

**7TH OECD INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS EXPERT MEETING ITS
and OECD-EUROSTAT MEETING OF EXPERTS IN TRADE-IN-SERVICES
STATISTICS (TIS)**

Tour Europe - Paris La Défense, Salle des Nations, 11 - 14 September 2006

UNSD new data collection update

This document has been prepared by UNSD

item 20 b)



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

STATISTICS DIVISION
TRADE STATISTICS BRANCH

7TH OECD INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS (TIS) EXPERT MEETING
Paris, 12-14 September 2006

item 20(b)

New developments of the UN ServiceTrade database

Note by UNSD

At its 34th session in March 2004, the UN Statistical Commission agreed that UNSD, using its experience with the merchandise trade statistics database (UN Comtrade), would create a database system which will be able to process, store and disseminate statistics of international trade in services (SITS) in accordance with the requirements set out in the Manual on SITS, including trade by service category and partner country. A pilot version of the United Nations Statistics of International Trade in Services database (UN ServiceTrade) was created and made available to members of the TFSITS and to the UN Regional Commissions for comments and suggestions in May 2005.

Current status of UN ServiceTrade data availability

The UN ServiceTrade pilot database contains data on trade in services for 164 countries or areas. The time series coverage is not homogenous from one country to another. Quality of coverage can be evaluated based on (1) the length of the time series, (2) availability of recent data and (3) availability of detailed data. Good country coverage can then be defined as country data (1) available for more than 20 years, (2) available for 2002 or more recent, and (3) available in detail, namely with a number of records per year (by EBOPS category, partner country and flow) exceeding 100. About two thirds (106) of the countries with data in UN ServiceTrade meet at least two of these criteria. The longest time series per country were sourced from IMF, and the more detailed series in recent years from Eurostat (EU25, plus Bulgaria, Japan, Norway, Romania, Turkey and USA) and from national offices of some CIS countries (Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation and Ukraine). Annex 1 gives an overview of quality of coverage and Annex 2 of data sources, namely Eurostat, IMF, OECD and some national offices. These annexes are provided as separate documents.

New developments regarding data collection and UN ServiceTrade

An important development for UNSD is the recruitment of a new staff member, Mr. Alain Gaugris, who started on 1 June 2006 and is full time devoted to the work in SITS. He will be primarily responsible for the maintenance and updating of UN ServiceTrade and he is leading the effort of UNSD in the analysis of the worldwide consultation document.

Another important development is that Eurostat and UNSD have just signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on cooperation in the area of SITS. The MOU focuses primarily on data exchange, first of all of data from the Eurostat database for inclusion in UN ServiceTrade. Very soon, UNSD will send out a request for detailed EBOPS by partner country SITS data to all countries and areas which are not covered by the Eurostat database.

In order to provide a coherent and satisfactorily detailed UN ServiceTrade database for release on the Internet, we decided not to aim at maintaining a database with very long and not very detailed time series. Instead we will take 2000 as the starting year, and aim at maintaining UN ServiceTrade as a database with recent and detailed data.

Next steps

Similar to recent improvements on UN Comtrade, the UN ServiceTrade design and layout will be updated. Also the functionalities will be changed in such a way that data are country based and that the source of the data will be part of the metadata. Moreover, a Knowledge Base will be available from which references can be downloaded and where other help and support can be found. We hope to launch UN ServiceTrade on the Internet in that new format before the end of this year.
