



## REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON STATISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SERVICES

**11-13 January 2011**

**Muscat, Oman**

*Information Note*

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), the World Bank Institute (WBI), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of National Economy are organizing a regional workshop on "Statistics of International Trade in Services" in Muscat, Oman, January 11-13, 2011.

### **Background:**

Improving statistics of international trade in services (SITS) in the region received attention of the organizers of this workshop as well as many other international organizations including the IMF, UNCTAD and UNSD. A number of national and regional workshops were organized during 2004, 2007 and 2009 aiming at building national capacities in ESCWA member countries in collecting, compiling and disseminating service trade statistics. Country presentations made during the previous events show that the region still suffers from a lack of detailed statistics on international trade in services due to the insufficiency of regular surveys, and absence of adequate methods to collect, compile and update already existing information. In addition, since data of balance of payments are compiled in most cases by central banks, in certain cases, the lack of coordination between central banks and national statistical offices leads to inconsistency of SITS data at the national and regional levels.

Based on the recommendations of the previous workshops and on the recommendations of the third Working Group of the ESCWA Statistical Committee, ESCWA was requested to organize a workshop/training on SITS, notably, on the revised Manual of SITS (ver. 2010). In the mean time, the WBI and WTO among other organizations showed high interest in contributing to this workshop as part of their global capacity building programs in statistics on exchange of services at the international level. The Ministry of National Economy of the Sultanate of Oman generously offered an outstanding logistical support to host this event.

### **1. Objectives:**

The workshop aims at increasing the participants' knowledge in the area of collecting and compiling SITS. Participants will have an opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge of the relevant statistical systems, international classifications and methodologies used in collect international trade in services data. High on the agenda of this workshop is the introduction of international recommendations pertaining to the balance of payments (ver.6), compiling foreign affiliates statistics (FATS) and the new SITS manual (ver. 2010) in addition to the different trade classifications.

Also, the workshop aims at improving the quality of SITS in the Arab region to better serve the needs of trade policy makers and negotiators, including those engaged in regional and bilateral free trade agreements. The need for such statistics today is vital and crucial than any time in the past due to the large number of trade agreements that entail extensive commitments in the services trade.

The agenda will cover, among other things, the following items:

- (i) GATS agreement and the need to improve SITS;
- (ii) International recommendations on balance of payments (BPM 6) and services trade statistics (*MSITS ver. 2010*);
- (iii) Foreign Affiliates Statistics (FATS) (*EU regulation and OECD handbook*);
- (iv) Statistics of the international supply of services by modes; and
- (v) Trade classifications (*W/I20, CPC Version 2.0, BPM6, EBOPS, ICFA/ISIC*)

## **2. Participants:**

Officials from Central Banks and National Statistical Offices responsible for producing SITS and foreseen collection of foreign affiliates statistics in the Arab Countries will be invited to the workshop.

Services trade statistics experts from the UN-ESCWA, the WTO and the Statistical Office of the European Communities, Eurostat, are among the resource persons taking part in this workshop.

## **3. Date and Venue**

The Regional Workshop will be take place during 11-13 January 2011 in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. The event will be hosted at the “Crown Plaza Hotel”.

Sindibad Hall,  
Crown Plaza Hotel  
P.O. BOX 1455 Ruwi 112  
Muscat, 112 OMAN,  
Tel: +968 921 31618  
Fax: +968 24660600  
<http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/cp/1/en/hotel/mschc?rpb>

## **4. Visa Requirements for Entry into Oman**

All participants must have a visa to Oman. Participants should send scanned copies of their passports to ESCWA to get their entry visas facilitated by the Ministry of National Economy in Oman. Passports should have validity of at least six months.

## 5. Travel and accommodation

The Ministry of National Economy in Oman has managed to get preferential rates for a number of hotels in Muscat. Also, transportation from hotels (if other than Crown Plaza where the venue is taking place) will be provided to participants to and from the meeting venue for the listed hotels. Should participants choose different hotels, they should arrange for their transportation to the meeting place. All participants arriving at Muscat Airport can take taxi to the hotels of their choice that should cost around 7-8 Omani Riyals within Muscat.

All participants should contact the hotel of their choice directly for reservations as well as their travel arrangements at their earliest convenience except those financed by the WBI.

### List of hotels

*Rates are in Omani Riyal (1\$=0.385 OR) for single room inclusive of taxes and breakfast unless otherwise mentioned*

Hotel Name	Agreed rate (OR)	Contact person	Phone number	E-mail	Homepage
<b>Crown Plaza</b>	85 not including breakfast or taxes	Mr. Faheem Albalushi	+96892131618	Faheem.albalushi@cpmuscat.com	www.cpmuscat.com
<b>Radisson Blue</b>	75 including breakfast only	Mr. Muneer Albalushi	+96899882968	Muneer.albalushi@radissonblu.com	
<b>AlMorouj hotel apartments</b>	25	Ms. Rahila	+96897644866	Rahela.almurooj@gmail.com	
<b>Rahab hotel apartments</b>	25	Mr. Rami	+96897603202	rehabresidencehotel@gmail.com	
<b>Bowshar International</b>	30 including breakfast only	Mr. Reynolds Gabral	+96899425137	bwshrhtl@omantel.net.om	www.bowsharhotel.com
<b>Damas</b>	33	Mr. Fayyadh	+96895895593		www.dmashtel.com
<b>Safeer hotel wings</b>	35	Mr. Anees	+96897307450	anees@safeerintl.com	

## 6. Language

The Workshop will be held in English and Arabic with simultaneous interpretation.

## 7. General information about Oman

For general information about the Sultanate of Oman, it is recommended to browse the official website of the Omani Ministry of Tourism on the following link:

<http://www.omantourism.gov.om/wps/portal/mot>

## 8. Additional Information

Any inquiries and requests for additional information should be addressed to:

Mr. Majed Hamoudeh  
Economic Statistics Section, Statistics Division  
UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)  
P.O. Box 11-8575, Beirut, Lebanon  
Tel: +961-1-981301 Ext.: 1456  
Fax: +961-1-981510  
Email: [hamoudeh@un.org](mailto:hamoudeh@un.org)

Contact persons in the Ministry of National Economy, Sultanate of Oman:

Mr. Khaled Al-Mudhafar  
Phone: +968 99330511  
E-mail: [kmudhafar@mone.gov.om](mailto:kmudhafar@mone.gov.om)

Ms. Fatima Al-Namani  
Phone: +968 95060572  
E-mail: [fnamani@mone.gov.om](mailto:fnamani@mone.gov.om)