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Foreword

The secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is pleased to present the twenty-fourth issue of the External Trade Bulletin of the Arab Region.

The Bulletin includes data and statistical indicators on the international trade in goods of ESCWA member countries, based primarily on national sources and on secondary sources where needed.

The External Trade Bulletin of the Arab Region aims to provide complete detailed international merchandise trade data on ESCWA member countries for the users of such statistics, including planners and researchers at the national, regional and international levels.

The Bulletin is divided into three parts:

Part I includes summary tables on the trends of overall trade in the region, its annual growth and its share of total world trade. It also includes a set of indicators on the share of external trade in the gross domestic product (GDP) of ESCWA member countries, and itemizes total imports, exports and the trade balance of these countries.

Part II presents the values of intraregional trade in ESCWA member countries in a series of tables. These tables underline the importance of intraregional trade as part of total world trade, identify the trade network within the region and provide a concise reflection of the structure of intraregional trade according to the main sections of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS). Trade in crude oil has been excluded from the data in this part in order to show the structure of intraregional trade in non-oil merchandise.
Part III provides data on the trends of foreign trade of ESCWA member countries, disaggregated by country and region, for the period 2010-2014. Tables, however, do not include Iraq due to the lack of detailed data on foreign trade. Data cover the value of imports and exports of ESCWA member countries by major countries and economic groupings, in line with the practices of the United Nations Statistics Division and other international organizations.
General notes

Part I. Summary of the external trade statistics of ESCWA member countries

Tables I.1 to I.8 touch upon trade in crude oil and oil products.

Tables I.1 and I.2 show the share of ESCWA member countries in total world trade and their annual trade growth rates, respectively. In both tables, ESCWA member countries are divided into two groups: major oil-exporting countries (Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) and other countries.

In the light of the definitions in relevant international sources, total world trade is defined in this bulletin as the arithmetic average of exports and imports of all countries in the world. Identified in this manner, world exports would theoretically equal world imports after the deduction of shipping and insurance charges. However, import values, which are usually more accurate than export values, do not reflect alone the reality of merchandise trade due to the said difference of trade in services. Therefore the arithmetic average is used for more accurate figures.

Tables I.3 and I.4 include a set of indicators related to the value of imports and exports of ESCWA member countries, the share of their external trade in GDP and total trade per capita.

Trade annual growth rates for the periods 1991-2001 and 2001-2014 are calculated using exponential trend functions.

Tables I.7 and I.8 show the percentage share of imports and exports for each ESCWA member country in the total value of world imports and exports, by HS Section.
Part II. Intraregional trade of ESCWA member countries

All tables in part II exclude crude oil unless otherwise indicated in the footnotes.

Table II.3 and II.4 show matrices of intraregional imports and exports of ESCWA member countries, by country and partner, for countries on which data are available.

Table II.7 should be interpreted with care when used to obtain trade balances between ESCWA member countries, as the available statistics may not reflect the true situation. Certain member countries use the general trade system to record their international trade statistics, while others use a special system.

Part III. Trends of the foreign trade of ESCWA member countries

The partners of ESCWA member countries in foreign trade in goods are classified as “developed” and “developing” economies, distributed over the five continents (Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania).

Crude oil data are presented as a separate item in the world aggregate, in order to reflect the share of oil in the imports and exports of ESCWA member countries. This is due to the fact that, very often, detailed data on this commodity are not available.

Some differences may be found between statistics on the value of overall imports and exports in tables I.5 and I.6, and statistics contained in tables I.7, I.8 and III.1 to III.13. This may be attributed to the non-distribution of crude oil import/export values or re-export values by HS section to different countries and economic blocs; to the non-distribution of import/export values of free zones and non-monetary gold; or simply to differences in approximation.

يجدر الحذر عند استخدام بيانات الجدول 2-7 للحصول على الميزان التجاري بين البلدان الأعضاء في الإسكوا، نظرًا إلى أن الإحصاءات قد لا تعطي صورة حقيقية للموازين بسبب اختلاف الأنظمة التجارية المستعملة. فبعض البلدان تتبع نظام التجارة العام في تدوين إحصائيات التجارة الخارجية، بينما تتبع البعض الآخر نظامًا خاصًا.

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### Abbreviations and symbols

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<tr>
<td>c.i.f</td>
<td>Including cost, insurance and freight</td>
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<tr>
<td>f.o.b.</td>
<td>Free on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CACEU</td>
<td>Central African Customs and Economic Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Free Trade Association</td>
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<td>ESCWA</td>
<td>Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>HS</td>
<td>Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System</td>
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<td>LAIA</td>
<td>Latin American Integration Association</td>
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<td>SITC</td>
<td>Standard International Trade Classification</td>
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**Symbols**

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<td>..</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>Negligible or zero</td>
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* تقديرات أولية
.. بيانات غير متوفر
— ضئيل أو صفر