

Unclassified

STD/TBS/WPTGS(2010)8

Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Économiques
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

30-Sep-2010

English - Or. English

STATISTICS DIRECTORATE

Working Party on International Trade in Goods and Trade in Services Statistics

ADDING DETAILED HIGHER FREQUENCY MERCHANDISE TRADE DATA

4-6 October 2010, OECD Headquarters, Paris

Item 5 a) of the agenda.

This document is submitted for discussion and comments to WPTGS Delegates.

Contact person: Ronald JANSEN, Email: jansen1@un.org

JT03289136

Document complet disponible sur OLIS dans son format d'origine
Complete document available on OLIS in its original format



STD/TBS/WPTGS(2010)8
Unclassified

English - Or. English



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

STATISTICS DIVISION
TRADE STATISTICS BRANCH

Adding detailed higher frequency merchandise trade data
Item 5(a) on the Provisional Agenda

Note by UNSD

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

UN Comtrade

Acting on the Commission's decision and based on users' feedback, UNSD decided to undertake in 2010-2013 a special effort to upgrade UN Comtrade. The main objectives of the upgrade include: (i) significant enhancement of metadata, (ii) inclusion of new data variables recommended in IMTS 2010, and (iii) adding monthly and quarterly trade data.

UN Comtrade was established in the early sixties and for almost fifty years has provided a wealth of information to policy makers, business community, research institutions and the general public. It stores standardised official annual statistics reported by countries and reflecting international merchandise flows in terms of both the Harmonised Description and Coding System (HS) and the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) detailed by partner country with coverage reaching up to 99 percent of world trade. UN Comtrade is an essential data source for numerous commercial and non-commercial databases on international trade. It allows free access to any data record to any user worldwide and limited free download. Users with additional data access needs are offered data streaming services and additional customization features. UN Comtrade is hugely popular and its usage has been steadily growing. In 2009 it had 194,000 users which submitted queries (12 percent increase over 2008) and over 44 billion records were downloaded (3 percent increase over 2008). UNSD will make every effort to serve the global user community even better in the future.

Monthly and Quarterly data

The impact of the financial crises on global trade flows highlighted the need for detailed monthly trade data in order to allow short term analysis of the global economy. Detailed monthly trade data are made available by many countries. However, unlike the annual data these data are not standardized and are not readily accessible at the global level. To meet this user demand and to enhance the policy relevance and analytical value of the internationally available trade data, UNSD initiated the collection, storage and dissemination of detailed (6-digit level of HS) monthly and quarterly data as part of its regular work programme.

In a letter of 30 April 2010, UNSD requested countries to inform if their office will be able to (i) make available to UNSD for testing purposes the detailed (6-digit level of HS) monthly and quarterly trade statistics for the first three months of 2010 and (ii) supply such statistics on a regular basis beginning with data for January 2011.

A large number of countries responded positively to this request. Either countries provided the data directly or it is or was made available for download. Some member countries of the European Union indicated that the data for their country should be sourced from Eurostat, which is what UNSD is doing now. Overall, UNSD was able to obtain detailed monthly and/ or quarterly data for some or all of the first three months of 2010 for 49 countries. UNSD is very grateful to all countries that made their data available.

Upgrade of UN Comtrade 2010 - 2013

The upgrade of UN Comtrade and the establishment of the collection, processing and dissemination of monthly and quarterly merchandise trade statistics is a major undertaking and UNSD hopes that monthly and quarterly data can be disseminated on a regular basis starting in 2013 as part of the upgraded UN Comtrade.

The work on this upgrade project has started. As mentioned, the upgrade consists of a significant enhancement of metadata, inclusion of new data variables recommended in IMTS 2010 and the addition of monthly and quarterly trade data. Among the new data variables to be added are mode of transport, second partner country (country of consignment) and valuation of imports FOB (in addition to imports CIF).

Concerning the collection, processing and dissemination of monthly and quarterly merchandise trade statistics, new and simplified procedures for processing have been successfully established. The automation of the upload of the national data to our processing system is the next and very important step as national data is provided in different formats. These automated procedures have to be developed on a country by country basis. A limited number of countries has been requested to already now provide their data on a regular basis.