

**Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Bangkok,
15-17 March 2005
Summary of the Meeting**

Major outcomes

- **The Task Force agreed on developing a joint website as an entry portal to merchandise trade statistics. It shall provide information on international concepts, compilation guidance, capacity building and technical assistance as well as internationally available trade data. The WTO as the Task Force's convenor will host the website on its Statistics Gateway.**
- **The Task Force discussed and advanced joint ventures for shared data collection and processing between international agencies to further reduce the national statistical bodies' response burden while providing more reliable and consistent statistical data to end-users.**
- **The Task Force agreed on publishing a common data set on the countries' total exports and imports on the Task Force's website by the end of 2005 at the latest.**
- **On concepts and methodologies, the Task Force agreed on a common position on issues stemming from the forthcoming revision of the Balance of Payments Manual, i.e. goods for processing and merchanting, and discussed the revision of international classifications such as the HS, CPC or ISIC. It also discussed future work on SITC, Rev. 4, the Export and Import Price Index Manual, and implementation issues that need further clarification.**

The meeting was hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Mr. Andrew Flatt, Director of the Statistics Division welcomed the Task Force members. He pointed out the Task Force's effective work on developing both methodologies and procedures for establishing international merchandise statistics. Trade statistics are an important information for decision making and surveillance, hence good quality data are of utmost importance. For example, economic developments such as the out-phasing of textiles import quota demand surveillance or the development of free trade areas represent a new challenge for setting up proper trade statistics as customs become less important. He also thanked UN/DESA for launching a newsletter on international trade statistics.

The Agenda is shown in Annex 1, the list of participants in Annex 2, and Annex 3 lists available documents. Annex 4 summarises the decisions and Annex 5 includes the Provisional Agenda for the next meeting.

1. Adoption of the provisional agenda

The provisional agenda was adopted with the following amendments: Under item 4(j) and 4(k), presentations of FAOSTAT (FAO) and CAMAD (WTO) were added. Under item 8(a), the forthcoming report to the Statistical Commission was added and item 8(a) was changed into item 8(b).

2. Minutes of the meeting held in Addis Ababa, 23-25 March 2004

The minutes were accepted with a change for item 7 to read as follows:

UN/ESCWA presented its draft proposal for a statistical capacity building project on international trade statistics in the Arab region. While the Task Force can try to promote this document, it has no resources on its own. The international organizations agreed however to provide resource persons if funds were available.

The Task Force recommended therefore that ESCWA contact possible trust funds such as the World Bank's new programme on funding of statistical capacity building or the Paris 21 initiative. For the latter, OECD offered to assist. However, it was recommended that the document need further refinement showing, for example, the need of statistics for good governance, policy-making and development of negotiation strategies. It was recommended that other regional commissions follow this example initiative for improving their respective trade statistics.

Furthermore, the Task Force decided to create an official Task Force website that would hold the meeting summaries in addition to background material on concepts and definitions, compilation guidance, and information on capacity building and technical assistance. The website will be linked up with all the other organizations websites and be hosted by WTO as a convenor of the Task Force. A prototype will be disseminated to participants for their approval.

3. Review of decisions of other international meetings with regard to merchandise trade

3(a) Report of the 36th UN Statistical Commission

The Task Force was informed on the setting up of working or expert groups that are of interest to it such as the Expert Group on Energy Statistics, the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Service Statistics, a Committee on Environmental-Economic Accounting or a "Friends of the Chair" group to follow up on the countries' ability to provide statistical information on the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators. The Task Force was also informed on the decision that UNSD would concentrate its technical assistance activities on its areas of expertise, that is, donor coordination, methodology, and human resource development.

The Task Force also took note that its activities would be reviewed by the statistical Commission in 2006.

3(b) Report of the Inter-agency Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities (New York, September 2004 and March 2005)

The Task Force was informed on the progress of work regarding the "Declaration of Principles for Statistical Activities in International Organizations" which will be redrafted to keep them in a less binding format. The CCSA also had decided to produce an inventory on "shareable applications".

3(c) The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Declaration

The Task Force was updated on MDG-related activities. This exercise has had a substantial impact on the work of all international agencies. As 2005 is a

benchmark year, the preparation of stocktaking reports has taken priority. The Inter-agency Expert Group on MDGs will resume its work on the methodology of regional aggregation, imputation of missing values, concepts and definitions as well as possible modifications of indicators in a forthcoming meeting in Rome in September 2005.

3(d) Report of the 5th OECD Trade Statisticians meeting

The OECD reported on its 5th meeting held in April 2004. Some of the highlights were the challenge of the HS 2002 implementation in the development of the joint database with UNSD, the need for improving the timeliness of the countries reporting of detailed trade data, the increasing need for short-term statistics, the integration of statistical information systems from electronic data collection, metadata managing and timely dissemination, and the linkage of structural business statistics and trade statistics. The latter being an issue for business and customs registers, will be addressed by the OECD at its 6th meeting to be held 12-15 September 2005 at OECD. Eurostat reported the intention of including an identifier for small and medium-sized enterprises in customs forms to derive these statistics.

4. Data collection and dissemination

A. Concepts and Definitions

4(a) Supplement to the Compilers' Manual for International Merchandise Trade Statistics

UNSD plans to publish a Supplement to the Compilers Manual in 2007. The purpose of the Supplement is to identify issues of common concern that would need additional clarification through a compilation guidance. The international organizations, through the Task Force, could consolidate these items and present them in an integrated way. The international organizations were asked to commit on drafting such items for the Supplement. It was therefore decided that UNSD would post a provisional list of topics on the EDG which could be supplemented by other proposals. The commitments and drafting proposals should be sent to UNSD by 1 June 2005. If it turns out that not enough material will be available to fill the Supplement completely, then UNSD will use a review of the questionnaire on National Compilation and Reporting Practices (for measuring compliance with the new concepts and definitions) as the core part of the Supplement.

Eurostat volunteered a contribution on the intra-EU treatment. Other topics included geo-nomenclatures, misallocation and under-coverage, or best implementation practices of countries.

4(b) Statistical Territories of the World for Use in International Merchandise Trade Statistics

The international organizations reported on their different practices to adapt their country aggregates to the new EU25 group. This new grouping raised the question on how to cooperate more closely in this area, for example, how to improve transparency between the agencies' groupings through agreeing on naming

conventions. Closer co-operation however was considered difficult as the organizations need to respond to different constituencies and no country grouping could be considered as "official". The only group that is internationally accepted is least-developed countries. It was pointed out that higher bodies such as the CCSA eventually could take on board such a harmonization of country groupings.

For the time being, the best achievable solution therefore would be a central registry of aggregates, possibly on the EDG, with a description of the underlying principles for the nomenclatures and an easy retrieval facility. It was also decided to rename this item to "geo-nomenclatures and country groupings".

4(c) Data Quality Assessment

The IMF reported on its implementation and use of the data quality assessment frameworks as a tool for surveillance and technical assistance. The frameworks are used to structure metadata in the IMF's dissemination standards (GDDS and SDDS) and identify best practices. For statistical end-users, it is important to know to which extent national data deviate from international standards and that has to be specified in statistical metadata. However, the language used for this differs from country to country and also from international language which makes the analysis difficult. A common metadata vocabulary developed through general frameworks and technical standards such as SDMX, paired with incentives for countries such as discount rates for SDDS subscribers or technical assistance for GDDS participants, will help increase transparency and thus data quality.

B. Classifications

4(d) revision of the HS and SITC

The meeting was updated on the latest developments in the HS2007 revision. The may 2004 HS Committee approved 354 sets of amendments focusing on simplifying the structure while including technological progress and changes in trade patterns. Some text was also clarified and adapted to trade practices. The social and environmental areas received particular attention.

The final texts have been distributed in January 2005 and the respective correlation tables will be available by the end of 2005. Explanatory notes are planned to be finalised by September 2006 in time for the implementation in January 2007.

As for the SITC, Rev.4, a special page was created on the UN website and a provisional draft is being prepared. It will be circulated in summer 2005. The meeting also pointed out the importance of linking trade and production in the context of enhanced international economic integration and economic growth for poverty alleviation. Good correlation tables between SITC, Rev.4 and the ISIC are therefore important.

C. Methodology

4(e) Improving the estimation procedure for detailed export and import data

The UNSD reported on its continuation of the comparison study on different estimation techniques. These results tend to confirm that mirror statistics provide better results for years further away from the base year and extrapolation methods show only good results for the first year after the base year. These studies will be continued to see whether a combination of both methods could improve results. The FAO is currently also analysing various methods such as cross-entropy techniques for improving the estimation of the missing data and for calibrating the trading partner database by origins and destinations. FAO agreed to report back at the next Task Force meeting on the results of the implementation of this technique. Eurostat uses ARIMA models to estimate monthly trade flows and UNSD produces standard unit values separately for imports and exports which could be used in the estimation of cif/fob factors. In the context of extrapolation, WTO pointed out that an estimate first in national currency might lead to better results. In view of the current workload, UNSD decided to continue this important work but to report back to the Task Force only in 2007.

4(f) Index numbers of international trade

The IMF reported on the progress of work regarding the Export and Import Price Index Manual. This will be developed along the lines of the Producer Price and Consumer Price Index Manual. The final draft, planned for the end of 2005, would also include some compilation guidance. Substantial drafts and comments are expected for the fall. The Task Force members were invited to consult the Manual's website and forward comments. The question as to how national experts could be involved was raised. Even so drafts of the Manual are available on the Internet, there would be no guarantee that these are carefully scrutinized. Hence, it was suggested to undertake proper outreach activities, that is, invite national experts to a Seminar and spread drafts to specifically identified persons.

The UNSD agreed to forward a list of some 20 representative national experts and the IMF agreed to look into possibilities for funding an Expert meeting. The UNSD also informed the meeting that the publication on national compilation practices would be in the pipeline for publication in the coming months.

D. Databases on international trade

- 4(g) COMTRADE: status, technical issues and EDP strategies and
4(j), 4(k) FAO's FAOSTAT and WTO's CAMAD**

Comtrade

The UNSD focused its activities over the last year on developing web services for data transfers with its users. Different models are available. Applying SDMX standards, ECLAC for example developed an online interfaces that allows the user to define and save queries for which the processing is then carried out in the background on the Comtrade server. Others such as the World Bank copy the

whole database or intend to do so (FAO). The World Trade Organization downloads data on its server for carrying out the processing of world trade matrices for which they have developed interfaces providing specific functionalities such as estimation (extrapolation, mirror statistics) or exclusion of intra-trade.

It was noted that improving Comtrade data availability helps increasing the quality of trade data estimations based on mirror statistics. The UN regional commissions and other organizations such as FAO contribute to collecting annual trade data files. The FAO for example uses its regional or country offices and other field activities to improve trade data availability. All organizations were requested to contribute further to this process of improving country coverage and data quality.

While the UNSD is asking countries for provisional and final data, differences can persist between totals reported by countries and totals for detailed data in Comtrade. The UNSD is planning to start a quarterly data collection on totals and will align Comtrade data to the extent possible.

Overall, it was highlighted that the Task Force co-operation has contributed considerably to increasing data coverage and quality in Comtrade. Joint statements of the organizations helped to make countries understand that the whole international trade statistics depend on timely data available in Comtrade. It was pointed out that the primary dissemination through Comtrade and the re-dissemination of trade data through other organizations show how interlinked and cooperative the organizations work together in this area. For improving the country coverage, it was recommended that regional commissions should follow-up countries that do not or do badly report their data.

The UN continues to coordinate and organize technical assistance for developing countries, for example, for French-speaking African nations. It was again highlighted how important a successful co-operation between customs and national statistical offices is for compiling good quality trade statistics.

FAOSTAT

The FAO in its report highlighted the role of the external trade statistics in compiling food consumption at national level, as well as, in analyzing food disparities and food requirements at world level. Improving trade data is therefore essential for the entire food and agriculture data base and FAO has adopted new strategic measures to increase the availability and the quality of the trade data. As a consequence, in the last year, FAO collected trade data files from about 70 individual countries which have been uploaded in FAOSTAT and also shared with UNSD.

There are still gaps regarding the availability of trade data for certain regions. The FAO will continue to use its particularly good relations with African countries to improve country coverage in the respective trade databases.

It was also mentioned that the Task Force's discussions and conclusions of its annual meetings had positively influenced the harmonization of the trade methodology, the trade data availability, as well as the co-operation and collaboration between the participating organizations.

CAMAD

The WTO reported about a new initiative, the Common Market Access Analytical database. This database is being developed between WTO, ITC and UNCTAD to pool data from different databases in order to ensure enhanced country coverage and the inclusion of *ad valorem* equivalents, preferences and preference utility rates. The database is currently being developed and the dissemination policy has not yet been fixed but will have to balance the involved organizations' confidential and financial requirements.

4(h) Statistical metadata in merchandise trade statistics

The OECD presented its MetaStore system. It was highlighted that good metadata equal high data quality. MetaStore as system is designed to link up with OECD's data quality framework and is applied to all OECD statistical domains. The other organizations reported about their systems. For example, the IMF is verifying whether OECD's system could fully reflect its data quality assessment frameworks and how it would be able to manage the SDDS and GDDS. UNSD is going to adopt MetaStore for its own metadata management. Other organizations showed interest in further information and in exploiting the system in their own environments.

4(i) Dissemination policies of international organizations

The international organizations policies vary mostly in terms of access and in pricing of products. While some organizations provide all their data free-of-charge, others are asking for subscriptions and prices differ according to volume of requested data. The dissemination policies normally do not depend of the Statistics Department only but need to be coordinated with IT and Publication departments, often with diverging views and objectives. Sometimes revenues of the statistical products are flowing into the general organization's budget, sometimes part or all of the revenues are at the direct disposal of the statistical department and can be used for example to finance technical assistance. Another question discussed was the substitution of hardcopy publications through online data access. Some organizations run the various dissemination tools in parallel while others have adopted a policy to abandon printed publications.

4(j) and 4(k) FAO trade data collection and WTO's CAMAD

These agenda items were linked with agenda item 4(g) where the respective organizations reported about their trade data collection systems and new database developments.

5. Exchange of data and information amongst international organizations

5(a) aggregate trade data

The UNSD reported on its two trade databases, that is, the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics MBS (monthly, quarterly and annual totals) and Comtrade. Totals between the two databases are regularly compared. As the data come from two different data collection systems (MBS is mostly sourced through the IMF whereas Comtrade

through national authorities), totals differ. The UNSD is now changing its policy and will align the totals in the two different databases. For OECD countries, the joint development of the trade database will automatically ensure identical data, for non-OECD countries work on the Common Data Set will be a starting point. Within this project, UNSD is responsible for some 64 countries or areas and these totals will be reviewed on the basis of an explicit request for trade totals sent out to these countries in conjunction with the request for detailed 2004 data. Annual totals will be aligned between the MBS and Comtrade.

5(b) the EU in international trade statistics

Eurostat indicated that it had sent revised 2003 data to the UN and also EU25 data from 1999 onwards to 2004 for inclusion in Comtrade. The participants were also informed on the new INTRASTAT legislation that has been adopted in 2004. The scope of this new legislation is more clearly defined and rules were made clearer and simpler. A new regulation on Extrastat is foreseen for 2008.

5(c) Arrangements between OECD and UNSD in data processing and data dissemination

Data of detailed merchandise trade statistics collected by the OECD for all its member countries are fully shared with UNSD Comtrade. This exercise of shared data collection and processing has been a multi-year exercise and over the years much emphasis has been put on improving timeliness, and this with success. However, if 1 July of this year is taken as target date, some countries still need to improve their timeliness for detailed data of the previous year. Countries are asked to provide their release dates, provisional and final trade statistics, and also HS 2-digit data with a full partner breakdown.

The joint data processing between the two organizations has been continued over the last year with many background documents being produced on the treatment of data. Once approved by both parties, all this material will be included in the Task Force's EDG. These papers cover for example the combination of country codes, re-adjustments of historical data, or the processing of commodity codes.

Both organizations also allow retrieving tariff line data. For OECD countries, prior approval is necessary from the OECD (and the country) . For non-OECD member country data, UNSD allows the retrieval for internal purposes only. Both UNSD and OECD aim at aligning their respective practices vis-à-vis the use of tariff line data.

5(d) Internet site with aggregate exports and imports by country

The idea of a Common Data Set on the countries' total merchandise exports and imports, developed through a joint data ownership with shared responsibilities, was launched during the Beirut Task Force in 2001. Since then, the organizations agreed on data ownership, that is, on each organization's responsibilities for data collection and provision, and put together the data set for all countries. The WTO acted as a clearing house and organised the reconciliation of the data between the

different agencies. Statistical metadata were added and the CDS comprises now data as of 1995 until 2003.

While the reconciliation exercise will be a continued effort, the Task Force decided that the data could now be provided online through its forthcoming website. However, the presentation should include some built-in safeguards. Some organizations are not allowed to either adjust national data or estimate data in case of missing data. On the other hand, for the Common Data Set country data should concord with international concepts and definitions. For that purpose, the Task Force agreed to present the data set according to different layers, for example, officially reported data, adjusted data or estimated data. The users can then choose the data level according to their requirements. It was also agreed that exact procedures needed to be put in place for data and metadata to be updated and signed off by the respective data owners (international agencies) before being disseminated. This *modus operandi* for the Common Data Set needs clearly be specified and made transparent to explain users how a single country data has been signed off.

5(e) EDG - International Trade Statistics

The OECD provided a quick reference guide to the EDG and explained some of the new features. All participants agreed that the tool was working fine and helpful for exchanging information amongst the Task Force participants. The development of a Task Force website to present some of its results online to the general public was welcomed as a complement but should not replace the Task Force's website.

6. Cross-cutting issues

6(a) Reports of relevant Task Force and working groups (BOP revision, inter-agency Task Force on Trade in Services, etc.)

The Task Force reviewed the BOPTTEG outcome and issue papers on goods for processing, merchanting, re-exports and goods in transit. It was informed on the position of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts regarding the treatment of goods for processing. The group seems to be divided as to the possible gross treatment as good or net treatment as service, especially in the light of the increasing importance of outsourcing. For merchanting, a significant majority of BOPTTEG members favoured a new treatment of it as good and a subsequent creation of a subcategory in the goods account.

In 2004, the Task Force had discussed the Annotated Outline of the Goods and Services Account of the forthcoming Balance of Payments revised manual. It provided its guidance from a merchandise trade statistics point of view, against the current concepts and definitions (IMTS, Rev.2), opting for the current treatment of goods for processing (at gross value) and the inclusion of re-exports in total exports with reporting them separately for analytical purposes. Goods in transit should be excluded.

The Task Force reiterated its approach taken last year on the treatment of goods for processing. It agreed to reinforce its position with a letter to the IMF

Committee highlighting issues of data collection if the treatment for goods for processing and merchanting were to be changed.

With current customs procedures, the change of ownership is difficult to be surveyed. A further complication is to distinguish a change in ownership for transfers within multinational companies, i.e. intra-firm trade. To survey these data, enterprise statistics might be needed. Furthermore, the definition of residency might complicate further a proper measuring of these trade flows.

The Task Force agreed to draft a joint position paper by end May at the latest pointing out data collection issues for a proposed treatment of goods for processing and merchanting.

6(b) Status of globalization projects

Eurostat informed the Task Force on a new regulation on business registers whose implementation is expected in 2007. With this regulation, enterprise groups will have to be notified which will then allow to measure their trade contribution in more detail. The OECD is planning to send out questionnaires to countries exploring which of them is able to link business registers with trade information and asked Eurostat for a possible co-operation. UNSD is also preparing some statistics on exports by industries which it will publish. UNIDO traditionally explores this relation in more detail to calculate trade/output ratios and analyse export/import dependencies.

6(c) Interaction between BOP, SNA and external trade

The Task Force took note of Eurostat's work to improve the estimation of cif/fob factors and to define in collaboration with EU member countries national action plans.

6 (d) Trade indicators

The OECD explained its current work on establishing trade indicators combining statistical information from various departments. This project is considered important as it adds analytical value to available statistical information. The WTO presented its newly available format of trade indicators on the Internet. The UNSD pointed out that it already links its Comtrade Internet with trade indicators produced by ITC and that it will link up its application with the WTO trade indicators. The OECD also would like to include parts of the WTO trade indicators in its programme and all participants found it very useful to provide statistical users with this complementary information. The Task Force's forthcoming website should therefore also include links to the organizations' respective websites on trade indicators.

7. Technical assistance

The UN Statistical Commission endorsed the strategy of UNSD to focus on its area of expertise, that is, donor coordination, methodology and human resource development. In this respect, UNSD should coordinate technical assistance in trade

statistics that focus on methodology and implementation. For this, the formula is to link UNCTAD's ASYCUDA, Eurostat's Eurotrace and UNSD's expertise on concepts and definitions and their implementation with national experts from both national statistical authorities and customs organizations. This approach proved successful and will be continued by UNSD. Workshops are planned for francophone African countries.

The FAO has in progress a project on trade statistics for Arab countries. The FAO/AOAD (Arab Organization for Agricultural Development) workshop on trade statistics organised last year in Sudan was attended by trade experts from 18 Arab countries. The FAO, together with its regional office from the Pacific countries, is also working on the preparation of a new project on improving data availability in the Pacific region.

ESCWA described its plans for improving merchandise trade statistics in its region for which funds were approved. Each country will undergo a needs assessment which will help to identify priorities and develop strategies at national level. The WTO highlighted that from its experience regional seminars are less effective than national ones. Joint projects are also explored between UNSD and ESCAP.

It was agreed that the Task Force website should also include information on Technical Assistance and link up with the respective organization's websites on this issue. The UNSD agreed to assist the WTO in setting up this item on the Task force's website. For advanced information on planned activities, the EDG could be used as a forum for exchanging information.

Other business

8(a) Statistical Commission Report 2006

The meeting discussed the structure of the forthcoming report and its possible content. Starting from its mandate – reducing duplication in data collection and harmonization of concepts, definitions and methodologies -- the report will have to point out important achievements, ongoing work, and activities planned for the future for which an approval is required by the Statistical Commission. All activities should be flagged with either completed, partially completed or to be done.

On the contents, the report will note that the Task Force will have to continue its important work on concepts and definitions including the development of compilation guidance. In this respect the Task Force should engage itself more in the completion of the Export and Import Price Index Manual. Conceptual work should also go in parallel with enhancing transparency not only on statistical classifications -- development of SITC, Rev.4 and product/activity correspondence tables -- but also on geo-nomenclatures.

A major endeavour of the Task Force was and will always be the improvement of Comtrade as a central repository of international merchandise trade statistics for all international organizations. Activities in that context should highlight improvements in data collection, processing and also in data dissemination including topics such as statistical metadata or secondary distribution of data. Activities of the

Task Force centred especially around these stages of the statistical data production with the OECD/UNSD joint data collection and processing and the inter-agency Common Data Set for improving data dissemination. It should be made clear that international statistical systems strive for more integration and that the current joint ventures of the Task Force described above are proactive examples. These examples can lead the way for international organizations to find for other statistical domains a similar division of labour through integrating their respective data collection, processing, and dissemination that includes statistical metadata within a given data quality framework.

Issues that need further work by the Task Force comprise adjustments of the concepts and definitions required through revisions of other statistical frameworks such as the System of National Accounts or the Balance of Payment, for example, the investigation of proper data capture systems for goods for processing or merchanting (enterprise statistics), statistical implications of regional trade agreements, i.e. measurement of intra-trade, the measurement of trade flows between multinational enterprises, i.e. intra-firm trade and transfer pricing, or the linkage of structural business statistics and trade flows through business registers.

8(b) Time and place of next meeting

The Task Force thanked UN/ESCAP for hosting this meeting and the good organization. It agreed to follow an invitation of UN/ECLAC to reconvene in Santiago de Chile from 4 to 6 April 2006.

Annex 1:**TASK FORCE ON INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS**

Bangkok, 15-17 March 2005

Agenda

- 1. Adoption of the provisional agenda**
- 2. Minutes of the meeting held in Addis Ababa, 23-25 March 2004**
- 3. Review of decisions of other international meetings with regard to merchandise trade**
 - (a) Report of the 36th UN Statistical Commission
 - (b) Report of the Inter-agency Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities (New York, September 2004)
 - (c) The Millennium Development Goal Declaration
 - (d) Report of the 5th OECD Trade Statisticians meeting

4. Data collection and dissemination**Concepts and Definitions**

- (a) Supplement to the Compilers' Manual for International Merchandise Trade Statistics (*update by UNSD*)
- (b) the Statistical Territories of the World for Use in International Merchandise Trade Statistics (*update by UNSD*)
- (c) Data Quality Assessment (*update by the IMF*)

Classifications

- (d) revision of the HS and SITC (*update by WCO and UNSD*)

Methodology

- (e) improving the estimation procedure for detailed export and import data (*update by UNSD*)
- (f) Index numbers of international trade (*update by IMF and UNSD*)

Databases on international trade

- (g) COMTRADE: status, technical issues and EDP strategies (*update by UNSD*)
- (h) Statistical metadata in merchandise trade (*report by OECD*)
- (i) Dissemination policies of international organizations (*exchange of information*)
- (j) FAOSTAT (*report by FAO*)
- (k) CAMAD (*report by WTO*)

5. Exchange of data and information amongst international organizations

- (a) aggregate trade data (*update by UNSD and IMF*)
- (b) the EU in international trade statistics (*report by EUROSTAT*)
- (c) arrangements between OECD and UNSD in data processing and data dissemination (*joint report*)

- (d) Internet site with aggregate exports and imports by country (*update by WTO*)
- (e) EDG - International Trade Statistics

6. Cross-cutting issues

- (a) Reports of relevant Task Forces and working groups (BOP revision, Inter-agency TF on Trade in Services, etc.)
- (b) status of globalisation projects (*update by EUROSTAT and OECD*)
- (c) interaction between BOP, SNA and external trade (*update by EUROSTAT*)
- (d) Trade Indicators (*update by OECD and WTO*)

7. Technical assistance (*updates by various international organizations*)

8. Other business

- (a) Statistical Commission report 2006
- (b) time and place of next meeting

Annex 2: List of participants

Name	Organization	Phone and Fax	E-mail
Abdelfadil Fathia	ESCWA	+96-11-981 301 +96-11-981 510	abdelfadil@un.org
Kimberley Zieschang	IMF	+1-202-623 4264 +1-202-623-6165	kzieschang@imf.org
Campeanu Mariana	FAO	+39 06 570 53661 +39 06 570 55615	marianna.campeanu@fao.org
Jere Joel	ESCAP	+66-2288 1659 +66-2288-1082	jerej@un.org
Karsenty, Guy	WTO	+41-22-7395426 +41-22-7395763	guy.karsenty@wto.org
Lindner Andreas	OECD	+33-1-45 24 95 44 +33-1-45 24 98 14	andreas.lindner@oecd.org
Jansen Ronald	UNSD	+1-914-963 5980 +1-917-367 5106	jansen1@un.org
Maurer Andreas	WTO	+41-22 739 5507 +41-22 739 5763	andreas.maurer@wto.org
Tetsuo Yamada	UNIDO	+43-1-26026-3667 +43-1-26026-6802	t.yamada@unido.org
Tyrman Henri	Eurostat	+352-4301-5332	henri.tyrman@cec.eu.int

Annex 3: List of Available Documents

Item 3	(d)	5th International Trade Statistics meeting 26-29 April 2004 Provisional Summary (OECD)
Item 4	(a)	International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Supplement to Compilers Manual (UNSD)
	(b)	Joint OECD – UNSD statement on practice re. EU – 25 and country groupings Towards a Consistent Geo-Nomenclature for Trade – Issues for Discussion (OECD) Changes to the Composition of WTO Country Groups (WTO)
	(c)	Metadata Standards (IMF)
	(d)	Fourth revision of the Standard International Trade Classification (UNSD) Summary of the 2007 Amendments (WCO)

	(e)	Comparing trade data estimation procedures (UNSD)
	(g)	COMTRADE: Status, Usage and EDP strategies (UNSD)
	(h)	OECD's METASTORE SYSTEM
	(i)	WTO Dissemination Practices for Statistical Information
	(k)	FAO data collection and dissemination
Item 5	(a)	Alignment of the annual merchandise trade totals in the UNSD trade databases
	(b)	Recent/Future developments in EU legislation on External Trade Statistics (Eurostat) EU in international trade statistics (update by Eurostat)
	(c)	The UNSD-OECD data processing project – A joint statement by UNSD and OECD
	(d)	The Common Data Set – Progress report by WTO
	(e)	A quick Reference Guide to OECD Electronic Discussion Groups (EDGs)
Item 6	(a)	Summary Conclusions: Second Meeting of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts (AEG) 8-16 December 2004 United Nations, New York Re-Exports and Goods in Transit (IMF) Goods for Processing – Issues Paper (BOPTTEG) # 14B – Implications for Balance of Payments and National Accounts Data (IMF) Merchanting (IMF) Re-Exports - Outcome Paper (BOPTTEG) # 14A Goods for Processing – Outcome Paper (BOPTTEG) # 14A Merchanting Outcome Paper (BOPTTEG) # 16A
	(b)	Recent developments on globalisation in Eurostat
	(c)	Draft Minutes of The Twentieth Meeting of the Interagency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade-in-Services: OECD Paris - 2-3 February 2005 Differences between Balance of Payments and Foreign Trade Statistics (Eurostat)
Item 7		Two technical Assistance Programmes in ASEAN – Note by UNESCAP

Annex 4: Summary of actions decided

Action	Who
item 2: Develop prototype of website	WTO
item 4(a): Post list of possible issues for Supplement to Compilers Guide (EDG) and seek commitment of TF participants for drafting parts of it (June 2005)	UNSD and others
item 4(b): Central registry of country group descriptions on the EDG and rename item to "geo-nomenclatures and country groupings, inform CCSA on this agenda item	WTO
item 4(f): Organize outreach activities for Export and Import Price Index Manual (Seminar and contact national experts, check for funding)	IMF/UNSD
item 5(d): Develop <i>modus operandi</i> and design for the CDS on the Task Force website (October 2005)	WTO
item 6(a): Draft joint position paper of the Task Force on data capture issues for goods for processing and merchanting in the revised Balance of Payments (May 2005)	WTO
item 6(d): Link each others trade indicator pages on the web	OECD/UNSD/WTO
item 8(a): Draft Statistical Commission report (October 2005)	WTO

Annex 5:**TASK FORCE ON INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS**

Santiago de Chile , 4-6 April 2006

Provisional Agenda

- 1. Adoption of the provisional agenda**
- 2. Minutes of the meeting held in Bangkok, 15-17 March 2004**
- 3. Review of decisions of other international meetings with regard to merchandise trade**
 - (a) Report of the 37th UN Statistical Commission
 - (b) Report of the Inter-agency Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities (Rome, September 2005)
 - (c) The Millennium Development Goal Declaration
 - (d) Report of relevant trade statistics meetings (OECD Trade Statisticians, Task Forces, etc.)
- 4. Concepts, definitions and methodology**
 - (a) Supplement to the Compilers' Manual for International Merchandise Trade Statistics (*update by UNSD*)
 - (b) Interaction between BOP, SNA and external trade (*update by Eurostat*)
 - (c) Handbook on Foreign Trade Indices (*update by IMF*)
- 5. Country and Product Classifications**
 - (a) Geo-nomenclatures and country groupings for use in international merchandise trade statistics (*update by UNSD*)
 - (b) Revision of HS and SITC (*update by UNSD*)
 - (c) Correspondences between classifications (HS/SITC/ISIC)
- 6. Databases on international trade**
 - (a) COMTRADE: status, technical issues, EDP strategies and joint arrangements (*joint report of UNSD/OECD*)
 - (b) Database developments in other organizations (FAO, WTO, others)
 - (c) Common Data Set (*update by WTO*)
 - (d) Trade Indicators (*update by OECD and WTO*)
 - (e) Dissemination tools and policies of international organizations (*exchange of information*)
- 7. Data quality**
 - (a) Statistical metadata in merchandise trade (*report by OECD*)
 - (b) Data Quality Assessment Frameworks (*update by the IMF*)
- 8. Globalization and merchandise trade statistics**
 - (a) Multi-national enterprises
 - (b) Links between business and trade statistics
- 9. Technical assistance** (*updates by various international organizations*)
- 10. Other business**
 - (a) time and place of next meeting