DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS STATISTICS DIVISION

2008 INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS YEARBOOK

VOLUME I TRADE BY COUNTRY



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	1 agc
Introduction	v
The new yearbook	v
Concepts and definitions of International Merchandise Trade Statistics	v
Sources and Presentation	viii
Description of world trade tables of part 1 (Tables A and D)	xiii
Description of country tables and graphs of part 2	xiii
Abbreviations and Explanation of symbols	XV
Disclaimer, UN Comtrade Subscription information, Contact	xvii
Part 1 World Trade Tables	1
Total imports and exports for countries and regions in U.S. dollars (Table A)	2
World exports by provenance and destination in U.S. dollars (Table D)	20
Part 2 Country Trade Profiles	
Countries (or areas)	58
European Union (EU-27)	402

Part 2 COUNTRY TRADE PROFILES

	Page
Albania	58
Algeria	60
Andorra	62
Anguilla	64
Antigua and Barbuda	66
Argentina	68
Armenia	70
Aruba	72
Australia	74
Austria	76
Azerbaijan	78
Bahamas	80
Bahrain	82
Bangladesh	84
Barbados	86
Belarus	88
Belgium	90
Belize	92
Benin Bolivia (Plurinational State	94
of)	96
Bosnia and Herzegovina	98
Botswana	100

	Page
Brazil	102
Brunei Darussalam	104
Bulgaria	106
Burkina Faso	108
Burundi	110
Cambodia	112
Cameroon	114
Canada	116
Cape Verde	118
Central African Republic	120
Chile	122
China	124
China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	126
China, Macao Special	120
Administrative Region	128
Colombia	130
Comoros	132
Cook Islands	134
Costa Rica	136
Côte d'Ivoire	138
Croatia	140
Cuba	142
Cyprus	144

	Page
Czech Republic	146
Denmark	148
Dominica	150
Ecuador	152
Egypt	154
El Salvador	156
Estonia	158
Ethiopia	160
Faeroe Islands	162
Fiji	164
Finland	166
France-Monaco	168
French Polynesia	170
Gabon	172
Gambia	174
Georgia	176
Germany	178
Ghana	180
Greece	182
Greenland	184
Grenada	186
Guatemala	188

Į	Page
Guyana	190
Honduras	192
Hungary	194
Iceland	196
India	198
Indonesia	200
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	202
Ireland	204
Israel	206
Italy	208
Jamaica	210
Japan	212
Jordan	214
Kazakhstan	216
Kenya	218
Kiribati	220
Korea, Republic of	222
Kuwait	224
Kyrgyzstan	226
Latvia	228
Lebanon	230
Lesotho	232
Lithuania	234
Luxembourg	236
Madagascar	238
Malawi	240
Malaysia	242
Maldives	244
Mali	246
Malta	248
Mauritania	250
Mauritius	252
Mayotte	254
Mexico	256
Mongolia	258
Montserrat	260
Morocco	262
Mozambique	264
Namibia	266
Netherlands	268

	Page
New Caledonia	270
New Zealand	272
Nicaragua	274
Niger	276
Nigeria	278
Norway, including Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands	280
Occupied Palestinian	
Territory	282
Oman	284
Pakistan _	286
Panama	288
Papua New Guinea	290
Paraguay	292
Peru	294
Philippines	296
Poland	298
Portugal	300
Qatar	302
Republic of Moldova	304
Romania	306
Russian Federation	308
Rwanda	310
Saint Kitts and Nevis	312
Saint Lucia	314
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	316
Samoa	318
Sao Tome and Principe	320
Saudi Arabia	322
Senegal	224
Serbia	226
Serbia and Montenegro	
Seychelles	220
Singapore	222
C1 1:	224
cı :	226
C-1 I-1 I-	220
C4- A £-i	240
C	2.40
Spain Sri Lanka	244
Sri Lanka	
Sudan	
Suriname	348

	Page
Swaziland	350
Sweden	352
Switzerland-Liechtenstein	354
Syrian Arab Republic	356
Thailand	358
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	360
Timor-Leste	362
Togo	364
Tonga	266
Trinidad and Tobago	
Tunisia	370
Turkey	372
Turks and Caicos Islands	374
Uganda	376
Ukraine	378
United Arab Emirates	380
United Kingdom	382
United Republic of Tanzania	384
United States of America, including Puerto Rico and US	
Virgin Islands	386
Uruguay	388
Vanuatu	390
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	392
Viet Nam	204
Yemen	396
Zambia	398
Zimbabwe	400
European Union (27 member states)	402

INTRODUCTION

The new yearbook

- The 2008 International Trade Statistics Yearbook (2008 ITSY) is being issued in two 1. redesigned volumes which are prepared at different points in time during 2009. Volume I is compiled early in 2009 to allow for an advanced release of an overview of international merchandise trade in 2008 and for a much earlier publication of the available 2008 country (area) data. Volume II contains the detailed tables showing international trade in main commodity groups and is finalized approximately six months after the submission of Volume I as the preparation of those tables requires additional country data which, normally, become available later in the year. Volume II contains also updated versions of the two world trade tables published in Volume I.
- 2. Volume I has been redesigned in respect to the presentation of data for individual countries with the aim to provide a more analytical and condensed view of a country's trade performance (country trade profile). Overall, data for a total of 173 countries (or areas) are shown in Volume I with the 2008 data on imports and exports by commodity and trading partner provided for 77 countries (areas), representing approximately 61% of world trade of 2008. All tables of Volume I are made available electronically shortly after the completion of the manuscript.
- 3. The detailed information about the trade of particular countries by commodity and partner (values and quantities) contained in the tables and graphs for individual countries in Volume I and commodities in Volume II are taken from the publicly available database UN Comtrade (http://comtrade.un.org/db/default.aspx). Users are advised to visit UN Comtrade for any additional and more current information as it is continuously updated.

Concepts and definitions of International Merchandise Trade Statistics

- 4. The statistics in this Yearbook have been compiled by national statistical authorities largely consistent with the United Nations recommended International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Concepts and Definitions, Revision 2.2 The main elements of the concepts and definitions are:
 - Coverage: 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. Goods simply being transported through a country (goods in transit) or temporarily admitted or withdrawn (except for goods for inward or outward processing) do not add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country and are not included in the international merchandise trade statistics. The general guidelines serve as

¹ The 2008 ITSY is the fifty-seventh edition of this yearbook.

² Statistical Papers, Series M No. 52, Rev.2, (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.16).

a basis for a set of specific recommendations on the inclusion or exclusion of certain categories of goods.

- 2. <u>Time of recording</u>: Coherence with the System of National Accounts and the Balance of Payments requires that transactions be recorded at the time when the change of ownership takes place. As a general guideline it is recommended that goods be included at the time when they enter or leave the economic territory of a country.
- 3. <u>Statistical territory</u>. In international merchandise trade statistics the objective is to record goods entering and leaving the economic territory of a country. In practice, what is recorded is goods that enter or leave the statistical territory, which is the territory with respect to which data are being collected. The statistical territory may coincide with the economic territory of a country or with some part of it. It follows that when the statistical territory of a country and its economic territory differ, international merchandise trade statistics do not provide a complete record of inward and outward flows of goods.
- 4. <u>The trade systems</u>. There are two trade systems in common use by which international merchandise trade statistics are compiled: the general trade system and the special trade system in its strict definition and relaxed definition.
- (a) The general trade system is in use when the statistical territory of a country coincides with its economic territory. Consequently, under the general trade system, imports include all goods entering the economic territory of a compiling country and exports include all goods leaving the economic territory of a compiling country.
- (b) The special trade system is in use when the statistical territory comprises only a particular part of the economic territory. The special trade system (strict definition) 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". Consequently, in such a case, imports include all goods entering the free circulation area of a compiling country, which means cleared through customs for home use, and exports include all goods leaving the free circulation area of a compiling country.
- (c) The special trade system (relaxed definition) is in use when (a) goods that enter a country for or leave it after inward processing and (b) goods that enter or leave an industrial free zone are also recorded and included in international merchandise trade statistics.
- 5. <u>Classification</u>. It is recommended that countries use the *Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System* (HS) for the collection, compilation and dissemination of international merchandise trade statistics as suggested by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session (22 February to 3 March 1993).³ 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

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³ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 6 (E/1993/26), para. 162 (d).

into force on 1 January 1988 (HS 1988).⁴ In accordance with the preamble to the HS Convention, which recognized the importance of ensuring that the HS be kept up to date in the light of changes in technology or in patterns of international trade, the HS is regularly reviewed and revised. The fourth edition, HS 2007 which is a substantial revision from previous versions came into effect 1 January 2007.⁵ The *Standard International Trade Classification (SITC)*⁶ which was in the past used by countries in data compilation and reporting has been recognized for its continued use in analysis.⁷

- Valuation. At its fifteenth session, in 1953, the Economic and Social Council, taking the view that trade statistics must reflect economic realities, recommended that the Governments of Member States of the United Nations, wherever possible, use transaction values in the compilation of their national statistics of external trade or, when national practices are based on other values, endeavor to provide supplementary statistical data based on transaction values (Economic and Social Council resolution 469 B (XV)). To promote the comparability of international merchandise trade statistics and taking into account the commercial and data reporting practices of the majority of countries, it is recommended that: (a) The statistical value of imported goods be a CIF-type value; (b) The statistical value of exported goods be an FOB-type value. 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.
- 7. Partner country. It is recommended that in the case of imports, the country of origin be recorded; and that in the case of exports, the country of last known destination be recorded. The country of origin of a good (for imports) is determined by rules of origin established by each country. 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 which change their legal status.
- 5. The pages containing the country profiles (part 2 of this publication) indicate the trade system, valuation and partner attribution each country is following. For more detailed information on national practices in the compilation and dissemination of international merchandise trade data please go to http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradereport/introduction_MM.asp.

vii

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⁴ See Customs Co-operation Council, The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, Brussels, 1989.

⁵ See World Customs Organization, Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, Fourth Edition (2007), Brussels 2005.

⁶ Standard International Trade Classification, Original, Statistical Papers, Series M No.10, Second Edition, 1951 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.51.XVII.1); subsequent editions are published as United Nations publications under Series M No.34.

See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 4 (E/1993/24), para. 24 (c).

Sources and Presentation

- 6. <u>Sources</u>: Figures on the total imports and exports of countries (or areas) presented in world table A are mainly taken from *International Financial Statistics* (IFS) published monthly by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) but also from other sources such as national publications and websites and the *United Nations Monthly Bulletin of Statistics Questionnaire* for the following countries: American Samoa, Andorra, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Cook Islands, Cuba, Faeroe Islands, French Polynesia, Gibraltar, Greenland, Kiribati, Montenegro (beginning 2006), Netherland Antilles, New Caledonia, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro (before 2006), Turkmenistan, Turks and Caicos, Tuvalu. Estimates for missing data are made in order to arrive to regional totals but are otherwise not shown. The estimation process is automated using quarterly year-on-year growth rates for the extrapolation of missing quarterly data (unless quarterly data can be estimated using available monthly data within the quarter). Estimates are reviewed and adjusted where necessary. Table A shows data as available by end of April 2009.
- 7. Figures presented in world table D are calculated using UN Comtrade data (see details below). Data for missing reporters are estimated either through the extrapolation of the data of the two adjacent years, or, if this is not possible, through the use of the data reported by the trading partners (so called mirror data). Mirror statistics is also used in case the partner distribution or confidential data make it necessary to adjust the reported data. All estimates are reviewed and adjusted where necessary. Table D uses data as available on UN Comtrade by mid of May 2009.
- 8. The figures in the country tables and graphs of part 2 (country trade profiles) are obtained from data directly submitted by countries to the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) or received via international and regional partner organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the UN regional commissions such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). Data for the European Union (EU-27) is received from the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). All data

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