, supranational and regional organizations to identify and apply the most efficient ways of international dissemination of their trade statistics and related metadata. In this context, countries may wish to review the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX)<sup>141</sup> format for possible use in the exchange and sharing of their data.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> For further details on data and metadata reporting, see OECD Data and Metadata Handbook, chapter 6, “Guidelines for the Reporting and Dissemination of Metadata”.

<sup>141</sup> The SDMX technical standards and content oriented guidelines can provide common formats and nomenclatures for exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata using modern technology. The dissemination of national data and metadata using web technology and SDMX standards is encouraged as a means to reduce the international reporting burden and to increase the efficiency of the international data exchange. For additional information on SDMX, see <http://www.sdmx.org/>.

<sup>142</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 4 (E/2008/24)*, decision 39/112: “Common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata”.

## **XI. Supplementary topics**

### **A. External trade indices**

11.1. *Need for external trade indices.* Many users need more information than trade values by country or by commodity, and require information on prices and volumes as well. The information on the development of prices and volumes is generally presented in the form of indices. **It is recommended** that all countries produce and publish, on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis, both volume (quantum) indices and either price or unit-value indices for their total imports and exports. **Countries are also encouraged** to calculate and publish such indices for commodity groups of particular importance to countries at least quarterly and annually.

11.2. *Price and unit value indices.* Two kinds of indices may be produced to reflect prices for imports and exports: unit-value indices that are based primarily on customs documents and export/import price indices that are based on survey data.<sup>143</sup> Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. Although price indices are generally preferred on methodological grounds, in practice countries may not have the resources available to compile that information. Many countries compile only unit-value indices, while others compile and use both price and unit-value indices in a complementary manner.<sup>144</sup>

### **B. Seasonally adjusted data**

11.3. *Need for seasonally adjusted data.* Monthly and quarterly data on international merchandise trade statistics are an important tool for economic policymaking, business cycle analysis, modelling and forecasting. However, they are often characterized by seasonal fluctuations and other calendar or trading-day effects, which mask other characteristics of the data that are of interest to analysts. Seasonal adjustment is a process of estimating and removing seasonal or calendar influences from a time series in order to achieve a better knowledge of the underlying behaviour. **Countries are encouraged** to compile and publish, where appropriate, seasonally adjusted monthly and quarterly international merchandise trade data on a regular basis.

11.4. *Seasonal adjustment method.* Because national circumstances vary from one country to another, no preferred seasonal adjustment method is recommended. If seasonally adjusted data is published, **it is recommended** that information on the adjustment methods, data quality etc. be provided by countries in their metadata.<sup>145, 146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> For detailed information on external trade price indices and unit values, see *Export and Import Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice*, International Monetary Fund, 2009, available electronically on the IMF website <http://imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.cfm?sk=19587.0>.

<sup>144</sup> More detailed information and guidance on good practices will be provided in the revised IMTS Compilers Manual, as appropriate and required.

<sup>145</sup> For Eurostat practices in this area, see Eurostat, *ESS Guidelines on Seasonal Adjustment, 2009 Edition*, available at [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product\\_details/publication?p\\_product\\_code=KS-RA-09-006](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-RA-09-006).

## C. Linking trade and business statistics

11.5 *Need for linking business and trade statistics.* Linking and integrating trade and business statistics is important for data-compilation and analytical purposes. A major development in economics statistics in recent years has been the establishment and use of national business registers that allow not only the conduct of business surveys but also the linkage of information from different data sources, potentially leading to significant efficiency and quality gains in data collection. Also, the integration of data from different sources provides new information for many analytical purposes that would not otherwise exist. One application is the analysis of trade by enterprise characteristics, which, for example, allows the impact of globalization on businesses to be examined.<sup>147</sup>

11.6 *Recommendation.* **Countries are encouraged** to integrate their trade register with their business register and to take steps towards establishing an integrated system of economics statistics for data compilation and analysis. Further examples of the applications of linking trade and business statistics will be provided in the updated version of IMTS Compilers Manual.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> More detailed information and guidance regarding the issue of seasonal adjustment will be provided in the updated version of IMTS Compilers Manual.

<sup>147</sup> Eurostat, *Bridging trade statistics with business statistics: Eurostat's experiences of register linkages*, paper prepared for the 21st meeting of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers: International Roundtable on Business Survey Frames, Paris, 24 - 27 November 2008.

<sup>148</sup> During a meeting of EG-IMTS, held from 3 to 6 November 2009, several analytical issues were suggested that potentially could be facilitated by the integration of trade and business statistics, including vertical integration, the import content of export, small business development, export promotion and food security.

# **Annexes**

## A. Basic national accounts and balance of payments concepts and definitions

A.1 *Introduction.* The present annex reproduces, for the convenience of users of IMTS 2010, important concepts and definitions contained in the *System of National Accounts 2008*<sup>a</sup> (2008 SNA) and the sixth edition of the IMF *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual*<sup>b</sup> (BPM6), which are relevant for compilers of IMTS and referred to in the body of the text above.

A.2 *Goods* are “physical, produced objects for which a demand exists, over which ownership rights can be established and whose ownership can be transferred from one institutional unit to another by engaging in transactions on markets” (2008 SNA, para. 6.15).

A.3 [...] *services* “are not separate entities over which ownership rights can be established. They cannot be traded separately from their production. By the time their production is completed, they must have been provided to the consumers.” The 2008 SNA differentiates two types of services, change-effecting services and margin services. Change-effecting services are outputs produced to order and typically consist of changes in the conditions of the consuming units realized by the activities of producers at the demand of the consumers. Margin services result when one institutional unit facilitates the change of ownership of goods, knowledge-capturing products, some services or financial assets between two other institutional units. (2008 SNA, para. 6.16-6.21).

A.4 *Knowledge-capturing products* “concern the provision, storage, communication and dissemination of information, advice and entertainment in such a way that the consuming unit can access the knowledge repeatedly. The industries that produce the products are those concerned with the provision, storage, communication and dissemination of information, advice and entertainment in the broadest sense of those terms including the production of general or specialized information, news, consultancy reports, computer programs, movies, music, etc. The outputs of these industries, over which ownership rights may be established, are often stored on physical objects (whether on paper or on electronic media) that can be traded like ordinary goods. They have many of the characteristics of goods in that ownership rights over these products can be established and they can be used repeatedly. Whether characterized as goods or services, these products possess the essential common characteristic that they can be produced by one unit and supplied to another, thus making possible division of labor and the emergence of markets.” (2008 SNA, para. 6.22).

A.5 *Institutional unit.* An institutional unit is an economic entity that is capable, in its own

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<sup>a</sup> *System of National Accounts 2008* (2008 SNA), European Commission, International Monetary Fund, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations, World Bank, available in PDF format on the website of the United Nations Statistics Division at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna2008.asp>.

<sup>b</sup> *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, Sixth Edition* (BPM6), International Monetary Fund, 2008, available electronically on the website of the International Monetary Fund at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/bop/2007/bopman6.htm>.

right, of owning assets, incurring liabilities and engaging in economic activities and in transactions with other entities. The main attributes of institutional units may be described as follows:

(a) An institutional unit is entitled to own goods or assets in its own right; it is therefore able to exchange the ownership of goods or assets in transactions with other institutional units;

(b) It is able to take economic decisions and engage in economic activities for which it is itself held to be directly responsible and accountable at law;

(c) It is able to incur liabilities on its own behalf, to take on other obligations or future commitments and to enter into contracts;

(d) Either a complete set of accounts, including a balance sheet of assets and liabilities, exists for the unit, or it would be possible and meaningful, from an economic viewpoint, to compile a complete set of accounts if they were to be required. (2008 SNA, para. 4.2)

*A.6 Residence.* The residence of each institutional unit is the economic territory with which it has the strongest connection, in other words, its centre of predominant economic interest. An institutional unit has a centre of predominant economic interest in an economic territory when there exists, within the economic territory, some location, dwelling, place of production, or other premises on which or from which the unit engages and intends to continue engaging, either indefinitely or over a finite but long period of time, in economic activities and transactions on a significant scale. The location need not be fixed so long as it remains within the economic territory. Actual or intended location for one year or more is used as an operational definition; while the choice of one year as a specific period is somewhat arbitrary, it is adopted to avoid uncertainty and facilitate international consistency. The concept of residence in the SNA is exactly the same as in *BPM6*. (2008 SNA, paras. 4.10-4.15).

*A.7 Economic territory.* The concept of economic territory in the SNA coincides with that of the *BPM6*. The most commonly used concept of economic territory is the area under the effective economic control of a single government. However, currency or economic unions, regions, or the world as a whole may be used, as they may also be a focus for macroeconomic policy or analysis.

- The economic territory includes the land area, airspace, territorial waters, including jurisdiction over fishing rights and rights to fuels or minerals. In a maritime territory, the economic territory includes islands that belong to the territory. The economic territory also includes territorial enclaves in the rest of the world. These are clearly demarcated land areas (such as embassies, consulates, military bases, scientific stations, information or immigration offices, aid agencies, central bank representative offices with diplomatic immunity, etc.) located in other territories and used by governments that own or rent them for diplomatic, military, scientific, or other purposes with the formal agreement of governments of the territories where the land areas are physically located.

- Economic territory has the dimensions of physical location as well as legal jurisdiction, so that corporations created under the law of that jurisdiction are part of that economy. The concepts of economic territory and residence are designed to ensure that each institutional unit is a resident of a single economic territory.

- The economic territory also includes special zones, such as free trade zones and off-shore financial centres. These are under the control of the government so are part of the economy, even though different regulatory and tax regimes may apply. (However, it may also be useful to show

separate data for such zones.) The territory excludes international organizations and enclaves of other governments that are physically located in the territory. (2008 SNA, paras. 4.10 -4.12 and 26.25-26.26).

A.8 *Ownership.* Within the SNA, a distinction is made between legal ownership and economic ownership. The legal owner of an entity such as goods and services, natural resources, financial assets and liabilities is the unit entitled in law to the benefits embodied in the value of the product. A legal owner may, though, contract with another unit for the latter to accept the risks and rewards of using the product in production in return for an agreed amount that has a smaller element of risk in it (this other unit becomes the economic owner). The economic owner is the institutional unit entitled to claim the benefits associated with the use of the entity in the course of an economic activity by virtue of accepting the associated risks. (2008 SNA, para. 2.46-2.49 and 3.21-3.29).

A.9 *Change of ownership.* The criterion for recording the transfer of products from one unit to another in the SNA is that the economic ownership of the product changes from the first unit to the second. The SNA and the BPM6 apply the criterion of change of economic ownership to all national and international transactions (2008 SNA, paras. 2.46-2.49 and 26.20-26.22).<sup>c</sup>

A.10 *Manufacturing services on physical inputs owned by others.* Because there is no change of ownership of goods between a resident and a nonresident goods for assembly, packing, labeling, or processing by an entity that does not own the goods concerned are not recorded as a goods transaction in the balance of payments (and the 2008 SNA) but under services, as manufacturing services on physical inputs owned by others. (BPM6, paras. 10.22(f) and 10.62-10.71).

A.11 *Financial and operating leasing.* A financial lease is a contract under which the lessor as legal owner of an asset conveys substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of the asset to the lessee. In other words, the lessee becomes the economic owner of the asset. Because the lessee is the economic owner, a change of ownership between the seller of the goods and the lessee is recorded at the start of the lease. The lessor has legal title, but does not have economic ownership. In contrast, goods under *operating leases* do not change ownership to the lessee, and thus are not included in general merchandise when delivered to the lessee. (BPM6, paras. 5.56-5.60 and 10.17(f)).

A.12 *Merchanting.* Merchanting is defined as the purchase of goods by a resident (of the compiling economy) from a nonresident combined with the subsequent resale of the same goods to another nonresident without the goods being present in the compiling economy. (BPM6, para. 10.23(a) and 10.41-10.49).

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<sup>c</sup> In contrast, following the IMTS 2010 recommendations, the recording of imports and exports is based on the physical movement of goods across borders and the criterion of change of ownership is to be used only if the general guideline is not applicable or not sufficient (see chap. I, paras 1.2 and 1.4 above).



## **B. Definition of selected customs terms**

B.1 *Introduction*. The present annex reproduces, for the convenience of users of IMTS 2010, a number of important definitions contained in the Revised Kyoto Convention<sup>a</sup> that are relevant for compilers of IMTS and referred to in the body of the text above.

B.2 “*Customs territory*” means the territory in which the Customs law of a Contracting Party applies (Revised Kyoto Convention, General Annex/ Chapter 2/ E12).

B.3 “*Goods declaration*” means a statement made in the manner prescribed by the Customs, by which the persons concerned indicate the Customs procedure to be applied to the goods and furnish the particulars which the Customs require for its application (Revised Kyoto Convention, General Annex/ Chapter 2/ E19).

B.4 “*goods in free circulation*” means goods which may be disposed of without Customs restriction (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex B/ Chapter 1/ E2).

B.5 “*compensating products*” means the products resulting from the manufacturing, processing or repair of goods for which the use of the inward processing procedure is authorized (Specific Annex F/ Chapter 1/ E1) or the products obtained abroad and resulting from the manufacturing, processing or repair of goods for which the use of the outward processing procedure is authorized (Specific Annex F/ Chapter 2/ E1).

B.6 “*free zone*” and “*authorized operations*”: “*free zone*” means a part of the territory of a Contracting Party where any goods introduced are generally regarded, insofar as import duties and taxes are concerned, as being outside the Customs territory (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex D/ Chapter 2/ E1). *Authorized operations*: Goods admitted to a free zone shall be allowed to undergo operations necessary for their preservation and usual forms of handling to improve their packaging or marketable quality or to prepare them for shipment, such as breaking bulk, grouping of packages, sorting and grading, and repacking. (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex D/ Chapter 2/ para. 11). Where the competent authorities allow processing or manufacturing operations in a free zone, they shall specify the processing or manufacturing operations to which goods may be subjected in general terms and/or in detail in a regulation applicable throughout the free zone or in the authority granted to the enterprise carrying out these operations. (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex D/ Chapter 2/ para. 12).

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<sup>a</sup> World Customs Organization, *International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (as amended)* (Revised Kyoto Convention), Brussels, 2006.

## **Customs procedures**

B.7 “clearance for home use” means the Customs procedure which provides that imported goods enter into free circulation in the Customs territory upon the payment of any import duties and taxes chargeable and the accomplishment of all the necessary Customs formalities (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex B/ Chapter 1/ E1).

B.8 “reimportation in the same state” means the Customs procedure under which goods which were exported may be taken into home use free of import duties and taxes, provided they have not undergone any manufacturing, processing or repairs abroad and provided that any sums chargeable as a result of repayment or remission of or conditional relief from duties and taxes or of any subsidies or other amounts granted in connection with exportation must be paid. The goods that are eligible for reimportation in the same state can be goods that were in free circulation or were compensating products (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex B/ Chapter 2/ E5).

B.9 “outright exportation” means the Customs procedure applicable to goods which, being in free circulation, leave the Customs territory and are intended to remain permanently outside it (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex C/ Chapter 1/ E1).

B.10 “Customs warehousing procedure” means the Customs procedure under which imported goods are stored under Customs control in a designated place (a Customs warehouse) without payment of import duties and taxes (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex D/ Chapter 1/ E1).

B.11 “free zone” means a part of the territory of a Contracting Party where any goods introduced are generally regarded, insofar as import duties and taxes are concerned, as being outside the Customs territory (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex D/ Chapter 2/ E1). Admission to a free zone shall be authorized not only for goods imported directly from abroad but also for goods brought from the Customs territory of the Contracting Party concerned (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex D/ Chapter 2/ para. 5).

B.12 “inward processing” means the Customs procedure under which certain goods can be brought into a Customs territory conditionally relieved from payment of import duties and taxes, on the basis that such goods are intended for manufacturing, processing or repair and subsequent exportation (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex F/ Chapter 1/ E3).

B.13 “outward processing” means the Customs procedure under which goods which are in free circulation in a Customs territory may be temporarily exported for manufacturing, processing or repair abroad and then reimported with total or partial exemption from import duties and taxes (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex F/ Chapter 2/ E2).

B.14 “drawback procedure” means the Customs procedure which, when goods are exported, provides for a repayment (total or partial) to be made in respect of the import duties and taxes

charged on the goods, or on materials contained in them or consumed in their production (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex F/ Chapter 3/ E2).

B.15 “processing of goods for home use” means the Customs procedure under which imported goods may be manufactured, processed or worked, before clearance for home use and under Customs control, to such an extent that the amount of the import duties and taxes applicable to the products thus obtained is lower than that which would be applicable to the imported goods (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex F/ Chapter 4/ E1).

B.16 “Customs offence” means any breach, or attempted breach, of Customs law (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex H/ Chapter 1/ E3).

B.17 “traveller” means: (1) any person who temporarily enters the territory of a country in which he or she does not normally reside (“non-resident”) or who leaves that territory; and (2) any person who leaves the territory of a country in which he or she normally resides (“departing resident”) or who returns to that territory (“returning resident”) (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 1/ E3).

B.18 Customs formalities in respect of postal traffic: “CN22/23” means the special declaration forms for postal items as described in the Acts of the Universal Postal Union currently in force (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 2/ E1); “Customs formalities in respect of postal items” means all the operations to be carried out by the interested party and the Customs in respect of postal traffic (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 2/ E2).

B.19 “Customs treatment of stores” means all the facilities to be accorded and all the Customs formalities applicable to stores (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 4/ E3); “stores” means: - stores for consumption; and - stores to be taken away (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 4/ E4):

- “stores for consumption” means: - goods intended for consumption by the passengers and the crew on board vessels, aircraft or trains, whether or not sold; and - goods necessary for the operation and maintenance of vessels, aircraft or trains including fuel and lubricants but excluding spare parts and equipment; which are either on board upon arrival or are taken on board during the stay in the Customs territory of vessels, aircraft or trains used, or intended to be used, in international traffic for the transport of persons for remuneration or for the industrial or commercial transport of goods, whether or not for remuneration (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 4/ E5);

- “stores to be taken away” means goods for sale to the passengers and the crew of vessels and aircraft with a view to being landed, which are either on board upon arrival or are taken on board during the stay in the Customs territory of vessels and aircraft used, or intended to be used, in international traffic for the transport of persons for remuneration or for the industrial or commercial transport of goods, whether or not for remuneration (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 4/ E6).

B.20 “relief consignments” means : - goods, including vehicles and other means of transport, foodstuffs, medicaments, clothing, blankets, tents, prefabricated houses, water purifying and water storage items, or other goods of prime necessity, forwarded as aid to those affected by disaster; and - all equipment, vehicles and other means of transport, specially trained animals, provisions, supplies, personal effects and other goods for disaster relief personnel in order to perform their duties and to support them in living and working in the territory of the disaster throughout the duration of their mission (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 5/ E1).

B.21 “Customs transit” means the Customs procedure under which goods are transported under Customs control from one Customs office to another (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex E/ Chapter 1/ E4).

B.22 “transshipment” means the Customs procedure under which goods are transferred under Customs control from the importing means of transport to the exporting means of transport within the area of one Customs office which is the office of both importation and exportation (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex E/ Chapter 2/ E1).

B.23 “the carriage of goods coastwise procedure” means the Customs procedure under which: a. goods in free circulation, and b. imported goods that have not been declared under the condition that they must be transported in a vessel other than the importing vessel in which they arrived in the Customs territory are loaded on board a vessel at a place in the Customs territory and are transported to another place in the same Customs territory where they are then unloaded (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex E/ Chapter 3/ E1).

B.24 “temporary admission” means the Customs procedure under which certain goods can be brought into a Customs territory conditionally relieved totally or partially from payment of import duties and taxes; such goods must be imported for a specific purpose and must be intended for re-exportation within a specified period and without having undergone any change except normal depreciation due to the use made of them (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex G/ Chapter 1/ E1).

B.25 “means of transport for commercial use” means any vessel (including lighters and barges, whether or not ship-borne, and hydrofoils), hovercraft, aircraft, road vehicle (including trailers, semi-trailers and combinations of vehicles) or railway rolling stock, which is used in international traffic for the transport of persons for remuneration or for the industrial or commercial transport of goods, whether or not for remuneration, together with their normal spare parts, accessories and equipment, as well as lubricants and fuel contained in their normal tanks, when carried with the means of transport for commercial use (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex J/ Chapter 3/ E3).

## **Additional definitions related to customs procedures**

B.26 “*goods exported with notification of intended return*” means goods specified by the declarant as intended for reimportation, in respect of which identification measures may be taken by the Customs to facilitate reimportation in the same state (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex B/ Chapter 2/ E3).

B.27 “*temporary storage of goods*” means the storing of goods under Customs control in premises and enclosed or unenclosed spaces approved by the Customs (hereinafter called temporary stores) pending lodgement of the Goods declaration (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex A/ Chapter 2/ E2).

## **Origin of goods**

B.28 “*country of origin of goods*” means the country in which the goods have been produced or manufactured, according to the criteria laid down for the purposes of application of the Customs tariff, of quantitative restrictions or of any other measure related to trade (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex K/ Chapter 1/ E1).

B.29 “*rules of origin*” means the specific provisions, developed from principles established by national legislation or international agreements (“origin criteria”), applied by a country to determine the origin of goods (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex K/ Chapter 1/ E2).

B.30 “*substantial transformation criterion*” means the criterion according to which origin is determined by regarding as the country of origin the country in which the last substantial manufacturing or processing, deemed sufficient to give the commodity its essential character, has been carried out (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex K/ Chapter 1/ E3).

B.31 Goods produced wholly in a given country shall be taken as originating in that country. The following only shall be taken to be produced wholly in a given country (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex K/ Chapter 1, para. 2):

- a. mineral products extracted from its soil, from its territorial waters or from its sea-bed;
- b. vegetable products harvested or gathered in that country;
- c. live animals born and raised in that country;
- d. products obtained from live animals in that country;
- e. products obtained from hunting or fishing conducted in that country;
- f. products obtained by maritime fishing and other products taken from the sea by a vessel of that country;
- g. products obtained aboard a factory ship of that country solely from products of the kind covered by para. (f) above;
- h. products extracted from marine soil or subsoil outside that country's territorial waters, provided that the country has sole rights to work that soil or subsoil;

- i. scrap and waste from manufacturing and processing operations, and used articles, collected in that country and fit only for the recovery of raw materials;
- j. goods produced in that country solely from the products referred to in paragraphs (a) to (i) above.

B.32 Where two or more countries have taken part in the production of the goods, the origin of the goods should be determined according to the substantial transformation criterion. (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex K/ Chapter 1, para. 3)

B.33 Operations which do not contribute or which contribute to only a small extent to the essential characteristics or properties of the goods, and in particular operations confined to one or more of those listed below, should not be regarded as constituting substantial manufacturing or processing (Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex K/ Chapter 1, para. 6):

- a. operations necessary for the preservation of goods during transportation or storage;
- b. operations to improve the packaging or the marketable quality of the goods or to prepare them for shipment, such as breaking bulk, grouping of packages, sorting and grading, repacking;
- c. simple assembly operations;
- d. mixing of goods of different origin, provided that the characteristics of the resulting product are not essentially different from the characteristics of the goods which have been mixed.

## C. Rules of origin

C.1 *Introduction.* The present annex provides further background information for IMTS compilers and users on the rules of origin and their use in import statistics.

C.2 *Country experience.* Most countries broadly follow the guidelines of the Revised Kyoto Convention with regard to both wholly produced and substantially transformed goods.<sup>a</sup> However, there is a significant divergence of views regarding detailed application of the guidelines. Which goods can be considered wholly produced in a given country and what kinds of transformations of the goods can be considered substantial remains, in many cases, a matter of trade dispute.

C.3 *WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin and work on harmonization of rules for non-preferential trade.* The WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin was negotiated during the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations and entered into force on 1 January 1995.<sup>b</sup> The aim of the Agreement is to harmonize non-preferential rules of origin and to ensure that such rules do not themselves create unnecessary obstacles to trade. Since the Agreement came into force, the Technical Committee on Rules of Origin, under the auspices of WCO (Brussels), and the Committee on Rules of Origin, under the auspices of WTO (Geneva), have been undertaking the harmonization work programme on rules of origin, under which both Committees are to:

(a) Develop definitions of wholly obtained goods and of minimal operations or processes that do not by themselves confer origin to a good;

(b) Elaborate upon substantial transformation expressed by change in HS tariff classification;

(c) In cases where the exclusive use of the HS nomenclature does not allow for the expression of substantial transformation, develop supplementary criteria, such as ad valorem percentages and/or manufacturing or processing operations.

C.4 The substantial transformation criteria are elaborated on a product-specific basis and are to be applied to goods when more than one country is concerned in their production. The Agreement envisages the use of those rules, inter alia, for trade statistics, and IMTS 2010 incorporates that idea (see chap. VI, para. 6.6 above). Those rules will provide updated international guidelines in

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<sup>a</sup> See chap. VI, paras. 6.6-6.9 above for current application of the relevant rules of the Revised Kyoto Convention; see Revised Kyoto Convention, Specific Annex K, and annex B, paras. B.28-B.33. In the case of a trading partner being a customs union, in principle the origin may be assigned to the customs union.

<sup>b</sup> See World Trade Organization, *The Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations: The Legal Texts*, Geneva, 1995, Agreement on Rules of Origin (WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin).

this area and will allow the determination of origin of each internationally traded commodity classified in the Harmonized System.<sup>c</sup>

C.5 *Rules of origin in the case of preferential trade.* Preferential rules of origin are used to establish whether goods are eligible for special treatment under a trading arrangement between two or more countries or customs unions. Preferential (or reduced) rates of duty are applied to goods that are found to be the products or manufacture of a country defined as a preference country. The principal objective of preferential rules of origin is to ensure that benefits are restricted to goods which originate and are traded within the particular preference area, i.e., whose origin is a particular specified country or countries.

C.6 Each multinational or bilateral agreement has its own rules of origin. There is no work programme for the harmonization of preferential rules of origin. However, annex II of the WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin (common declaration with regard to preferential rules of origin) provides the general principles and requirements applied to non-preferential rules of origin, which apply to preferential rules of origin as well.

C.7 Those requirements include notification procedures. All members agree to provide to the WTO secretariat, as soon as possible, their preferential rules of origin, including a listing of the preferential arrangements, judicial decisions and their administrative rulings of general application relating to their preferential rules of origin, including any modification or new preferential rules of origin. In particular, members agree to ensure that:

(a) In cases where the criterion of change of tariff classification is applied, such a preferential rule of origin and any exceptions to the rule must clearly specify the subheadings or headings within the tariff nomenclature that are addressed by the rule;

(b) In cases where the ad valorem percentage criterion is applied, the method for calculating that percentage shall also be indicated in the preferential rules of origin;

(c) In cases where the criterion of manufacturing or processing operation is prescribed, the operation that confers preferential origin shall be precisely specified.

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<sup>c</sup> The harmonization work programme was launched by WTO and WCO in 1995. Substantial progress has been made, especially as regards the harmonization of rules of origin for specific products. The technical work has been largely completed and the templates drawn up by the WCO Technical Committee on Rules of Origin, which set out alternative options of possible solutions, are very useful for dealing with technically unresolved issues and as a basis for trade policy considerations by the WTO Committee on Rules of Origin. Additional work, however, remains necessary. The elaboration of definitions of goods wholly obtained is virtually complete, although several issues, such as “products taken from the sea outside a country” and “environmental concerns with respect to the parts recovered from nonrepairable articles”, remain unresolved and need further consideration. Definitions of minimal operations or processes are far advanced but will be subject to further refinement. The Committee on Rules of Origin also notes that the overall architecture of the harmonized rules of origin (including general rules), section/chapter rules and residual rules still require considerable work. Definitions of the goods being considered as wholly obtained and product-specific non-preferential rules of origin on the basis of the use of the criterion of change in tariff classification or other supplementary criteria have been drafted, as well as the general rules.



C.8 It is advised that if a country's trade statistics are compiled using preferential rules of origin with respect to certain countries, an appropriate explanation be provided in the methodological note to the disseminated data.

## **D. Rules on customs valuation as set out in the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation**

D.1. *Introduction.* The present annex reproduces, for the convenience of users of IMTS 2010, Part I of the Agreement on Implementation of Article VII of the GATT 1994 (WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation).<sup>a</sup> It is recommended that countries adopt the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation as the basis for valuation of their international merchandise trade for statistical purposes (whether or not a country is a WTO member). This recommendation for determining the statistical value applies to all goods flows (imports and exports) (see chap. 4 above).

D.2. The WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation contains four parts and three annexes. Part I defines the rules on customs valuation; part II concerns the administration of the Agreement, consultations and dispute settlement; part III concerns special and differential treatment for developing countries; and part IV contains the final provisions of the Agreement. Annex I of the Agreement contains interpretative notes on articles of the Agreement; annex II concerns the establishment of the Technical Committee on Customs Valuation; and annex III contains further explanations on the application of the Agreement by developing countries.

D.3. To consult on matters relating to the administration of the customs valuation, the Committee on Customs Valuation, which meets once a year, has been established. The Technical Committee on Customs Valuation, under the auspices of the World Customs Organization, has also been established with a view to ensuring, at the technical level, uniformity in interpretation and application of the Agreement; the Technical Committee meets at least twice a year. Those two Committees should provide an appropriate forum for the improvement of the uniform application of the Agreement.

D.4. Part I of the WTO Agreement on Valuation<sup>b</sup> is reproduced below.

### **PART I**

#### **RULES ON CUSTOMS VALUATION**

##### **Article 1**

1. The customs value of imported goods shall be the transaction value, that is the price actually paid or payable for the goods when sold for export to the country of importation adjusted in accordance with the provisions of Article 8, provided:

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<sup>a</sup> See World Trade Organization, *The Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations: The Legal Texts*, Geneva, 1995: Agreement on Implementation of Article VII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994, Part I, "Rules on customs valuation" (WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation). The WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation is one of the multilateral agreements on trade in goods annexed to the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization and is obligatory for all WTO members.

<sup>b</sup> WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation, articles 1 - 17.

(a) that there are no restrictions as to the disposition or use of the goods by the buyer other than restrictions which:

- (i) are imposed or required by law or by the public authorities in the country of importation;
- (ii) limit the geographical area in which the goods may be resold; or
- (iii) do not substantially affect the value of the goods;

(b) that the sale or price is not subject to some condition or consideration for which a value cannot be determined with respect to the goods being valued;

(c) that no part of the proceeds of any subsequent resale, disposal or use of the goods by the buyer will accrue directly or indirectly to the seller, unless an appropriate adjustment can be made in accordance with the provisions of Article 8; and

(d) that the buyer and seller are not related, or where the buyer and seller are related, that the transaction value is acceptable for customs purposes under the provisions of paragraph 2.

2. (a) In determining whether the transaction value is acceptable for the purposes of paragraph 1, the fact that the buyer and the seller are related within the meaning of Article 15 shall not in itself be grounds for regarding the transaction value as unacceptable. In such case the circumstances surrounding the sale shall be examined and the transaction value shall be accepted provided that the relationship did not influence the price. If, in the light of information provided by the importer or otherwise, the customs administration has grounds for considering that the relationship influenced the price, it shall communicate its grounds to the importer and the importer shall be given a reasonable opportunity to respond. If the importer so requests, the communication of the grounds shall be in writing.

(b) In a sale between related persons, the transaction value shall be accepted and the goods valued in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 whenever the importer demonstrates that such value closely approximates to one of the following occurring at or about the same time:

- (i) the transaction value in sales to unrelated buyers of identical or similar goods for export to the same country of importation;
- (ii) the customs value of identical or similar goods as determined under the provisions of Article 5;
- (iii) the customs value of identical or similar goods as determined under the provisions of Article 6;

In applying the foregoing tests, due account shall be taken of demonstrated differences in

commercial levels, quantity levels, the elements enumerated in Article 8 and costs incurred by the seller in sales in which the seller and the buyer are not related that are not incurred by the seller in sales in which the seller and the buyer are related.

(c) The tests set forth in paragraph 2(b) are to be used at the initiative of the importer and only for comparison purposes. Substitute values may not be established under the provisions of paragraph 2(b).

## Article 2

1. (a) If the customs value of the imported goods cannot be determined under the provisions of Article 1, the customs value shall be the transaction value of identical goods sold for export to the same country of importation and exported at or about the same time as the goods being valued.

(b) In applying this Article, the transaction value of identical goods in a sale at the same commercial level and in substantially the same quantity as the goods being valued shall be used to determine the customs value. Where no such sale is found, the transaction value of identical goods sold at a different commercial level and/or in different quantities, adjusted to take account of differences attributable to commercial level and/or to quantity, shall be used, provided that such adjustments can be made on the basis of demonstrated evidence which clearly establishes the reasonableness and accuracy of the adjustment, whether the adjustment leads to an increase or a decrease in the value.

2. Where the costs and charges referred to in paragraph 2 of Article 8 are included in the transaction value, an adjustment shall be made to take account of significant differences in such costs and charges between the imported goods and the identical goods in question arising from differences in distances and modes of transport.

3. If, in applying this Article, more than one transaction value of identical goods is found, the lowest such value shall be used to determine the customs value of the imported goods.

## Article 3

1. (a) If the customs value of the imported goods cannot be determined under the provisions of Articles 1 and 2, the customs value shall be the transaction value of similar goods sold for export to the same country of importation and exported at or about the same time as the goods being valued.

(b) In applying this Article, the transaction value of similar goods in a sale at the same commercial level and in substantially the same quantity as the goods being valued shall be used to determine the customs value. Where no such sale is found, the transaction value of similar goods sold at a different commercial level and/or in different quantities, adjusted to take account of differences attributable to commercial level and/or to quantity, shall be used, provided that such adjustments can be made on the basis of demonstrated evidence which clearly establishes the reasonableness and accuracy of the adjustment, whether the adjustment leads to an increase or a

decrease in the value.

2. Where the costs and charges referred to in paragraph 2 of Article 8 are included in the transaction value, an adjustment shall be made to take account of significant differences in such costs and charges between the imported goods and the similar goods in question arising from differences in distances and modes of transport.

3. If, in applying this Article, more than one transaction value of similar goods is found, the lowest such value shall be used to determine the customs value of the imported goods.

#### Article 4

If the customs value of the imported goods cannot be determined under the provisions of Articles 1, 2 and 3, the customs value shall be determined under the provisions of Article 5 or, when the customs value cannot be determined under that Article, under the provisions of Article 6 except that, at the request of the importer, the order of application of Articles 5 and 6 shall be reversed.

#### Article 5

1. (a) If the imported goods or identical or similar imported goods are sold in the country of importation in the condition as imported, the customs value of the imported goods under the provisions of this Article shall be based on the unit price at which the imported goods or identical or similar imported goods are so sold in the greatest aggregate quantity, at or about the time of the importation of the goods being valued, to persons who are not related to the persons from whom they buy such goods, subject to deductions for the following:

- (i) either the commissions usually paid or agreed to be paid or the additions usually made for profit and general expenses in connection with sales in such country of imported goods of the same class or kind;
- (ii) the usual costs of transport and insurance and associated costs incurred within the country of importation;
- (iii) where appropriate, the costs and charges referred to in paragraph 2 of Article 8; and
- (iv) the customs duties and other national taxes payable in the country of importation by reason of the importation or sale of the goods.

(b) If neither the imported goods nor identical nor similar imported goods are sold at or about the time of importation of the goods being valued, the customs value shall, subject otherwise to the provisions of paragraph 1(a), be based on the unit price at which the imported goods or identical or similar imported goods are sold in the country of importation in the condition as

imported at the earliest date after the importation of the goods being valued but before the expiration of 90 days after such importation.

2. If neither the imported goods nor identical nor similar imported goods are sold in the country of importation in the condition as imported, then, if the importer so requests, the customs value shall be based on the unit price at which the imported goods, after further processing, are sold in the greatest aggregate quantity to persons in the country of importation who are not related to the persons from whom they buy such goods, due allowance being made for the value added by such processing and the deductions provided for in paragraph 1(a).

#### Article 6

1. The customs value of imported goods under the provisions of this Article shall be based on a computed value. Computed value shall consist of the sum of:

(a) the cost or value of materials and fabrication or other processing employed in producing the imported goods;

(b) an amount for profit and general expenses equal to that usually reflected in sales of goods of the same class or kind as the goods being valued which are made by producers in the country of exportation for export to the country of importation;

(c) the cost or value of all other expenses necessary to reflect the valuation option chosen by the Member under paragraph 2 of Article 8.

2. No Member may require or compel any person not resident in its own territory to produce for examination, or to allow access to, any account or other record for the purposes of determining a computed value. However, information supplied by the producer of the goods for the purposes of determining the customs value under the provisions of this Article may be verified in another country by the authorities of the country of importation with the agreement of the producer and provided they give sufficient advance notice to the government of the country in question and the latter does not object to the investigation.

#### Article 7

1. If the customs value of the imported goods cannot be determined under the provisions of Articles 1 through 6, inclusive, the customs value shall be determined using reasonable means consistent with the principles and general provisions of this Agreement and of Article VII of GATT 1994 and on the basis of data available in the country of importation.

2. No customs value shall be determined under the provisions of this Article on the basis of:

(a) the selling price in the country of importation of goods produced in such country;

(b) a system which provides for the acceptance for customs purposes of the higher of two alternative values;

(c) the price of goods on the domestic market of the country of exportation;

(d) the cost of production other than computed values which have been determined for identical or similar goods in accordance with the provisions of Article 6;

(e) the price of the goods for export to a country other than the country of importation;

(f) minimum customs values; or

(g) arbitrary or fictitious values.

3. If the importer so requests, the importer shall be informed in writing of the customs value determined under the provisions of this Article and the method used to determine such value.

#### Article 8

1. In determining the customs value under the provisions of Article 1, there shall be added to the price actually paid or payable for the imported goods:

(a) the following, to the extent that they are incurred by the buyer but are not included in the price actually paid or payable for the goods:

(i) commissions and brokerage, except buying commissions;

(ii) the cost of containers which are treated as being one for customs purposes with the goods in question;

(iii) the cost of packing whether for labour or materials;

(b) the value, apportioned as appropriate, of the following goods and services where supplied directly or indirectly by the buyer free of charge or at reduced cost for use in connection with the production and sale for export of the imported goods, to the extent that such value has not been included in the price actually paid or payable:

(i) materials, components, parts and similar items incorporated in the imported goods;

(ii) tools, dies, moulds and similar items used in the production of the imported goods;

(iii) materials consumed in the production of the imported goods;

(iv) engineering, development, artwork, design work, and plans and sketches undertaken elsewhere than in the country of importation and necessary for the production of the imported goods;

(c) royalties and license fees related to the goods being valued that the buyer must pay, either directly or indirectly, as a condition of sale of the goods being valued, to the extent that such royalties and fees are not included in the price actually paid or payable;

(d) the value of any part of the proceeds of any subsequent resale, disposal or use of the imported goods that accrues directly or indirectly to the seller.

2. In framing its legislation, each Member shall provide for the inclusion in or the exclusion from the customs value, in whole or in part, of the following:

(a) the cost of transport of the imported goods to the port or place of importation;

(b) loading, unloading and handling charges associated with the transport of the imported goods to the port or place of importation; and

(c) the cost of insurance.

3. Additions to the price actually paid or payable shall be made under this Article only on the basis of objective and quantifiable data.

4. No additions shall be made to the price actually paid or payable in determining the customs value except as provided in this Article.

#### Article 9

1. Where the conversion of currency is necessary for the determination of the customs value, the rate of exchange to be used shall be that duly published by the competent authorities of the country of importation concerned and shall reflect as effectively as possible, in respect of the period covered by each such document of publication, the current value of such currency in commercial transactions in terms of the currency of the country of importation.

2. The conversion rate to be used shall be that in effect at the time of exportation or the time of importation, as provided by each Member.

#### Article 10

All information which is by nature confidential or which is provided on a confidential basis for the purposes of customs valuation shall be treated as strictly confidential by the authorities concerned who shall not disclose it without the specific permission of the person or government



providing such information, except to the extent that it may be required to be disclosed in the context of judicial proceedings.

#### Article 11

1. The legislation of each Member shall provide in regard to a determination of customs value for the right of appeal, without penalty, by the importer or any other person liable for the payment of the duty.
2. An initial right of appeal without penalty may be to an authority within the customs administration or to an independent body, but the legislation of each Member shall provide for the right of appeal without penalty to a judicial authority.
3. Notice of the decision on appeal shall be given to the appellant and the reasons for such decision shall be provided in writing. The appellant shall also be informed of any rights of further appeal.

#### Article 12

Laws, regulations, judicial decisions and administrative rulings of general application giving effect to this Agreement shall be published in conformity with Article X of GATT 1994 by the country of importation concerned.

#### Article 13

If, in the course of determining the customs value of imported goods, it becomes necessary to delay the final determination of such customs value, the importer of the goods shall nevertheless be able to withdraw them from customs if, where so required, the importer provides sufficient guarantee in the form of a surety, a deposit or some other appropriate instrument, covering the ultimate payment of customs duties for which the goods may be liable. The legislation of each Member shall make provisions for such circumstances.

#### Article 14

The notes at Annex I to this Agreement form an integral part of this Agreement and the Articles of this Agreement are to be read and applied in conjunction with their respective notes. Annexes II and III also form an integral part of this Agreement.

#### Article 15

1. In this Agreement:

(a) "customs value of imported goods " means the value of goods for the purposes of levying *ad valorem* duties of customs on imported goods;

(b) "country of importation" means country or customs territory of importation; and

(c) "produced" includes grown, manufactured and mined.

2. In this Agreement:

(a) "identical goods" means goods which are the same in all respects, including physical characteristics, quality and reputation. Minor differences in appearance would not preclude goods otherwise conforming to the definition from being regarded as identical;

(b) "similar goods" means goods which, although not alike in all respects, have like characteristics and like component materials which enable them to perform the same functions and to be commercially interchangeable. The quality of the goods, their reputation and the existence of a trademark are among the factors to be considered in determining whether goods are similar;

(c) the terms "identical goods" and "similar goods" do not include, as the case may be, goods which incorporate or reflect engineering, development, artwork, design work, and plans and sketches for which no adjustment has been made under paragraph (b)(iv) of Article 8 because such elements were undertaken in the country of importation;

(d) goods shall not be regarded as "identical goods" or "similar goods" unless they were produced in the same country as the goods being valued;

(e) goods produced by a different person shall be taken into account only when there are no identical goods or similar goods, as the case may be, produced by the same person as the goods being valued.

3. In this Agreement "goods of the same class or kind" means goods which fall within a group or range of goods produced by a particular industry or industry sector, and includes identical or similar goods.

4. For the purposes of this Agreement, persons shall be deemed to be related only if:

(a) they are officers or directors of one another's businesses;

(b) they are legally recognized partners in business;

(c) they are employer and employee;

(d) any person directly or indirectly owns, controls or holds 5 per cent or more of the outstanding voting stock or shares of both of them;

(e) one of them directly or indirectly controls the other;

(f) both of them are directly or indirectly controlled by a third person;

(g) together they directly or indirectly control a third person; or

(h) they are members of the same family.

5. Persons who are associated in business with one another in that one is the sole agent, sole distributor or sole concessionaire, however described, of the other shall be deemed to be related for the purposes of this Agreement if they fall within the criteria of paragraph 4.

#### Article 16

Upon written request, the importer shall have the right to an explanation in writing from the customs administration of the country of importation as to how the customs value of the importer's goods was determined.

#### Article 17

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as restricting or calling into question the rights of customs administrations to satisfy themselves as to the truth or accuracy of any statement, document or declaration presented for customs valuation purposes.

## **E. Terms of goods delivery**

E.1 *Introduction*. The value (invoice price) of the goods negotiated between traders depends on the agreed terms of delivery. Compilers must make appropriate adjustments to the invoice price to obtain CIF- or FOB-type value of goods (see chap. 4 above). The terms of delivery were standardized by the International Chamber of Commerce and first published in 1936 as “Incoterms 1936”. Amendments and additions were later made in 1953, 1967, 1976, 1980, 1990 and 2000.<sup>a</sup> Those standard trade definitions are most commonly used in international sales contracts. For the convenience of IMTS compilers and users, the main types of terms of delivery are described below.

E.2 *Ex works (EXW)*. Under this term, the obligation of a seller is completed when the goods are made available to a buyer at the seller's premises or another named place (works, factory, warehouse etc.). The seller is not responsible for loading the goods on the vehicle provided by the buyer or for clearing the goods through customs for export unless the contract of sale clearly so states. All costs and risks involved in taking the goods from the seller's premises are the buyer's responsibility.

E.3 *Free carrier (FCA)*. Under this term, the seller's obligation to deliver goods is fulfilled when the goods have been handed over, cleared for export, into the charge of the carrier nominated by the buyer at the named place. The chosen place of delivery has an impact on the obligations of loading and unloading the goods at that place. If delivery occurs at the seller's premises, the seller is responsible for loading. If delivery occurs at any other place, the seller is not responsible for unloading. This term may be used for any mode of transport, including multimodal transport. If the buyer nominates a person other than a carrier to receive the goods, the seller is deemed to have fulfilled his/her obligation to deliver the goods when they are delivered to that person.

E.4 *Free alongside ship (FAS)*. This term means that the seller's obligation to deliver is fulfilled when the goods have been placed alongside the vessel on the quay or in lighters at the named port of shipment. The buyer must bear all costs and risks of loss or of damage to the goods from that moment. The FAS term requires the seller to clear the goods for exports. This term can only be used for sea or inland waterway transport.

E.5 *Free on board (FOB)*. This term means that the seller's obligation to deliver is fulfilled when the goods have passed over the ship's rail at the named port of shipment. This means that the buyer has to bear all costs and risks of loss or of damage to the goods from that point. The FOB term requires the seller to clear the goods for exports. This term can only be used for sea or inland waterway transport. If the parties do not intend to deliver the goods across the ship's rail, the FCA term (see para. E.3 above) should be used.

E.6 *Cost and freight (CFR)*. This term means that the seller's obligation to deliver is fulfilled when the goods have passed over the ship's rail in the port of shipment. The seller must pay the

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<sup>a</sup> International Chamber of Commerce, *INCOTERMS 2000*, ICC No. 560, New York, 1999.

costs and freight necessary to bring the goods to the named port of destination, but the risk of loss or of damage to the goods, as well as any additional costs due to events occurring after the time of delivery, are transferred from the seller to the buyer. The CFR term requires the seller to clear the goods for export. This term can only be used for sea and inland waterway transport. If the parties do not intend to deliver the goods over the ship's rail, the CPT term (see para. E.8 below) should be used.

E.7 *Cost, insurance and freight (CIF)*. The seller has the same obligations as under CFR, but with the addition that he/she has to procure marine insurance against the buyer's risk of loss or damage to the goods during the carriage. The seller contracts for insurance and pays the insurance premium. The buyer should note that, under the CIF term, the seller is required to obtain insurance only on minimum coverage. The CIF term requires the seller to clear the goods for export. This term can only be used for sea and inland waterway transport. If the parties do not intend to deliver the goods over the ship's rail, the CIP term (see para. E.9 below) should be used.

E.8 *Carriage paid to (CPT)*. The seller delivers the goods to the carrier nominated by him/her, but the seller must in addition pay the cost of carriage necessary to bring the goods to the named destination. The risk of loss or of damage to the goods, as well as any additional costs due to events occurring after the time the goods have been delivered to the carrier, is transferred from the seller to the buyer when the goods have been so delivered. If subsequent carriers are used for the carriage to the agreed destination, the risk passes when the goods have been delivered to the first carrier. The CPT term requires the seller to clear the goods for export. This term may be used for any mode of transport, including multimodal transport.

E.9 *Carriage and insurance paid to (CIP)*. The seller has the same obligations as under CPT, but with the addition that the seller has to procure insurance against the buyer's risk of loss or of damage to the goods during the carriage. The seller contracts for insurance and pays the insurance premium. The buyer should note that, under the CIP term, the seller is required to obtain insurance only on minimum coverage. The CIP term requires the seller to clear the goods for export. This term may be used irrespective of the mode of transport, including multimodal transport.

E.10 *Delivered at frontier (DAF)*. The seller's obligation to deliver is fulfilled when the goods are placed at the disposal of the buyer on the arriving means of transport not unloaded, cleared for export, but not cleared for import at the named point and place at the frontier, and before the customs border of the adjoining country. The term "frontier" may be used for any frontier, including that of the country of export. Therefore, it is of vital importance that the frontier in question be defined precisely by always naming the point and place of delivery in the term. This term may be used irrespective of the mode of transport when goods are to be delivered at a land frontier. When delivery is to take place in the port of destination, on board a vessel or on the quay (wharf), the DES or DEQ terms should be used.

E.11 *Delivered ex ship (DES)*. The seller's obligation to deliver is fulfilled when the goods are placed at the disposal of the buyer on board the ship not cleared for import at the named port of destination. The seller has to bear all the costs and risks involved in bringing the goods to the

named port of destination before discharging. This term can be used only when the goods are to be delivered by sea or inland waterway or multimodal transport on a vessel in the port of destination.

E.12 *Delivered ex quay (DEQ)*. The seller's obligation to deliver is fulfilled when the goods are placed at the disposal of the buyer not cleared for import on the quay (wharf) at the named port of destination. The seller has to bear costs and risks involved in bringing the goods to the named port or destination and discharging the goods on the quay (wharf). The DEQ term requires the buyer to clear the goods for import and to pay for all formalities, duties, taxes and other charges upon import. This term can be used only when the goods are to be delivered by sea or inland waterway or multimodal transport on discharging from a vessel onto the quay (wharf) in the port of destination.

E.13 *Delivered duty unpaid (DDU)*. The seller's obligation to deliver is fulfilled when the goods are placed at the disposal of the buyer, not cleared for import and not unloaded from any arriving means of transport at the named place of destination. The seller has to bear the costs and risks involved in bringing the goods thereto, other than, where applicable, any "duty" (which term includes the responsibility for, and the risks of, the carrying out of customs formalities and the payment of formalities, customs duties, taxes and other charges) for import in the country of destination. Such "duty" has to be borne by the buyer, as well as any cost and risks caused by his/her failure to clear the goods for import in time. If the parties wish the seller to carry out customs formalities and bear the costs and risks resulting therefrom, as well as some of the costs payable upon import of the goods, that should be made clear by adding explicit wording to that effect in the contract of sale. This term may be used irrespective of the mode of transport, but when delivery is to take place in the port of destination on board the vessel or on the quay (wharf), the DES or DEQ terms should be used.

E.14 *Delivered duty paid (DDP)*. The seller's obligation to deliver is fulfilled when the goods are placed at the disposal of the buyer, cleared for import and not unloaded from any arriving means of transport at the named place of destination. The seller has to bear all the costs and risks involved in bringing the goods thereto, including, where applicable, any "duty" (which term includes the responsibility for, and the risks of, the carrying out of customs formalities and the payment of formalities, customs duties, taxes and other charges) for import in the country of destination. Whilst the EXW term (see para. E.2 above) represents the minimum obligation for the seller, DDP represents the maximum obligation. This term should not be used if the seller is unable directly or indirectly to obtain the import license. If the parties wish to exclude from the seller's obligations some of the costs payable upon importation of the goods (such as value added tax (VAT)), that should be made clear by adding explicit wording to that effect in the contract of sale. If the parties wish the buyer to bear all risks and costs of the import, the DDU term should be used. This term may be used irrespective of the mode of transport, but when delivery is to take place in the port of destination on board the vessel or on the quay (wharf), the DES or DEQ terms should be used.

## F. Conceptual differences between IMTS 2010 and BPM6

F.1 *Introduction.* The present annex explains the main conceptual differences in the recording of international transactions in goods between IMTS 2010 and the BPM6/ 2008 SNA<sup>a</sup> Table F.1 shows what adjustments are commonly required to derive the value of “Total goods on a balance of payment basis”<sup>b</sup> using international merchandise trade statistics (IMTS)<sup>c</sup> based on IMTS 2010 as the starting point.<sup>d</sup> Not all adjustments apply to all countries and, depending on national practices, additional adjustments may be needed.

F.2 International merchandise trade statistics (IMTS) is the main source of data on trade in goods for the balance of payments and national accounts. However, there are conceptual differences concerning the coverage, time of recording, valuation and classification of goods transactions between IMTS and the balance of payments that require adjustments to IMTS data for use in the balance of payments. The main conceptual difference is that international merchandise trade statistics is based on the general principle to record all goods that add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory (see para. 1.2), whereas the recording of transactions in the balance of payments is based on the principle of change of ownership between residents and non-residents (see annex A, paras. A.8-A.9 above).

F.3 The conceptual differences between IMTS 2010 and BPM6/ 2008 SNA in the recording of international transactions of goods are explained in section A below. Additional conceptual differences between BPM6/ 2008 SNA that existed in respect of the previous revision of the international recommendations on IMTS (IMTS, Rev.2)<sup>e</sup> but have been eliminated in IMTS 2010 are listed in section B below. Further adjustments to BPM6 that may be required due to national practices in the compilation of IMTS are described in section C below. As a result of the conceptual differences between IMTS 2010 and BPM6/ 2008 SNA, the figures on goods exports and imports published in the BPM6 Goods and Services Account are expected to be different from

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<sup>a</sup> *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, Sixth Edition* (BPM6), International Monetary Fund, 2008, available electronically on the IMF website at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/bop/2007/bopman6.htm>. *System of National Accounts 2008*, European Commission, International Monetary Fund, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations, World Bank, available in PDF format on the website of the United Nations Statistics Division at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna2008.asp>.

<sup>b</sup> Total goods on a balance of payment basis consists of the three items General merchandise on a balance of payment basis (thereafter referred to as ‘general merchandise’), Net exports of goods under merchanting and Nonmonetary gold.

<sup>c</sup> The terms “international merchandise trade statistics”, “trade statistics” and the acronym “IMTS” refer to international merchandise trade statistics compiled according to IMTS 2010.

<sup>d</sup> BPM6 contains table 10.2, which similarly shows the adjustments required to derive the “Total goods on a the balance of payments basis” from IMTS. However, that table in BPM6 is based on IMTS, Rev.2 and hence shows a few adjustments that are no longer required if a country complies with the recommendations contained in IMTS 2010 (see paras. F.17-F.20 below).

<sup>e</sup> *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, Revision 2* (IMTS, Rev.2), (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.16).

the figures compiled and published according to the present IMTS 2010 recommendations; this question is addressed in section D below.

## A. List of conceptual differences between IMTS 2010 and BPM6/ 2008 SNA

**Table F.1**  
**Reconciliation between IMTS and total goods on a balance of payment basis**

	Exports	Imports
<b>Merchandise trade statistics as provided in data source</b>		
<b>Adjustments, as relevant:</b>		
For example (with paragraph reference)		
- Goods sent for or returned after processing without a change of ownership (F.4)		
+ Goods acquired from other economies for processing abroad (F.4)		
+ Goods sold abroad after processing in other economies (F.4)		
- Customized recordings on physical media (F.5)		
- Noncustomized recordings on physical media with periodic license fee (F.5)		
- Returned goods (F.6)		
- Migrants' effects (F.7)		
+ Goods entering or leaving the economic territory of a country illegally (F.8)		
+ Goods lost or destroyed after change of ownership but before entering the importing country (F.9)	N/A	
- Goods lost or destroyed before change of ownership (F.9)		N/A
- Goods imported for construction projects by nonresident enterprises (F.10)		
-/+ Goods transferred from or to a buffer stock organization (F.11)		
- Goods which cross borders as a result of transactions between related parties (F.12)		
+/- Non-monetary gold transactions between residents and non-residents without physical movement (F.13)		
+ Net exports of goods under merchanting (F.14)		
+/- Difference in time of recording i.e. for high value capital goods (F.15)		
- Different valuation for imports (CIF/FOB adjustment) (F.16)	N/A	
<b>= Total goods on a balance of payment basis</b>		

N/A = not applicable.

F.4 *Goods for processing with or without change of ownership.* This item reflects a significant conceptual difference between IMTS 2010 and the balance of payments statistics compiled according to BPM6.<sup>f</sup> IMTS 2010 recommends that goods for processing be recorded when they enter or leave the economic territory, irrespective of whether a change in ownership takes place (see paras. 1.19-1.20 above). However, goods supplied to another economy for processing without a change of ownership and returned to the economy of the owner after processing are not recorded in the balance of payments statistics compiled according to BPM6; further, if the goods are sold to a third economy after processing, then the value of the goods (including the value of processing) is recorded as an export of the economy of the owner and an import of the third economy; the value of the processing is recorded as an export of services of the processing economy and an import of services of the economy of the owner (BPM6, paras. 10.22(f) and 10.62-10.71).

<sup>f</sup> In the previous edition of the Balance of Payments (BPM5), this difference did not exist.



F.5 *Media, whether or not recorded* is recommended to be included in IMTS, except for media used for carrying customized software or software written for a specific client or originals of any nature, although exclusion of such media may not be possible in practice (see para. 1.18 above). BPM6 includes in general merchandise only non-customized packaged software and video and audio recordings on physical media, such as disks and other devices, with a license for perpetual use (BPM6, paras. 10.17(c) and 10.143-10.144).

F.6 *Returned goods* are recommended to be included in IMTS as exports and imports (see para. 1.23 above). The BPM6 recommends that in the case of returned goods, revised entries be made to exports and imports and transactions be voided, preferably for the period when the goods were initially recorded (BPM6, para. 10.22(i)).

F.7 *Migrants' effects* are recommended to be included in IMTS (see para. 1.26 above). These goods are not covered in the balance of payments statistics because there is no change in ownership (BPM6, para. 10.22(b)).

F.8 *Goods entering or leaving the economic territory of a country illegally* (this may include legal as well as illegal goods) are recommended to be excluded from IMTS but to be separately recorded (see para. 1.59 above). BPM6 includes in general merchandise illegal goods as well as smuggled goods that are otherwise legal (BPM6, paras. 10.17(i) and 10.17 (j)).

F.9 *Goods lost or destroyed after leaving the exporting country but before entering the importing country and after ownership has been acquired by the importer* are recommended to be excluded from the IMTS of the importing country but to be separately recorded (see para. 1.60). BPM6 includes such goods as imports (BPM6, para. 10.17(m)). A further difference arises when goods are lost or destroyed after leaving the exporting country but before entering the importing country, when ownership has not been acquired. In this case, an export would be recorded in IMTS but no goods transaction would be recorded in BPM6.

F.10 *Goods imported for construction projects by non-resident enterprises* (for example, for use in a construction project), where these operations are not sufficiently substantial to constitute a branch of the enterprise, are not recorded as trade in goods in BPM6 (BPM6, para. 10.22(d)) but in IMTS are recorded as exports and imports.

F.11 *Goods transferred from or to a buffer stock organization* are recommended to be included in IMTS (see para. 1.27 above). BPM6 excludes goods temporarily exported or imported, such as goods for storage, if no change of ownership takes place (BPM6, para. 10.22(e)). However, these goods are to be recorded if they are sold while being abroad (BPM6, para. 10.17(g)).

F.12 *Goods that cross borders as a result of transactions between related parties* are recommended to be included in IMTS, irrespective of whether a change of ownership occurs (see para. 1.22 above). BPM6 records a trade in goods transaction only if it can be determined that there is a change of ownership (BPM6, para. 10.24).

F.13 *Non-monetary gold* is recommended to be included in IMTS (see para. 1.10 above). Transactions in non-monetary gold between residents and non-residents are recorded in balance of payments statistics even when there is no physical movement (BPM6, paras. 10.50-10.54).

F.14 *Goods under merchanting* are recommended to be excluded from IMTS (see para. 1.50 above). BPM6 records goods under merchanting separately as a negative export when acquired by a resident from a non-resident, and as an export when sold by a resident to a non-resident (BPM6, paras. 10.23(a) and 10.41–10.49).

F.15 *Differences in time of recording*: In practice, for BPM6, the timing of the change of ownership is usually assumed to be approximately the same as the time of customs recording (BPM6, paras. 10.26-10.27). For high value capital goods that are produced over a long time period, BPM6 recommends recording according to the time that the economic ownership is conveyed from the seller to the buyer (BPM6, para. 10.28). The time of ownership change could be a progressive change based on stage payments or in full on delivery. Likewise, goods on consignment (goods dispatched before their sale is arranged) are not recorded in the balance of payments until economic ownership changes (BPM6 para. 10.29). For IMTS, it is recommended that all goods be recorded at the time when they enter or leave the economic territory of a country (see para. 1.8 above).

F.16 *Different valuation of imports*: For IMTS, it is recommended that the statistical value of exported goods be an FOB-type value and the statistical value of imported goods be a CIF-type value (see para. 4.8 above). BPM6 requires that imports and exports be valued at a point of uniform valuation, which is at the customs frontier of the economy from which the goods are first exported (BPM6, para. 10.30). Hence, while IMTS recommends CIF-type valuation for imports, balance of payments / national accounts require an FOB-type valuation for imports.

## **B. Conceptual differences that have been eliminated in IMTS 2010**

F.17 Several conceptual differences between IMTS and balance of payments goods account have been eliminated in IMTS 2010, as described below.

F.18 *Mobile equipment that changes ownership while outside the country of residence of its original owner*, which was previously recommended to be excluded from export statistics but to be recorded separately (see IMTS, Rev.2, para. 57) is now recommended to be included (see paras. 1.3 and 1.39 above). BPM6 stipulates that a transaction be recorded in the goods account only when ownership is then transferred from a resident to a non-resident (BPM6, para. 10.17(g)).

F.19 *Fish catch, minerals from the seabed and salvage*. Such goods sold from national vessels in foreign ports or from national vessels on the high seas to foreign vessels were previously recommended to be excluded from export statistics but to be recorded separately (see IMTS, Rev.2, para. 58). Both IMTS 2010 and BPM6 include these as goods transactions (see para. 1.31 above; and BPM6, para. 10.17(e)).

F.20 *Bunkers, stores, ballast and dunnage* that are (a) acquired by national vessels or aircraft outside the economic territory of a country or (b) supplied by national vessels or aircraft to foreign vessels or aircraft outside the economic territory of a country or landed in foreign ports from national vessels or aircraft were previously recommended to be excluded from export statistics but to be recorded separately (see IMTS, Rev.2 para. 59). Both IMTS 2010 and BPM6 include these as goods transactions (see para. 1.32 above; and BPM6, para. 10.17(d)).

### **C. Adjustments due to national practices in the compilation of trade statistics**

F.21 *Adjustments due to the trade system used.* The statistical territory of a country used for the compilation of IMTS might comprise only a particular part of the economic territory, so that certain flows of goods recommended for recording in IMTS are not included in either import or export statistics of the compiling country (see chap. II above). In these cases, balance of payment compilers need to use additional sources of data to achieve the coverage of trade transactions for the whole economy (BPM6, para. 10.25).

F.22 *Trade not included in IMTS.* For different reasons, such as difficulties in data collection, certain exports and imports, although recommended to be recorded, may in practice be only partially or not at all included in IMTS. In such cases, balance of payment compilers need to use additional data sources to achieve full coverage of all trade in goods transactions.

### **D. Differences in figures published in trade statistics and the BPM6 Goods and Services Account**

F.23 As described above, the figures for imports and exports of “Total goods” in the BPM6 Goods and Services Account are expected, at least for some countries, to be significantly different from the figures for total imports and exports published in trade statistics, probably often reflecting the role of goods for processing without change of ownership, transactions between related parties and merchanting in countries. Similar differences are expected for the sub-item “re-exports”. In addition, figures published for non-monetary gold in the BPM6 Goods and Services Account may be very different from those published in IMTS because BPM6 includes and excludes transactions of non-monetary gold based on the residence of the buyer and seller.

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