

INDUSTRY STATISTICS

Economics Statistics, UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/industry/>

Economic statistics

WHAT IS INDUSTRY STATISTICS?

Industry Statistics provides information on economic activity, particularly in the areas of mining, manufacturing and utilities. Although economic activity is understood to be much larger, including also the provision of services, the historical scope of "industry statistics" as a measurement of the goods-producing activities has not lost its importance. Such information may cover indicators that describe the state and growth of individual goods-producing branches of the economy and indicators that describe the outputs of the physical production.

INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS AND THE UN

The League of Nations was just about to take up industrial statistics when World War II erupted. It was only with the founding of the United Nations that industrial statistics appeared on the international level.

United Nations involvement in industrial statistics began in 1947 with the Report to the Economic and Social Council on the First Session of the Commission. The very first two recommendations of the Statistical Commission in that report mandated the Secretary-General to begin gathering national industrial classifications and metadata and to collate it into a report so that the Statistical Commission could prepare a programme of work in the field. Once these classifications were reviewed and a common UN classification was created, collection and dissemination of international industrial statistics could begin.

According to Michael Ward's *Quantifying the World: UN Ideas and Statistics* (Indiana University Press: 2004), industrial statistics were a central concern in the post-World War II era: "Countries firmly believed that industrialization enhanced their power and status on the global political platform. Industrialization, it was widely thought, would win higher living standards for the working classes by raising the level of aggregate demand, increasing the total flow of output, and improving people's well-being through an enhancement of their command over an expanded supply of material goods and services." Industrialization could most easily be gauged through industrial statistics.

Work on industrial statistics within UNSD has included the production of world-wide comparable statistical information and the developing of methodology for adequately measuring the industrial sector.

An important part of this work was the undertaking of three *World Programmes of Industrial Statistics* in 1963, 1973 and 1983. These programmes served as benchmarks, provided a

methodological basis and practical guidance for data collection at the national level and complemented the ongoing data collection on general industrial indicators and commodity production statistics.

Methodological guidelines that have been produced by UNSD include the *International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics* (Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 48, Rev.1), which define scope and methods used in industrial statistics. This manual is currently being revised.

Most recently, industrial statistics were taken up by the Statistical Commission in 2006, when it was recommended that industrial statistics should be better integrated "with other statistics, such as services statistics," and so the future should see increased attention paid to service statistics to complement the traditional industrial statistics.

INDUSTRIAL COMMODITY STATISTICS

One of the main focuses of Industrial Statistics is the collection and dissemination of data on the production of major industrial commodities.

This data helps policymakers, businesses, academics and others to gauge both the absolute levels of production of the various commodities in each country, as well as long- and short-term trends in absolute terms. The data also offer insight into the major features of countries' economics.

Data are mainly collected through an annual questionnaire, sent to national statistical offices, which gather data through industrial censuses and surveys.

The 2003 *Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook* is the 37th annual compilation and is based on the data of the UNSD Commodity Production Statistics Database, which includes data beginning with 1950. The *Yearbook* provides production statistics in physical quantities for about 530 industrial commodities (*up from 315 in the 1968 edition!*). It includes data for a ten-year period for about 200 countries and territories (*up from just 43 in the 1968 edition!*).

Through the 2003 edition of the *Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook*, commodities were classified according to a UN List of Industrial Products, developed within the framework of the 1973 World Programme on Industrial Statistics. This list defined commodities in terms of earlier versions of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) and was coded according to ISIC Rev.2.

A revised UN List of Industrial Products has been developed and entered into usage with the 2004 round of data collection. The revision was the result of work undertaken within UNSD and in consultation with a number of national and international agencies. This new list is based on the Central Product Classification (CPC) and enables the collection and dissemination of new series of commodity data, such as high technology commodities and pharmaceuticals, providing a better picture of today's economic production. The revised list also improves the links to existing product classifications, such as the CPC, the Harmonized System (HS) and the European Prodcom list, thus providing data producers with a better tool to identify products in their national setting and providing users with a better tool for linking production and trade-related data.

The complete List of Industrial Products is available on the UNSD industry statistics website.

The first publication of the *Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook* using this new list will appear in 2007. This edition will, for the first time, provide production data not only in terms of physical quantities, but also in monetary values.

INDICES OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

The Indices of Industrial Production (IIP) are the other main focus of Industry Statistics within UNSD. The IIP are a widely used tool to measure changes in the volume of industrial production over time, and they are also an important short-term economic indicator for the estimation of national accounts at constant prices. The IIP are also used by businesses and others interested in measuring the growth of national economies. UNSD started collecting data on IIP in 1953 and is the only international organization that produces aggregated IIP data at world level as well as by economic and geographical grouping.

Guiding the IIP is the *Manual on Index numbers of Industrial Production* (Statistical Papers, Series F, No.1), which is currently being revised and updated. The manual provides guidance on matters of basic concepts and of statistical practice to individual countries compiling, or planning to compile, index numbers of production and assists in securing international comparability between national index numbers.

IIP data are collected through questionnaires sent to national statistics offices, and are published monthly, quarterly and yearly in the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* and the *UN Statistical Yearbook*. Data are currently compiled according to ISIC Rev.3, at the 2-digit level for the mining, manufacturing and utilities sectors.

The weights used in the calculation of the indices are updated in five year intervals and the base year in which the indices are published is changed at that time as well. The annual and quarterly indices are using 1995=100 as of the February 2002 edition of the MBS, but will soon be revised to 2000=100.

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS

From 1953 to 1993, Industrial Statistics also handled general industrial statistics, including such indicators as number of establishments, number of employees, wages and value added per industry group per country. As of 1994, these indicators for the manufacturing sector were transferred to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which now collects and disseminates this data. Indicators for the mining and utilities sectors remained with UNSD and continue to be collected but not separately published.

PUBLICATIONS

The three primary publications of Industrial Statistics are:

- the *Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook* (covering a ten-year period);
- the **dataset of Industrial Commodity Statistics** CD-ROM (covering data starting with 1950); and
- the **General Industrial Statistics Dataset** CD-ROM (covering 1953-1993).

Customized subsets of the Industrial Commodity Statistics database are available. Please contact us directly or check the website for ordering information.

Monthly data for selected commodities are published in the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, which also features the Indices of Industrial Production. Annual data for selected commodities as well as the IIP are also published in the *United Nations Statistical Yearbook*.

Prices and ordering information for Industry Statistics publications can be found at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/industry/publications.asp>

<p>Contact the Economic Statistics and Classifications Section for enquiries at: industry@un.org.</p>
