

Third meeting of the Technical Subgroup on the Movement of Persons – Mode 4

Minutes of the meeting

(New York, 22 - 24 February 2006)

1. The meeting was hosted by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in New York and chaired by Mr. Ivo Havinga, Chief Economic Statistics Branch, UNSD. The agenda and list of participants is included in Annex II and Annex III respectively.
2. The meeting: (a) discussed international activities in measuring remittances; (b) reached an agreement on the definition of remittances; (c) discussed the framework for the measurement of GATS Mode 4 and identified a way forward to bring the discussion to a conclusion; (d) provided a forum for exchange of information of country practices in the calculation of remittances; and (e) discussed the future of the Technical Subgroup on the Movement of Persons – Mode 4.

International activities in measuring remittances

3. Several activities on remittances are under way at the international level. The following were discussed at the meeting:
 - (a) International Working Group on Improving Data on Remittances;
 - (b) The Luxembourg Group on Remittances;
 - (c) Improving Central Bank Reporting and Procedures on Remittances in Latin America and Caribbean Region (CEMLA);
 - (d) High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

(a) International Working Group on Improving Data on Remittances

4. The G-8 Heads of States and G7 Finance Ministers called for the creation of an international working group led by the World Bank, in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Statistics Division, with the objective of improving data on remittances. A meeting to discuss the measurement of remittances was organized by the World Bank and IMF in January 2005¹.
5. The meeting identified key issues to be addressed for improving data on remittances. These include: (a) improving the definition of remittances as the concepts are often applied inconsistently in countries; and (b) improving compilation and reporting practices in Balance of Payments through providing guidance on data collection techniques.

¹ All documents related to this meeting are posted on the World Bank Development Data Group website at <http://www.worldbank.org/data/remittances.html>.

6. The World Bank and IMF meeting identified as a priority for users the improvement of aggregate estimates of remittances, followed by estimates of flows between countries. The meeting agreed that the Balance of Payments represents the appropriate framework for improving the estimation and reporting of remittances data. Moreover, it recognized that the TSG is the appropriate platform to clarify concepts and definitions of remittances. A report on progress made was submitted to G7 Finance Ministers was prepared by the World Bank, IMF and UNSD in September 2005. During the international meeting it was also agreed to establish a city group to develop a compilation guide on remittances.

(b) Luxembourg Group on Measuring Remittances

7. The first meeting of the city group on measuring remittances will be hosted by Eurostat on 26-27 June 2006 and the Group will be named “Luxembourg Group”. The terms of reference of the group, list of members and agenda of the meeting are still being developed. Eurostat has received confirmation of participation in the activities of the city group by 6 European countries namely France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain and United Kingdom. Participation from non-European countries is being looked after by the IMF.

8. IMF has indicated its strong commitment to the work of the city group and has offered to compile detailed metadata on remittances. UNSD has offered to assist in the preparation of the terms of reference, the designation of membership and in providing information on the procedural arrangement to formally establish a city group under the auspices of the Statistical Commission.

9. While Eurostat will host the first meeting of the Group, they indicated that they would not play a lead role in the functioning and work of the Group. They noted that at present no country has been identified for chairing the group and in this regards, Eurostat made a plea for an interested country to come forward. It was noted that the governance structure of city groups varies broadly ranging from city groups being steered by a single country to city groups being led by a country in close cooperation with an international organization.

10. The TSG recommended a broad representation in the city group including developed and developing countries, international and regional organizations active in compiling remittances statistics.

(c) Activities of CEMLA on Measuring Remittances

11. CEMLA, Centro de Estudios Monetarios Latinoamericanos, is a regional association of Central Banks for the Latin American and Caribbean countries. CEMLA’s regular activities include building capacity in economic statistics, namely the 1993 SNA, BPM5 and fiscal, monetary and financial statistics.

12. CEMLA has recently received the mandate from central bank governors to improve remittances statistics with the financing from the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB). The objectives of CEMLA’s programme on measuring remittances are: (a) to develop and adopt standard methodologies to measure remittances in the region based on best practices; (b) to provide a forum for systematic discussion of the issue; and (c) to improve the

regulatory environment and policy framework so as to reduce the costs of transferring money.

13. The project involves the following activities, each coordinated by a Task Force: (a) preparation of a country mission manual which will provide guidance on the structure of the missions to participating countries as well as on the country report to be prepared after the mission. The report will include a description of existing situation in countries as well as recommendations on statistical procedures and normative aspects to improve the measurement of remittances; (b) the preparation of an English-Spanish glossary including relevant terms related to remittances; and (c) preparation of a compilation guide on measuring remittances.

14. CEMLA praised the work of the TSG and considered very important the new definitions on remittances agreed by the TSG. They emphasized their readiness to collaborate with the TSG and the Luxembourg Group and offered to provide a “testing ground” for the new definitions and data collection methods. The first draft of the compilation guide is expected to be completed in June 2006 and CEMLA has offered to submit the draft for discussion at the next Luxembourg Group meeting.

(c) High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

15. The United Nations Population Division presented its activities in the field of migration and development and the current status of the preparation of the High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development. The meeting will take place in New York from 14-15 September 2006 and will include the following four round tables:

- Round table 1 will focus on the impacts of international migration on economic and social development;
- Round table 2 will focus on measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, and to prevent and combat smuggling of migrants and trafficking persons;
- Round table 3 will focus on the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development, including remittances;
- Round table 4 will focus on promoting the building of partnerships and capacity-building and the sharing of best practices at all levels, including the bilateral and regional levels, for the benefit of countries and migrants alike.

16. As part of the High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, the UN Secretariat is requested to prepare a comprehensive overview of studies and analyses on the multidimensional aspects of migration and development, including the effects of migration on economic and social development in developed and developing countries and on the effects of the movement of highly skilled migrant workers and those with advanced education. Special attention is also given to short-term seasonal workers within the issue of

labour movements. In this regard, the UN Population Division requested members of the TSG to send any relevant documentation to them.

17. The UN Population Division informed the TSG of a Symposium on Migration and Development being organized from 28-30 June in Turin in preparation of the High-Level Dialogue.

(d) Activities of COMESA on Movement of Persons and Mode 4

18. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is a regional organization for Eastern and Southern Africa focusing on the establishment of a free trade area among its countries. In the context of movement of persons, COMESA has recently issued a report on migration of nurses covering 6 countries in COMESA. COMESA invited the TSG to provide comments to the report.

(e) Activities of the World Tourism Organization on Movement of Persons

19. The World Tourism Organization informed the TSG that the model border surveys is being finalized. Once implemented, border surveys will be a useful source of information for statistics on movement of persons and thus for the compilation of remittances statistics.

Definition of remittances

20. The TSG discussed the issue paper on the definition of remittances. The paper was prepared to facilitate the discussion during the TSG meeting and reconcile the differences between the Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics (BOPCOM) and the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts (AEG) recommendations. The TSG reached an agreement on the definition of remittances in terms of personal transfers, personal remittances, total remittances and total remittances and transfers to non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs). The results of the discussion are presented in the outcome paper, which will be submitted to BOPCOM, the AEG and the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (TFSITS) for deliberation.

21. The TSG recommended presenting all BOP component related to remittances in a supplementary table, as presented in Annex I of the outcome paper. It further recognized the importance of compiling balance of payments flows related to remittances by partner countries. It recommended that, as a minimum, flows to and from the major partner countries be separately identified, however it noted that in some cases, it may be difficult to collect data disaggregated by partner countries. The conclusions of the TSG are summarized below.

(a) Personal transfers

22. The TSG agreed to introduce a new item “personal transfers” as a standard item to bring it in line with the 1993 SNA definition of current transfers between households. “Personal transfers” replaces the Balance of Payments Fifth Edition (BPM5) component “workers remittances”, which has been retained, following the recommendations of BOPCOM, as a supplementary item recorded as “of which” item of personal transfers to

maintain continuity of the time series. Workers' remittances has been renamed "remittances of resident employees"

23. Personal transfers would be part of the BOP standard presentation and be defined as follows:

Personal transfers consist of all current transfers in cash or in kind made, or received, by resident households to or from other non-resident households.

24. Personal transfers thus include all current transfers from resident to non-resident households, independently of (a) the sources of income of the sender (be it wages and salaries, social benefits or any other type of transfers, including transfers from a person receiving no income and running down his/her assets); (b) relationship between the households (be it between related or unrelated persons); (c) purpose for which the transfer is made (be it inheritance, alimony, lottery², etc.).

25. The TSG noted that although personal transfers are conceptually current transfers between residents and non-resident households, in practice it may be difficult to separately identify capital household-to-household transfers from the current transfers. In practice, capital transfers tend to be large, infrequent and irregular, whereas current transfers tend to be comparatively small and are often made frequently and regularly. However, while size, frequency and regularity help to distinguish current from capital transfers they do not provide satisfactory criteria for defining the two types of transfer (1993 SNA para 8.32).

26. The TSG further noted that some cash transfers may be regarded as capital by one party to the transaction and as current by the other. In an integrated system of accounts such as the SNA and BOP, however, it is not feasible to have the same transaction classified differently in different parts of the System. To distinguish current transfers from capital transfers, it is preferable to focus on the special characteristics of capital transfers. A transfer in kind is a capital transfer when it consists of the transfer of ownership of a fixed asset and nonproduced nonfinancial assets. A transfer of cash is a capital transfer when it is linked to, or conditional on, the acquisition or disposal of a fixed asset by one or both parties to the transaction. A capital transfer should result in a commensurate change in the stocks of assets of one or both parties to the transaction. When in doubt, the TSG recommended classifying the transfer as current (based on 1993 SNA, para 10.132).

27. The TSG recommended separately identifying household-to-household capital transfers as a supplementary item³ in the table on remittances presented in Annex I of the outcome paper but not to include them in the definition of personal transfers.

² The net transfers paid out to winners of lotteries and gambling, that is the residual transfers excluding service charges, are considered household to household transfers (1993 SNA, para 8.97).

³ A supplementary item is an item that should be considered by countries in circumstances that the information would, in their particular cases, be of interest to analysts and policymakers.

(b) Personal remittances

28. The TSG agreed to define personal remittances, taking the perspective of the receiving country, as follows:

$$\textit{Personal remittances} = \textit{personal transfers} + \textit{net compensation of employees} + \textit{capital transfers between households}$$

29. Annex II of the outcome paper presents a numerical example which illustrates how to calculate personal remittances. Personal remittances include personal transfers, net compensation of employees from persons working abroad and capital transfers between households. Investment income is not included because it is not directly linked to the movement of persons.

30. Personal remittances are essentially household-to-household transfer, with net compensation of employees approximating an imputed unrequited flow from the household members as employees to the households themselves.

31. The TSG agreed on netting compensation of employees of social contributions⁴ (possibly a standard component in BPM6), of taxes on income⁵ and travel and passenger transportation related to short term employment. Taxes on income and travel and passenger transportation related to short term employment are not part of the standard presentation and should be considered as supplementary items.

32. The TSG recommended that household to household capital transfer should be included in the definition of personal remittances. Including capital transfers in the definition of personal remittances would offset differences in country practices in recording household to household transfers – current and capital.

33. Personal remittances would be a supplementary item in BPM6 as its calculation involves the sum of several supplementary items, namely taxes on income and travel and passenger transportation related to short term employment and capital transfers between households. The components of personal remittances are shown in the supplementary table in Annex I of the outcome paper.

(c) Total remittances

34. The TSG agreed to define total remittances, taking the perspective of the receiving country, as follows:

⁴ Social contributions are actual or imputed payments to social insurance schemes to make provision for social insurance benefits to be paid (1993 SNA para 8.8).

⁵ Current taxes on income, wealth, etc consist of taxes on the incomes of households or profits of corporations and taxes on wealth that are payable regularly every tax period (as distinct from capital taxes levied infrequently) (1993 SNA, para 8.6).

$$\text{Total remittances} = \text{personal remittances} + \text{social benefits}^6$$

35. Total remittances would thus include all transfers directly to households from other institutional sectors, namely corporations, government and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs). The TSG considered this concept as policy relevant and agreed to include it in the supplementary table on remittances in Annex I of the outcome paper. It noted that the concept of total remittances entails asymmetry of reporting as social benefits are sent from the government and received by households.

36. Although in principle other current transfers to households (e.g. direct transfers other than social benefits to households from the government or NPISHs) should be included in the definitions of total remittances, the TSG agreed to omit them for ease of compilation and because they are likely to be small in size and infrequent. They exclude net non-life insurance premiums and nonlife insurance claims⁷ paid or received by resident households).

Country experiences

37. Mexico and the Philippines presented their experience in the compilation of remittances. Mexico's presentation covered the importance of remittances; the features of remittent beneficiaries; current regulation and international transfer of funds, with particular focus on the agreements between US Federal Reserve and Banco de Mexico; the impact of remittances on the economy; the destination of remittances; and remittances and economic development.

38. The Philippines presentation covered the importance of remittances in the Philippines economy, including their impact on GNI; the compilation methodology, including the concept of residence applied, surveys used as well as estimation techniques applied.

Measurement of GATS Mode 4

39. The TSG found the paper prepared by World Trade Organization as a good start for the discussion on the measurement of GATS Mode 4. It thought that the paper made a step forward in the identification of the various categories of persons moving in the context of Mode 4 and related statistics. In order to assess mode 4 it will be necessary to estimate:

- the value of exports of services supplied through mode 4 by contractual service suppliers; and
- the number of persons crossing the border in the context of GATS mode 4 for the following categories of persons: contractual service suppliers (either as an employee of the service supplier or as a self-employed person), intra-corporate transferees (in the

⁶ Social benefits are current transfers received by households intended to provide for the needs that arise from certain events or circumstances, for example, sickness, unemployment, retirement, housing, education or family circumstances (1993 SNA, para 8.7). They include pensions received by households.

⁷ Net nonlife insurance premiums and non-life insurance claims could conceptually be included in the definition of personal remittances since they are essentially redistributive flows between households. However, because it may be difficult to collect data separately for the transfers received by households, they have been left out of the definition.

context of the supply of a service through commercial presence) and persons going abroad to negotiate services contracts or the establishment of commercial presence.

40. The TSG however thought that there was a need to further discuss how the measurement of Mode 4 could better be translated into a statistical framework. In particular, the TSG requested that an Electronic Discussion Group led by WTO/OMC be established to: (a) define the variables for the various categories of persons identified in the context of Mode 4; (b) identify possible data sources for collecting the data on the variables in (a); and (c) possibly develop questions that could be added to existing surveys to get information on (a) as well as to possibly establish a number of rules in order to separately identify mode 4 estimates, notably in the balance of payments services account. The electronic discussion group would have four months to finalize its discussion on the measurement of Mode 4 and prepare a report for discussion by the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services by August 2006.

41. The following TSG members have offered to participate in the electronic discussion group: Bill Cave (OECD), Estrella Domingo (Philippines), Natalia Ivanik (IMF), Antonio Massieu (WTO/OMT), Chawe Mpande-Chuulu (COMESA), Julia Nielson (World Bank), Eduardo Rodriguez-Tenés (Spain), , Stuart Brown (UK) and Alessandra Alfieri and Ivo Havinga (UNSD).

42. The TSG discussed the scope of the chapter on mode 4 in the revised Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS). Although it was considered important to put mode 4 in a wider migration framework, the TSG thought that a broad approach may be outside the scope of the manual. A final decision on the scope of the chapter will be taken after the analysis of the country consultations. In this regard, the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (TFSITS) requested the TSG to assist them in the preparation of specific questions to be included in the consultation document.

Future of the Group

43. The TSG discussed the future of the Group and recommended that the Group consider, after the result of the electronic discussion group on the measurement of mode 4 is completed, whether it has fulfilled its terms of reference: (a) the conceptual development on the definition of remittances is complete. An outcome paper on the definition of remittances will be submitted to TFSITS, BOPCOM and the AEG for deliberation; and (b) the development of a statistical framework to measure mode 4 is close to completion and it is expected to be brought to a conclusion by the electronic discussion group.

44. The TSG will prepare a report to the TFSITS outlining the work done since its establishment in 2004. The TF will evaluate whether the TSG has complied with its terms of reference and, in case more work on the measurement of mode 4 is needed, it will identify the appropriate mechanisms to move it forward.

45. One issue that was discussed during the meeting is the development of a broad statistical framework to measure the economic impact of migration. This was considered beyond the scope of the TSG and it was recommended that the management of the various

international organizations discuss the issue and decide, if considered necessary, to establish a new group comprising migration statisticians, national accounts and balance of payments experts and tourism statisticians.

Work programme

46. The TSG will contribute to the consultation document being prepared by the TFSITS on the revision of MSITS. It will prepare an outcome papers on the definition of remittances, which will be submitted to TFSITS, BOPCOM and the AEG. The TSG will establish an electronic discussion group led by WTO. It will report to the TFSITS on the work done since its creation to the TFSITS and ask the TFSITS at its meeting in September 2006 to assess whether the terms of reference of the TSG were completed. A detailed time schedule and tasks to be completed by the members of the TSG is attached in Annex I. A summary of tasks is listed below.

47. UNSD will be responsible for:

- (a) Preparation of the outcome papers on the definition of remittances;
- (b) Preparation of the final report on the work done by the TSG since its establishment;
- (c) Contribute to the consultation document on TFSITS.

48. WTO/OMC will establish and lead the electronic discussion group on the statistical framework to measure mode 4.

49. OECD will coordinate the preparation of the consultation document on the MSITS and request the contribution from the TSG.

50. TSG members will participate in the electronic discussion group and contribute to the consultation document on MSITS.

Annex I

The table below outlines the detailed time schedule agreed at the TSG meeting and the tasks of countries and organizations.

Tasks	Countries/ organizations	Deadline
1. Assist Eurostat in the preparation of the Terms of Reference of the Luxembourg Group and selection of members	UNSD/IMF	April 2006
2. Distribute among TSG members the report on migration of nurses in 6 countries in COMESA	COMESA	March 2006
3. Preparation of outcome paper on the definition of remittances and submit it to TFSITS, BOPCOM, AEG	UNSD	March 2006
4. Establish an electronic discussion group on statistical framework to measure mode 4	WTO	March –July 2006
5. Contribute to the consultation document on the MSITS	OECD/All	March 2006
6. Prepare report on the work done by the TSG since its establishment for submission to TFSITS	UNSD	August 2006

Annex II

Meeting of the Technical Sub-group on the

Movement of Persons – Mode 4

22 -24 February 2006

Agenda

Wednesday – 22 February

2.30-5:30 International activities and needs for information on remittances and GATS Mode 4

1. Update on the revision of BPM5 and 1993 SNA - Issues related to Movement of Persons and Mode 4 (IMF/ UNSD)
2. International Working Group on Improving Data on Remittances (World Bank)
3. The Luxembourg Group (Eurostat)
4. High level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (UN Population Division)
5. Other

Thursday – 23 February

9:30-12:30 Conceptual issues on remittances

6. Issue paper on the definition of remittances (UNSD)
7. Country experiences (Mexico)

2:30-5:30 Measurement of economic impacts of movement of persons

8. Measurement of GATS Mode 4 (WTO)
9. Country experiences (Philippines)

Friday – 24 February

9:00-11:00

10. Improving Central Bank Reporting and Procedures on Remittances in Latin America and Caribbean Region (CEMLA)
11. Future of the Group

Annex III

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