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EXTERNAL TRADE STATISTICS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEFINITION AND STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF  
THE MAIN CATEGORIES OF COMMODITIES IN THE INWARD AND OUTWARD  
FLOWS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In the report of the thirteenth session (E/4045, para. 177 (i)), the Statistical Commission recommended the following project in the list of ad hoc projects of high priority:

"Compilation and publication of recommendations for the definition and statistical treatment of the main categories of commodities in the inward and outward flows of international trade, together with descriptions of national practices in this field."

2. In compliance with that recommendation, the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat is at present preparing a paper which will set out the conclusions reached by the Commission in past sessions on the subject of methods in external trade statistics. The paper will also describe the areas where national practices differ in the treatment of the main categories of commodities in the inward and outward flows of international trade. It is intended in this way to provide a systematic description of basic methods with which the national practices of each country may be compared.

3. The paper will shortly be circulated for comments and each national office will be requested to provide a description of its own practices according to the basic scheme of the paper. The resulting material will be published as a handbook for the many users of international trade statistics.

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