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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia - ESCWA

Seminar on Statistics of International Trade in Services
Beirut, 14-17 December 2004

INFORMATION NOTE

The United Nations for Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) is organizing, jointly with United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) a Seminar on Statistics of International Trade in Services. The seminar will be held in the UN House- Beirut, Republic of Lebanon, during the period 14 to 17 December 2004.

A. OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

1. Build and promote national skills for the utilization of the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS), *ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/86*, as the standard for data collection on statistics of international trade in services.
2. Present and discuss concepts, definitions and the statistical systems used in compiling and dissemination of statistics of international trade in services.
3. Develop, improve and upgrade countries' capabilities in collecting, processing, analyzing and utilizing statistics of international trade in services.
4. Share the experiences and concerns of ESCWA member countries and UN organizations working on Statistics of International Trade in Services.

B. MAIN AGENDA ITEMS

1. Conceptual framework for the development of statistics on international trade in services, as presented in the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services. This includes statistical concepts and definitions of international trade in services set in 1993 system of national accounts and in the manual of balance of payments, 5th edition. The meeting will also discuss the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the four modes of measurement of natural person supplying services.
2. Member countries will be asked to prepare a paper about the current status of International Trade in Services Statistics in their countries. The paper will cover availability of statistics, compilation and processing methods, dissemination and difficulties they are facing.

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C. PARTICIPANTS

1. Participants from National Statistical Offices (Trade/national account statisticians), Central Banks (Balance of Payment statisticians) and Ministry of trade/ Planning.
2. Experts from United Nations Statistical office and other UN agencies which have participated in producing the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services*, namely *UNSD, WTO, IMF and UNCTAD*, will be presenting different parts of the manual.
3. International and regional organizations working in this area of statistics.

D. DOCUMENTATION

Given the meeting's objectives and the main agenda items, the documents will include:

1. Working papers on the topics of the meeting prepared by ESCWA Secretariat.
2. Country papers contributed by national experts nominated by their respective countries covering national experiences on the status of statistics of international trade in services.
3. Working papers prepared by various international organizations on standard methodologies and systems that internationally agreed upon in compiling statistics of international trade in services.

E. MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE SEMINAR

1. Sharing the expertise between ESCWA member countries and international organizations in measuring International Trade in Services and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing sources of statistics.
2. Clear, relevant and practical recommendations that would assist countries in enhancing and strengthening their capabilities and capacities in collecting and compiling Statistics of International Trade in Services, according to international compiling standards.

F. LANGUAGES

The meeting will be held in Arabic; simultaneous interpretation from English to Arabic and vice-versa will be available.

G. TIME AND VENUE OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar will be held in UN-House- Beirut, Republic of Lebanon during the period 14–17 December 2004.

H. CONTACT ADDRESS

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