

International Trade and Transport Profiles of Latin American Countries, year 2000

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Contents

Summary	15
Introduction	17
Purpose of this document.....	17
Information covered.....	18
Basis of reporting.....	19
Terminology.....	19
Incomplete and inconsistent data	22
Cargo traffic in energy commodities	23
Sample information of interest	25
Outline of this document	27
Argentina	29
Bolivia	59
Brazil	91
Chile	121
Colombia	151
Ecuador	181
Mexico	211
Paraguay	243
Peru	271
Uruguay	301
Venezuela	331
Serie Manuales: Issues published	357

Illustrations

Illustration 1 Percentage of SITC 3 Commodity Group Imports and Exports, Volume	24
Illustration 2 Percentage of SITC 3 Commodity Group Imports and Exports, Value (FOB)	24
Illustration 3 Modal Split for SITC 3 Commodities, Volume.....	25

Tables

Table 1	Classification of Transport Modes	20
Table 2	SITC one-digit codes and Descriptions	21
Table 1	Argentina: Imports by Region or Country of Departure	31
Table 2	Argentina: Exports by Region or Country of Destination.....	32
Table 3	Argentina: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC	33
Table 4	Argentina: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC ..	34
Table 5	Argentina: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC.....	35
Table 6	Argentina: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC	36
Table 7	Argentina: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	37
Table 8	Argentina: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	38
Table 9	Argentina: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	39
Table 10	Argentina: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	41
Table 11	Argentina: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	42
Table 12	Argentina: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	43
Table 13	Argentina: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC.....	45
Table 14	Argentina: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	48
Table 15	Argentina: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	50
Table 16	Argentina: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	51
Table 17	Argentina: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	52
Table 18	Argentina: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	53
Table 19	Argentina: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports.....	54
Table 20	Argentina: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports	56
Table 21	Argentina: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport	57
Table 1	Bolivia: Imports by Region or Country of Departure	61
Table 2	Bolivia: Exports by Region or Country of Destination.....	62
Table 3	Bolivia: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC	63
Table 4	Bolivia: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	64
Table 5	Bolivia: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC.....	65
Table 6	Bolivia: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC	66
Table 7	Bolivia: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC	67
Table 8	Bolivia: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC	68
Table 9	Bolivia: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	69

Table 10	Bolivia: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	72
Table 11	Bolivia: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	73
Table 12	Bolivia: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC.....	74
Table 13	Bolivia: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC.....	77
Table 14	Bolivia: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	80
Table 15	Bolivia: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	82
Table 16	Bolivia: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	83
Table 17	Bolivia: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	84
Table 18	Bolivia: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	85
Table 19	Bolivia: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports.....	86
Table 20	Bolivia: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports.....	88
Table 21	Bolivia: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport.....	89
Table 1	Brazil: Imports by Region or Country of Departure.....	93
Table 2	Brazil: Exports by Region or Country of Destination.....	94
Table 3	Brazil: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	95
Table 4	Brazil: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC.....	96
Table 5	Brazil: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC.....	97
Table 6	Brazil: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC.....	98
Table 7	Brazil: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	99
Table 8	Brazil: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	100
Table 9	Brazil: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	101
Table 10	Brazil: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	103
Table 11	Brazil: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	104
Table 12	Brazil: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC.....	105
Table 13	Brazil: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC.....	107
Table 14	Brazil: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	110
Table 15	Brazil: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	112
Table 16	Brazil: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	113
Table 17	Brazil: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	114
Table 18	Brazil: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	115
Table 19	Brazil: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports.....	116
Table 20	Brazil: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports.....	118
Table 21	Brazil: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport.....	119
Table 1	Chile: Imports by Region or Country of Departure.....	123
Table 2	Chile: Exports by Region or Country of Destination.....	124
Table 3	Chile: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	125
Table 4	Chile: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC.....	126

Table 5	Chile: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	127
Table 6	Chile: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC	128
Table 7	Chile: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC	129
Table 8	Chile: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC	130
Table 9	Chile: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	131
Table 10	Chile: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	133
Table 11	Chile: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC	134
Table 12	Chile: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	135
Table 13	Chile: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC	137
Table 14	Chile: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC	140
Table 15	Chile: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	142
Table 16	Chile: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	143
Table 17	Chile: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	144
Table 18	Chile: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	145
Table 19	Chile: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports	146
Table 20	Chile: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports	148
Table 21	Chile: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport	149
Table 1	Colombia: Imports by Region or Country of Departure.....	153
Table 2	Colombia: Exports by Region or Country of Destination.....	154
Table 3	Colombia: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC	155
Table 4	Colombia: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	156
Table 5	Colombia: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	157
Table 6	Colombia: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC ..	158
Table 7	Colombia: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC	159
Table 8	Colombia: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC	160
Table 9	Colombia: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	161
Table 10	Colombia: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	163
Table 11	Colombia: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC	164
Table 12	Colombia: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	165
Table 13	Colombia: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC.....	167
Table 14	Colombia: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	170
Table 15	Colombia: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	172
Table 16	Colombia: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	173
Table 17	Colombia: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	174
Table 18	Colombia: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	175
Table 19	Colombia: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports	176
Table 20	Colombia: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports	178

Table 21	Colombia: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport ..	179
Table 1	Ecuador: Imports by Region or Country of Departure.....	183
Table 2	Ecuador: Exports by Region or Country of Destination	184
Table 3	Ecuador: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	185
Table 4	Ecuador: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC ..	186
Table 5	Ecuador: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	187
Table 6	Ecuador: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC	188
Table 7	Ecuador: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC	189
Table 8	Ecuador: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC	190
Table 9	Ecuador: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC	191
Table 10	Ecuador: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	193
Table 11	Ecuador: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC	194
Table 12	Ecuador: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	195
Table 13	Ecuador: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC	197
Table 14	Ecuador: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC	200
Table 15	Ecuador: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	202
Table 16	Ecuador: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	203
Table 17	Ecuador: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	204
Table 18	Ecuador: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	205
Table 19	Ecuador: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports	206
Table 20	Ecuador: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports	208
Table 21	Ecuador: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport	209
Table 1	Mexico: Imports by Region or Country of Departure.....	213
Table 2	Mexico: Exports by Region or Country of Destination	214
Table 3	Mexico: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	215
Table 4	Mexico: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC....	216
Table 5	Mexico: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	217
Table 6	Mexico: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC....	218
Table 7	Mexico: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC	219
Table 8	Mexico: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC	220
Table 9	Mexico: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC	221
Table 10	Mexico: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	224
Table 11	Mexico: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC	225
Table 12	Mexico: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	226
Table 13	Mexico: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC	229
Table 14	Mexico: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC	232
Table 15	Mexico: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	234
Table 16	Mexico: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	235

Table 17	Mexico: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	236
Table 18	Mexico: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	237
Table 19	Mexico: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports	238
Table 20	Mexico: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports	240
Table 21	Mexico: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport.....	241
Table 1	Paraguay: Imports by Region or Country of Departure	245
Table 2	Paraguay: Exports by Region or Country of Destination.....	246
Table 3	Paraguay: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC	247
Table 4	Paraguay: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	248
Table 5	Paraguay: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	249
Table 6	Paraguay: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC ...	250
Table 7	Paraguay: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC	251
Table 8	Paraguay: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC	252
Table 9	Paraguay: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	253
Table 10	Paraguay: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	255
Table 11	Paraguay: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC	256
Table 12	Paraguay: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	257
Table 13	Paraguay: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC.....	259
Table 14	Paraguay: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	262
Table 15	Paraguay: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	263
Table 16	Paraguay: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	264
Table 17	Paraguay: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	265
Table 18	Paraguay: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	266
Table 19	Paraguay: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports.....	267
Table 20	Paraguay: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports	269
Table 21	Paraguay: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport ...	270
Table 1	Peru: Imports by Region or Country of Departure	273
Table 2	Peru: Exports by Region or Country of Destination	274
Table 3	Peru: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	275
Table 4	Peru: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC.....	276
Table 5	Peru: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	277
Table 6	Peru: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC.....	278
Table 7	Peru: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	279
Table 8	Peru: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	280
Table 9	Peru: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	281
Table 10	Peru: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	283
Table 11	Peru: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	284
Table 12	Peru: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	285

Table 13	Peru: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC	288
Table 14	Peru: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC	291
Table 15	Peru: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	293
Table 16	Peru: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	294
Table 17	Peru: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	295
Table 18	Peru: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	296
Table 19	Peru: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports	297
Table 20	Peru: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports	299
Table 21	Peru: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport	300
Table 1	Uruguay: Imports by Region or Country of Departure	303
Table 2	Uruguay: Exports by Region or Country of Destination	304
Table 3	Uruguay: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC	305
Table 4	Uruguay: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC ..	306
Table 5	Uruguay: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	307
Table 6	Uruguay: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC ..	308
Table 7	Uruguay: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC	309
Table 8	Uruguay: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC	310
Table 9	Uruguay: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC	311
Table 10	Uruguay: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	313
Table 11	Uruguay: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC	314
Table 12	Uruguay: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	315
Table 13	Uruguay: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC	318
Table 14	Uruguay: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC	321
Table 15	Uruguay: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	323
Table 16	Uruguay: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	324
Table 17	Uruguay: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	325
Table 18	Uruguay: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value	326
Table 19	Uruguay: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports	327
Table 20	Uruguay: Freight and Insurance by one-digit Commodity for Imports	329
Table 21	Uruguay: Expenditure on Freight and Insurance in USD by Mode of Transport ..	330
Table 1	Venezuela: Imports by Region or Country of Departure	333
Table 2	Venezuela: Exports by Region or Country of Destination	334
Table 3	Venezuela: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC	335
Table 4	Venezuela: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	336
Table 5	Venezuela: Imports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	337
Table 6	Venezuela: Exports by SITC one-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC .	338
Table 7	Venezuela: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC	339
Table 8	Venezuela: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC	340

Table 9	Venezuela: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	341
Table 10	Venezuela: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	343
Table 11	Venezuela: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	344
Table 12	Venezuela: Imports By Mode of Transport and SITC one-digit Commodity Group from LAC	345
Table 13	Venezuela: Imports by Country and Mode of Transport from LAC.....	347
Table 14	Venezuela: Imports by Region and Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	350
Table 15	Venezuela: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	352
Table 16	Venezuela: Imports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group from LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	353
Table 17	Venezuela: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for outside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	354
Table 18	Venezuela: Exports by SITC two-digit Commodity Group bound for inside LAC Top 10, ranked by Value.....	355

Figures

Figure 1	Argentina: Imports by Region of Departure.....	31
Figure 2	Argentina: Exports by Region of Destination.....	32
Figure 3	Argentina: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	33
Figure 4	Argentina: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC.....	34
Figure 5	Argentina: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC.....	35
Figure 6	Argentina: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC.....	36
Figure 7	Argentina: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	37
Figure 8	Argentina: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	38
Figure 9	Argentina: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	41
Figure 10	Argentina: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	42
Figure 11	Argentina: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF.....	55
Figure 12	Argentina: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton..	55
Figure 13	Argentina: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF...	57
Figure 1	Bolivia: Imports by Region of Departure.....	61
Figure 2	Bolivia: Exports by Region of Destination.....	62
Figure 3	Bolivia: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	63
Figure 4	Bolivia: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC.....	64
Figure 5	Bolivia: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC.....	65
Figure 6	Bolivia: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC.....	66
Figure 7	Bolivia: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	67
Figure 8	Bolivia: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	68
Figure 9	Bolivia: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	72
Figure 10	Bolivia: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	73
Figure 11	Bolivia: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF.....	87
Figure 12	Bolivia: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton.....	87
Figure 13	Bolivia: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF.....	89
Figure 1	Brazil: Imports by Region of Departure.....	93

Figure 2	Brazil: Exports by Region of Destination	94
Figure 3	Brazil: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC	95
Figure 4	Brazil: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	96
Figure 5	Brazil: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC.....	97
Figure 6	Brazil: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC	98
Figure 7	Brazil: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	99
Figure 8	Brazil: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC	100
Figure 9	Brazil: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	103
Figure 10	Brazil: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	104
Figure 11	Brazil: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF	117
Figure 12	Brazil: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton.....	117
Figure 13	Brazil: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF	119
Figure 1	Chile: Imports by Region of Departure.....	123
Figure 2	Chile: Exports by Region of Destination	124
Figure 3	Chile: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC	125
Figure 4	Chile: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	126
Figure 5	Chile: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC.....	127
Figure 6	Chile: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC	128
Figure 7	Chile: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	129
Figure 8	Chile: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	130
Figure 9	Chile: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	133
Figure 10	Chile: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	134
Figure 11	Chile: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF	147
Figure 12	Chile: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton.....	147
Figure 13	Chile: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF	149
Figure 1	Colombia: Imports by Region of Departure.....	153
Figure 2	Colombia: Exports by Region of Destination	154
Figure 3	Colombia: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC	155
Figure 4	Colombia: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	156
Figure 5	Colombia: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC.....	157
Figure 6	Colombia: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC	158
Figure 7	Colombia: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	159
Figure 8	Colombia: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	160
Figure 9	Colombia: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	163
Figure 10	Colombia: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	164
Figure 11	Colombia: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF	177
Figure 12	Colombia: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton	177
Figure 13	Colombia: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF .	179
Figure 1	Ecuador: Imports by Region of Departure	183
Figure 2	Ecuador: Exports by Region of Destination	184
Figure 3	Ecuador: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	185
Figure 4	Ecuador: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	186
Figure 5	Ecuador: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC	187
Figure 6	Ecuador: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC	188

Figure 7	Ecuador: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	189
Figure 8	Ecuador: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	190
Figure 9	Ecuador: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	193
Figure 10	Ecuador: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	194
Figure 11	Ecuador: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF.....	207
Figure 12	Ecuador: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton ..	207
Figure 13	Ecuador: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF....	209
Figure 1	Mexico: Imports by Region of Departure	213
Figure 2	Mexico: Exports by Region of Destination.....	214
Figure 3	Mexico: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	215
Figure 4	Mexico: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC.....	216
Figure 5	Mexico: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC	217
Figure 6	Mexico: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC.....	218
Figure 7	Mexico: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	219
Figure 8	Mexico: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	220
Figure 9	Mexico: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	224
Figure 10	Mexico: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	225
Figure 11	Mexico: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF.....	239
Figure 12	Mexico: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton ..	239
Figure 13	Mexico: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF.....	241
Figure 1	Paraguay: Imports by Region of Departure.....	245
Figure 2	Paraguay: Exports by Region of Destination	246
Figure 3	Paraguay: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC	247
Figure 4	Paraguay: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	248
Figure 5	Paraguay: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC.....	249
Figure 6	Paraguay: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC	250
Figure 7	Paraguay: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC	251
Figure 8	Paraguay: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	252
Figure 9	Paraguay: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC.....	255
Figure 10	Paraguay: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	256
Figure 11	Paraguay: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF.....	268
Figure 12	Paraguay: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton.	268
Figure 13	Paraguay: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF ..	270
Figure 1	Peru: Imports by Region of Departure	273
Figure 2	Peru: Exports by Region of Destination.....	274
Figure 3	Peru: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC.....	275
Figure 4	Peru: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC.....	276
Figure 5	Peru: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC	277
Figure 6	Peru: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC.....	278
Figure 7	Peru: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	279
Figure 8	Peru: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	280
Figure 9	Peru: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	283
Figure 10	Peru: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	284

Figure 11	Peru: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF	298
Figure 12	Peru: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton	298
Figure 13	Peru: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF	300
Figure 1	Uruguay: Imports by Region of Departure.....	303
Figure 2	Uruguay: Exports by Region of Destination	304
Figure 3	Uruguay: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC	305
Figure 4	Uruguay: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	306
Figure 5	Uruguay: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC.....	307
Figure 6	Uruguay: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC.....	308
Figure 7	Uruguay: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	309
Figure 8	Uruguay: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	310
Figure 9	Uruguay: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	313
Figure 10	Uruguay: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	314
Figure 11	Uruguay: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Imports, Percent of Imports CIF	328
Figure 12	Uruguay: Freight and Insurance by Mode of Transport for Import, USD per Ton..	328
Figure 13	Uruguay: Freight and Insurance, by Mode of Transport, Percent of Imports CIF...	330
Figure 1	Venezuela: Imports by Region of Departure.....	333
Figure 2	Venezuela: Exports by Region of Destination	334
Figure 3	Venezuela: Imports by Commodity Group from outside LAC	335
Figure 4	Venezuela: Exports by Commodity Group bound for outside LAC	336
Figure 5	Venezuela: Imports by Commodity Group from LAC.....	337
Figure 6	Venezuela: Exports by Commodity Group bound for inside LAC.....	338
Figure 7	Venezuela: Imports by Mode of Transport from outside LAC.....	339
Figure 8	Venezuela: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for outside LAC.....	340
Figure 9	Venezuela: Imports by Mode of Transport from LAC	343
Figure 10	Venezuela: Exports by Mode of Transport bound for inside LAC.....	344

Maps

Map 1	Countries covered by the BTI	18
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Abbreviations

BADECEL	Foreign Trade Data Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean
BTI	International Transport Data Base (“Base de datos de Transporte Internacional”)
CIF	Cost, Insurance, Freight
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
exc.	Excluding
FOB	Free on Board
Kg	Kilogram
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
n.a.	Not available or not applicable
n.d.	Not declared
North America	United States and Canada, only
Other LAC	Latin American and Caribbean Countries excluding the 11 reporting countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela)
SITC	Standard International Trade Classification ¹
ton	Metric ton
USD	United States Dollar

¹ See <http://esa.un.org/unsd/cr/family2.asp?CI=14> for a description of the Standard International Trade Classification of the United Nations.

Summary

The document consists of two main parts: first, the Introduction explains the scope and content of the BTI (International Transport Database) maintained by ECLAC's Transport Unit. It covers annual trade and transport statistics of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Readers are informed about the fields of information included in the data base, and, if interested, will thus be in a position to request more specific statistical information on a case by case basis from ECLAC's Transport Unit.

The second part of the document contains detailed tables and charts about the value and volume of imports and exports of the eleven Latin American countries covered by the BTI. It also includes information about the use of different transport modes, the costs of international freight and insurance, and the traded commodities. Data is annual, for the year 2000, and grouped by the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) codes.

Introduction

Purpose of this document

The International Trade and Transport Profiles respond to frequent requests received by ECLAC's Transport Unit for statistical information from its International Transport Database (BTI). Using data recently incorporated for the year 2000, the document endeavours to serve two main purposes:

First: to inform about the major trade flows of eleven Latin American countries, their volume and value, countries of departure and destination, and the modes of transport. For this purpose, general queries were performed to summarize and describe intra- and interregional trade and transport information.

Second: to illustrate what type of more specific queries can be made to the BTI. The database contains more than three million data entries per year, which are virtually impossible to represent in their entirety in a printed document. However, based on the tables presented below, readers will be in a position to formulate more detailed queries, combining the different fields of information covered by the BTI. ECLAC's Transport Unit will respond to requests sent to bti@eclac.cl.

Information covered

The BTI includes annual data for 1997 to 2000. It covers the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Map 1
COUNTRIES COVERED BY THE BTI



Source: ECLAC

Note: Boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

The BTI includes the following fields:

- Mode of transport by which the merchandise leaves from or arrives in the country.
- Product, classified according to a) the harmonized system², and b) the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC)³, Rev 3, up to the five digit level.
- Country of origin and departure (in the case of imports) and country of destination (in the case of exports).
- Tonnage (metric tons), in this context denominated as “volume”.

² See <http://www.un.org/Depts/unsd/statcom/wcopaper.pdf> for a description of the Harmonized System by the World Customs Organization (WCO).

³ See <http://esa.un.org/unsd/cr/family2.asp?CI=14> for a description of the Standard International Trade Classification of the United Nations.

- Value of exports FOB, imports FOB, and imports CIF⁴.
- The difference between imports FOB and CIF reflects the international transport and insurance costs.

For 2000, Venezuela does not inform the CIF value of imports. Bolivia provides incomplete information about the mode of transport. Chile provides incomplete information about the volume of its trade. Instead, it includes information about units for some commodities. Accordingly, in this document some of the information about Venezuela, Bolivia, and Chile is “not available”.

This document attempts to portray the best estimate of the true movements of goods from and to Latin American countries. To achieve this, based on data as informed by the importing countries, we report on cargo flows from the “country of departure”. In cases where this is not informed, we use the “country of origin” instead, as the best approximation for the “country of departure”. In most cases, country of departure and country of origin coincide, and it can be assumed that if a Customs declaration leaves the field for “country of departure” empty, then this coincides with the information provided in “country of origin”. This correction affects approximately 1% of trade volumes.

Basis of reporting

The BTI was created by ECLAC’s Transport Unit in 1999 as part of a research project on the determinants of international transport costs. At that time, existing trade data bases did not include transport related information. The statistics are derived from the Foreign Trade Data Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean (BADECEL), maintained by the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC. It represents information processed by each country’s national customs service.

Although the BTI was originally created for internal use at ECLAC, its Transport Unit is now also able to respond to external queries, depending on the availability of data and staff time. More information about the scope and coverage of the BTI is available in ECLAC’s Maritime Profile of Latin America and the Caribbean, LC/W.001 (www.eclac.cl/transporte/perfil) and also in the FAL Bulletin 168 (www.eclac.cl/Transporte/noticias/bolfall/9/6019/FAL168_en.html).

Terminology

Mode of transport

The transport mode is defined as the means of transport employed at the moment the traded goods cross the informing country’s border, including territorial water limits. It is thus possible that the same commercial transaction is reported as using one mode of transport by the exporting country, and a different mode of transport by the importing country. For example, cargo may leave Mexico on a deep draft vessel (transport mode “maritime”) and arrive in Paraguay on a shallow draft vessel (transport mode “river”) after transshipment in Buenos Aires, or by truck (transport mode “truck”) after transit through Montevideo. Moreover, it is possible that imports from overseas are registered as entering a country by truck or rail after being unloaded from an aeroplane or ship in a neighbouring country’s airport or seaport.

⁴ See <http://www.iccwbo.org/incoterms/preambles.asp> for a description of the Incoterms by the International Chamber of Commerce. The terms “FOB” and “CIF” are used in a broader sense by the BTI as it is not possible to cover all alternative agreements between importers and exporters. “FOB” is used to describe the value of the good prior to its export, and “CIF” is used to describe its value upon arrival in the importing country, after payment of insurance and international transport costs.

For most Latin American countries, however, the mode of transport used for the main part of the journey tends to be also the mode in which the commodity arrives at the importing country's border; i.e., the statistical information which covers the "mode of transport" reflects by which mode of transport the different commodities are moved between the countries. The main exceptions are Bolivia and Paraguay, where a relevant proportion of overseas trade is moved through neighbouring South American countries' ports, and also Mexico, where an important part of overseas trade enters North America via US ports.

For some tables and charts, we chose to group different modes of transport together. The terminology used is described in Table 1.

Table 1
CLASSIFICATION OF TRANSPORT MODES

Code	Classification	First aggregation	Second aggregation
1	Deep Draft Vessel	Waterborne	Waterborne
2	Shallow Draft Vessel River		
3	Shallow Draft Vessel Lake		
4	Airborne	Airborne	Airborne
6	Rail	Rail	Truck and Rail
7	Truck	Truck	
5	Postal	Other modes	Other modes and not declared
8	Pipeline		
9	Other		
0	Not declared	Not declared	

Source: ECLAC, based on data concept from BTI

The definitions of the classifications are:

- **Deep draft vessel.** Barges, ships, or ferries operating primarily on the high seas.
- **Shallow draft vessel river:** Barges, ships, or ferries operating primarily on rivers and canals.
- **Shallow draft vessel lake:** Barges, ships, or ferries operating primarily on lakes.
- **Airborne:** commercial or private aircraft.
- **Postal:** Delivery Services, packages, and other small shipments that typically have low weight, or for which the weight or value is not necessarily registered.
- **Truck:** Private and for-Hire Trucks.
- **Rail:** Any common carrier or private railway.
- **Pipeline:** Movements of oil, petroleum, gas, slurry etc. by tube.
- **Other:** Any mode not specified above.
- **Not declared:** Mode of transport not reported by the reporting country.

Country of origin, departure, and destination

For exports, the reporting country informs of the destination of the goods, as declared to Customs by the exporter. For imports, the Customs declaration should inform separately about the country where the goods come from originally, i.e. where they are "made", and also about the country of departure, i.e. where the good is purchased. Thus, it may be that a good is, for example,

made in Malaysia (country of origin), but the country of departure is Singapore because this is where the wholesaler who appears in the Bill of Lading has his warehouse. Transshipment or transit without an underlying commercial transaction is not reported. In practice, most data entries of the BTI report the same country of departure and country of origin. The field “country of departure” is left empty more often than the field “country of origin”. Sample evidence suggests that many Customs declarations actually appear to reflect the country of departure where they should report the country of origin. As a result of the globalization of production processes, it is in any case becoming increasingly difficult to identify a single “country of origin”. This is potentially a problem for trade analysis. Since in this report we are looking at the physical movement of goods, the country of departure is actually more relevant than the country of origin. The present document, therefore, informs about the “country of departure”.

Commodities

To distinguish commodities, in this document, we use the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), 3rd revision, with commodity groupings at the one- and two-digit level. The table below lists the commodity groups and their associated codes. Further descriptions are available in ECLAC’s Maritime Profile under www.eclac.cl/transporte/perfil/tools.asp

Table 2
SITC ONE- AND TWO-DIGIT CODES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Code	SITC Description		
0	food and live animals	28	metalliferous ores and metal scrap
	live animals other than fish, crustaceans, molluscs and aquatic invertebrates of division 03	29	crude animal and vegetable materials, n.e.s.
01	meat and meat preparations	3	mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials
02	dairy products and birds' eggs	32	coal, coke and briquettes
03	fish (not marine mammals), crustaceans, molluscs and aquatic invertebrates, and preparations thereof	33	petroleum, petroleum products and related materials
04	cereals and cereal preparations	34	gas, natural and manufactured
05	vegetables and fruit	35	electric current
06	sugars, sugar preparations and honey	4	animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes
07	coffee, tea, cocoa, spices and manufactures thereof	41	animal oils and fats
08	feeding stuff for animals (not including unmilled cereals)	42	fixed vegetable fats and oils, crude, refined or fractionated
09	miscellaneous edible products and preparations	43	animal or vegetable fats and oils processed; waxes and inedible mixtures or preparations of animal or vegetable fats or oils, n.e.s.
1	beverages and tobacco	5	chemicals and related products, n.e.s.
11	beverages	51	organic chemicals
12	tobacco and tobacco manufactures	52	inorganic chemicals
2	crude materials, inedible, except fuels	53	dyeing, tanning and colouring materials
21	hides, skins and furskins, raw	54	medicinal and pharmaceutical products
22	oil seeds and oleaginous fruits	55	essential oils and resinoids and perfume materials; toilet, polishing and cleansing preparations
23	crude rubber (including synthetic and reclaimed)	56	fertilizers (exports include group 272; imports exclude group 272)
24	cork and wood	57	plastics in primary forms
25	pulp and waste paper	58	plastics in nonprimary forms
26	textile fibers (other than wool tops and other combed wool) and their wastes(not manufactured into yarn or fabric)	59	chemical materials and products, n.e.s.
27	crude fertilizers (imports only), except those of division 56, and crude minerals (excluding coal, petroleum and precious stones)		

Table 2 (continued)

6	manufactured goods classified chiefly by material	79	transport equipment, n.e.s.
61	leather, leather manufactures, n.e.s., and dressed furskins	8	miscellaneous manufactured articles
62	rubber manufactures, n.e.s.	81	prefabricated buildings; sanitary, plumbing, heating and lighting fixtures and fittings, n.e.s.
63	cork and wood manufactures other than furniture	82	furniture and parts thereof; bedding, mattresses, mattress supports, cushions and similar stuffed furnishings
64	paper, paperboard, and articles of paper pulp, paper or paper board	83	travel goods, handbags and similar containers
65	textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles, n.e.s., and related products	84	articles of apparel and clothing accessories
66	nonmetallic mineral manufactures, n.e.s.	85	footwear
67	iron and steel	87	professional, scientific and controlling instruments and apparatus, n.e.s.
68	nonferrous metals	88	photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies and optical goods, n.e.s.; watches and clocks
69	manufactures of metals, n.e.s.	89	miscellaneous manufactured articles, n.e.s.
7	machinery and transport equipment	9	commodities and transactions not classified elsewhere in the sitc
71	power generating machinery and equipment	91	
72	machinery specialised for particular industries	93	special transactions and commodities not classified according to kind
73	metalworking machinery	96	coin (other than gold coin), not being legal tender
74	general industrial machinery and equipment, n.e.s., and machine parts, n.e.s.	97	gold, nonmonetary (excluding gold ores and concentrates)
75	office machines and automatic data processing machines	99	estimate of non-canadian low value shipments; compiled low value shipments to canada; and various export shipments not identified by kind
76	telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment		
77	electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, n.e.s., and electrical parts thereof (including nonelectrical counterparts of household type, n.e.s.)		
78	road vehicles (including air-cushion vehicles)		

Source: Standard International Trade Classification Revision 3, United Nations 1986

Volume, value and international transport costs

The value of imports is reported CIF and FOB in USD. The value of exports is only available FOB. The volume of imports and exports is reported in metric tons. Although physically speaking a “ton” is a measure of weight, it is common practice us the term “volume” when talking about shipments of cargo (see for example UNCTAD, *Review of Maritime Transport 2001*, Geneva, December 2001).

The value of imports CIF is derived by Customs by adding the value of imports FOB and the expenditure on international freight and insurance. Equivalently, by subtracting the value of imports FOB from the value of imports CIF, the cost of international transport (freight and insurance) is obtained.

Incomplete and inconsistent data

The statistical information contained in the BTI, and thus also in this document, is prone to potential reliability problems likely to affect any data base on international trade. The main sources of error are: firstly, mistakes made by Customs’ officials when filling out declaration forms; secondly, incomplete or erroneous declarations on behalf of the importer or exporter; thirdly, systematically inconsistent information; and, fourthly, missing data.

Mistakes made by Customs officials do not usually lead to systematic errors. There is surely a “noise”, or random error, but our experience with anecdotal evidence and feed-back received from users suggests that such errors make up less than one percent of reported information.

Wrong or fraudulent declarations can not be excluded. On average, the exporting countries tend to report slightly higher values than the importing countries, suggesting that possibly sometimes exports are declared that do not actually take place or that importers do not declare the full value of their purchases. In general, however, we assume that such under- or over reporting does not systematically affect the validity of the main statistical aggregates of the BTI.

The correct identification of the “country of origin” is increasingly difficult in a world of globalized production. Equivalently, the “country of departure” may be difficult to identify if international trading houses, duty free zones, transshipment centres, or transit ports are involved. Statistics on bilateral trade flows as reported by the exporting or importing country rarely coincide. Each country may have different criteria regarding valuation, exchange rates and commodity codification. Cargo may leave a country in December of one year and arrive in January of the next, or goods may even be sold to a new importer while en-route. The latter is particularly common in the case of oil.

Finally, some reporting countries do not yet provide the complete range of statistical information required by the BTI. As mentioned above, in 2000, Venezuela does not inform the CIF value of imports, Bolivia provides incomplete information about the mode of transport, and Chile provides incomplete information about the volume of some commodities.

Cargo traffic in energy commodities

In the following sections, we exclude all imports and exports of fuels and other energy commodities (SITC 3). This is done for the following three reasons:

First: trade in energy commodities is comparatively unrelated to other trade flows. The countries of origin are those which have the natural resources of oil, coal and gas, and traffics are mostly determined by the world price of oil and general economic growth, and less by other factors that may influence trade and transport in other commodities (such as tariffs, geography, distance, transport costs, or economic blocks). In particular oil is moved in specialized liquid bulk vessels and port facilities, which have little in common with dry cargo vessels and terminals. Energy commodities require specialized vessels, pipelines, or even “other modes of transport” to move, for example, electrical current. All the above justifies that commodities of SITC section 3 be treated separately from others.

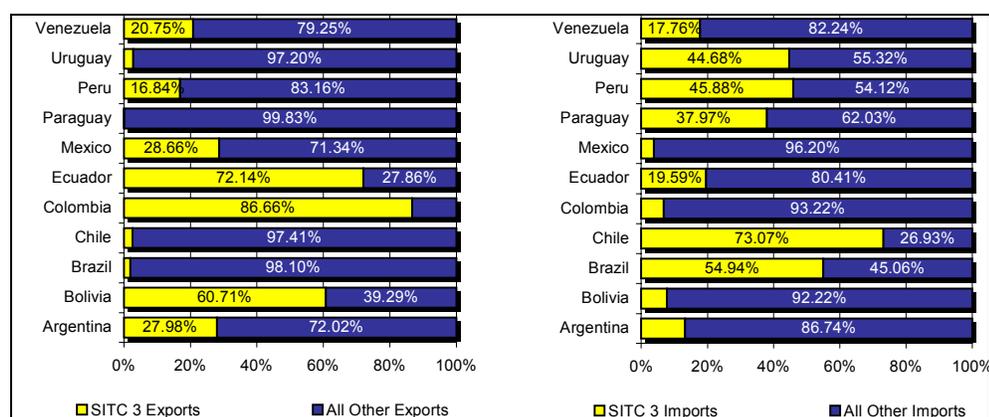
Second: the BTI data for trade in SITC 3 commodities is less reliable and complete than the data for other traffics. In particular, it is very common that oil is bought and sold while it is still being transported, after which the reported “country of departure” tends to be the “Cayman Islands” because this is where many oil trading companies have their official offices. Venezuela does not inform about the mode of transport for its oil exports. Also, it appears that restrictions of the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC) concerning maximum export volumes may encourage oil exporting countries not to report completely all their exports. Looking at bilateral trade flows, trade in SITC 3 commodities appears to be the only one where the exporting country’s reported volumes are generally below the volumes as reported by the importing country. Finally, estimating the tonnage of flows of gas or even electrical energy poses special problems.

Third: almost all trade in energy commodities is waterborne, which makes it rather uninteresting to analyze its modal split. Its transport is usually undertaken by specialized private transport providers, and the vessels and terminals are often owned or chartered by the cargo owner

himself. There are thus usually no common user (“public”) ports or carriers involved, which reduces the need for public entities such as ECLAC to undertake research on these traffics.

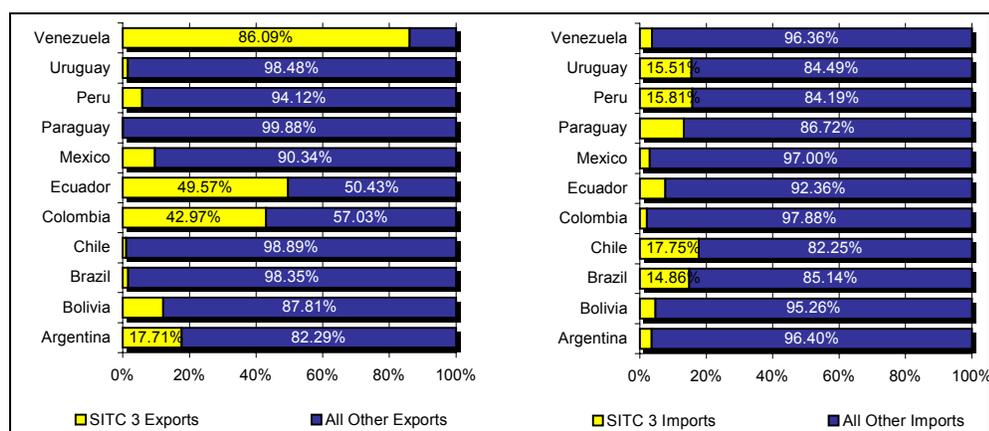
The following three illustrations provide a general overview of the trade in energy commodities. Three countries depend highly on energy exports. These are mainly SITC 33 (petroleum, petroleum products and related materials) in Venezuela and Ecuador, and SITC 32 (coal, coke and briquettes) in the case of Colombia. Considering imports, countries depend on SITC 3 commodities for between 2% (Colombia) and 18% (Chile) of their imports. Readers who are interested in more detailed information may contact bti@eclac.cl.

Illustration 1
PERCENTAGE OF SITC 3 COMMODITY GROUP IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, VOLUME



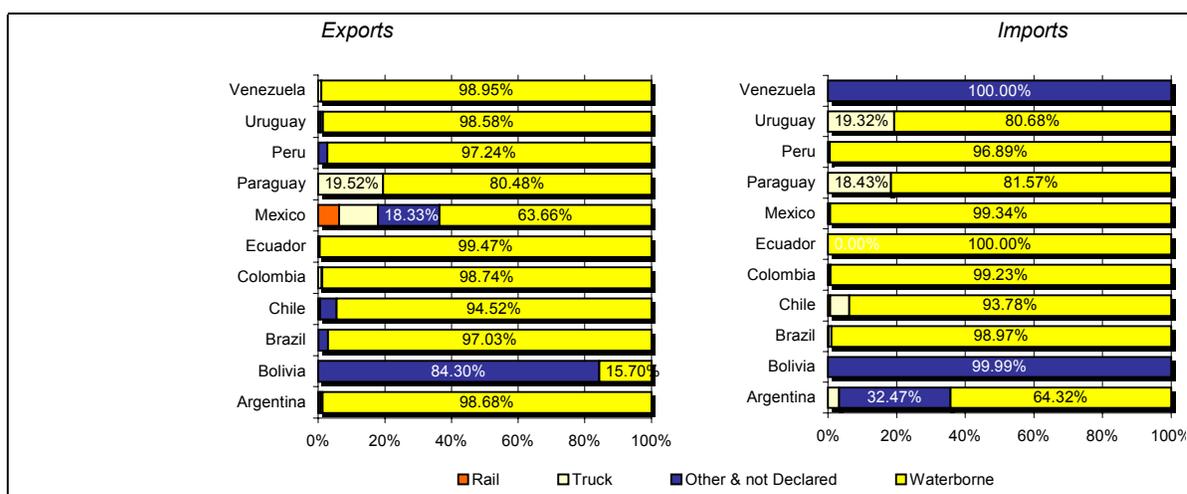
Source: ECLAC, Transport Unit

Illustration 2
PERCENTAGE OF SITC 3 COMMODITY GROUP IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, VALUE (FOB)



Source: ECLAC, Transport Unit

Illustration 3
MODAL SPLIT FOR SITC 3 COMMODITIES, VOLUME



Source: ECLAC, Transport Unit

Sample information of interest

Looking at the individual country profiles, some results may be worthy of note. They are by no means meant to be comprehensive, but rather it is intended to illustrate by way of example what type of conclusions can be drawn from the tables and charts presented in the chapters to follow. The reader is reminded that SITC 3 commodities are not included in these comparisons.

Trade imbalances: Most countries have bigger trade imbalances for volume of their trade than for value. For Mexico's foreign trade, for example, the relation between exports and imports is 1:0.89 in terms of value, yet 1:0.37 in terms of volume; i.e., the trade deficit is far higher in tons than in USD. For Brazil, in terms of value, there is practically no imbalance, yet in terms of volume the relation between exports and imports is 1:2.6.

Air versus waterborne transport: In terms of volume, waterborne transport is far more dominant than in terms of value. For Colombia's imports from outside Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), for example, airborne transport accounts for only 1.3% of its volume, but it makes up 35.6% of its value. Correspondingly, if measured as percent of the cargo's value, airborne transport often appears equally expensive as waterborne transport, yet if measured in USD per ton, it becomes clearly the most costly mode of transport.

Argentina: Regarding volume, Argentina imports more from Latin American and Caribbean countries, whereas in terms of value, it imports more from other regions, mostly Europe and North America. 46.9% of imports (tons) come from Brazil. Exports bound for outside LAC are mainly food items, whereas exports bound for inside LAC include more manufactured goods.

Bolivia: Regarding volume, 35% of Bolivian exports are destined for Colombia. Looking at trade's value, Europe and North America receive 59% of Bolivia's exports, whereas Colombia accounts for only 15.1%. In terms of volume, more than 82% of Bolivian exports are commodities of SITC 2.

Brazil: Crude materials exc. fuels and food items (SITC 0, 1, 2,4) account for 40% (USD) and 88% (tons) of non-LAC exports. Exports to other Latin American and Caribbean countries, however, consist of a relatively larger proportion of manufactured and chemical products (SITC sections 5 to 9) and the share of crude materials exc. fuel and food items exports is reduced to 12%

(USD) and 63% (Tons) respectively. In terms of volume, 99% of Brazilian exports outside LAC are moved by waterborne transport; 23% of exports to other Latin American and Caribbean countries are moved by truck and rail.

Chile: Airborne exports outside LAC are 25 times as high as imports in terms of volume, whereas in terms of value, Chile actually has a deficit in airborne trade with the same group of countries, imports being more than twice as high as exports. The average value of goods imported from other regions by air is 127 597 USD per ton, whereas the average value of maritime imports is only 811 USD per ton.

Colombia: Over 30% of imports and exports (USD) from/to outside LAC are airborne, but make up less than 4% in volume of total imports/ exports, which is mainly due to Colombia's imports of machinery and transport equipment via airborne transport from North America and Europe. While exports bound for inside LAC are basically moved by equal shares by truck and waterborne transport. Most imports and exports by truck are from and to neighbouring Ecuador and Venezuela. Long distances between the country's ports and Bogotá, its main political, administrative and commercial centre favors the use of air transport.

Ecuador: Ecuadorian exports bound for outside LAC are dominated by food and live animals (SITC 0), which make up for 92% volume and 80% of value. Exports bound for inside LAC underlie the same structure, for these 75% of all exports as food and live animals.

Mexico: Only 4% (tons) of Mexican exports are destined for LAC countries, and only 1% of imports come from LAC. Mexico is the largest LAC exporter, even in terms of volume (208 274 594 tons). 92% of exports (USD) go to the United States and Canada. As most of this cargo is moved by truck, Mexico is the only country covered by the BTI where waterborne transport is not the most dominant mode of transport. More than 50% of imports by truck are of machinery and transport equipment. Mexico is also the only country where international transport by rail plays a significant role, accounting for 14% of all exports (USD), bound for mainly for the United States.

Paraguay: 60% of Paraguay's imports and 77% of exports (USD) are traded with MERCOSUR countries. The most important export commodities belong to SITC section 2 (i.e. oil seeds and oleaginous fruits, textile fibers, cork and wood etc.). In terms of volume, waterborne transport – in this case shallow draft river vessels – account for 72% of exports to and 52% of imports from outside LAC. In absolute terms, by far the biggest amounts of freight and insurance are paid for imports from Brazil (35 million USD) and Argentina (20 million USD).

Peru: Peru's most important export commodity (USD) comprises non-ferruginous metals (SITC 68), more than 99% of which are exported via waterborne transport. In terms of value, 21% of Peru's imports (USD) from outside LAC are airborne.

Uruguay: Other LAC countries account for 65% (tons) and 54% (USD) of Uruguay's exports, Argentina and Brazil being by far the most important trading partners. Regarding imports, 92% (USD) of imports from Brazil are by truck, and 8% are waterborne. Imports from Argentina are 59% by truck and 38% waterborne. Measured as percent of the value of imports CIF, freight and insurance on waterborne imports from Chile (39%) and Ecuador (31%) are particularly high.

Venezuela: 99% (tons) of imports from outside LAC and 84% of imports from LAC are waterborne. 49% of exports are bound for North America.

Outline of this document

The remainder of this document is divided into eleven country specific chapters. Chapters are in alphabetical order by country; pages are numbered within each chapter. In each chapter, we cover the most common information requests we receive from users of the BTI:

- **Trade directions:** Imports and exports by region of departure and destination.
- **Commodities:** Imports and exports by commodity, with country of departure or destination outside LAC, and, separately, with country of departure or destination inside LAC.
- **Mode of transport:** Imports and exports by mode of transport, with country of departure or destination outside LAC, and, separately, with country of departure or destination inside LAC.
- **Mode of transport by commodity:** Imports and exports by mode of transport, with origin or destination outside LAC, and, separately, with origin or destination inside LAC, divided into ten commodity SITC chapters.
- **Mode of transport by country of departure:** Imports by mode of transport, separately for ten Latin American countries of departure and, for the remainder, five regions of departure.
- **Freight and insurance expenditure:** The difference between imports CIF and imports FOB, separately by region of departure, by main commodity group, and by mode of transport.