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RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Hearing with civil society and the private sector

The hearing with civil society and the private sector was held in Geneva on 29 September 2005 and chaired by the outgoing President of the Trade and Development Board (TDB) Ambassador Mary Whelan. Following opening remarks by the Chairperson and the Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD, lead discussants and other participants engaged in a debate on the following agenda items:

- Economic growth and poverty reduction in the 1990s: Lessons from a decade of economic reform for development strategies and global partnerships in the new millennium;
- Interdependence and global economic issues from a trade and development perspective: New features of global interdependence;
- Review of developments and issues in the post-Doha work programme of particular concern to developing countries.

Economic growth and poverty reduction in the 1990s:

Participants expressed their concern that, for many countries, the situation had worsened in the 1990s rather than the contrary and that the period was characterized by stagnation and that many countries had experienced reversals in development terms. The gap between rich and poor had also increased, highlighting the need to re-examine the policies that had been pursued.

Poverty reduction was still a major challenge for many developing countries, despite the good progress that had been achieved in a number of other policy areas. Participants added that judging from past experience, the market would not solve the problem of the poorest segment of the population and that market forces and economic growth alone would not serve to alleviate poverty.

The EU initiative to increase the levels of ODA it would make available was to be welcomed. However, it was still not clear how these higher levels of ODA would be financed; ideally, ODA financing should come from general budgets rather than through additional taxes that could have detrimental effects.

Gender and trade:

Many participants expressed concern about the gender imbalances that still hamper the development prospects of many developing countries and LDCs, despite the contribution made by women in economic activities in many other countries. Concerns were also raised about the lack of recognition for women's activities. Participants called for a holistic approach to addressing issues of concern to women and also expressed the need for gender to be mainstreamed into economic development strategies. UNCTAD was called upon to play a role in strengthening gender in the trade agenda.

Interdependence and global economic issues from a trade and development perspective:

The debate focused on the need to look at alternatives to the development model of world financial capitalism. Participants drew attention to the asymmetry in international trade between countries. Rich countries tabled their own proposals, but had not been open to developing fair policies that would also benefit poorer countries.

Civil society participants raised the question of how to protect the informal economy which had been adversely affected by exclusive development. They argued that countries should take joint responsibility for this and that the problems of inequality and poverty should be approached by different sectors. Participants pointed out the absence of legal support for illegal immigrants on remittances; this was important as immigrants were key players in their economies when they remitted money to their countries of origin, and also contributed to the economies of developed countries. This was a reality for all regions in the South. Participants argued that specific measures had to be developed to protect these workers and sustain remittances. A debate had taken place in the WTO on related issues, but poor countries tended to remain marginalized. All countries should form part of the debate and their views should be respected.

Review of developments and issues in the post-Doha work programme of particular concern to developing countries:

Civil society participants stressed that the Doha work programme had been adopted as an agenda for development to address the concerns raised by developing countries. Development should therefore be at the heart of the commitment to help integrate developing countries into the multilateral trading system, in the absence of an alternative to a broad-based development strategy.

Intellectual property rights:

On the question of intellectual property rights, civil society participants suggested that UNCTAD could focus on:

- strengthening and mainstreaming a balanced holistic approach towards intellectual property and development into its work;
- drawing attention to issues of concern to developing countries; and
- promoting coherence between UNCTAD and the work of other UN organizations on intellectual property and development.

The outcome of the hearing with civil society and the private sector http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/tdb52d9_en.pdf was summarized by the secretariat and submitted as an input to the Board discussions. A representative from Third World Network presented the report to the TDB on 11 October 2005.

The Trade and Development Board in its 52nd session

In his welcoming remarks at the opening of the Trade Development Board, UNCTAD's new Secretary-General, Supachai Panitchpakdi, said the organization would work to make itself more relevant in a rapidly changing world. The test, he said, would be achieving results on the ground that have the greatest possible impact on beneficiary countries, notably through: policy analyses and technical cooperation programmes that are practical and effective; providing assistance to developing nations during the Doha round of the World Trade Organization negotiations to enable them to protect their interests, expand their trade, and improve their competitiveness; achieving progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals; and strengthening and streamlining UNCTAD's activities to ensure that it can respond effectively to present and future challenges. At the opening session of the Board, the Minister of Trade and Industry of Ghana conveyed Ghana's offer to host UNCTAD XII in 2008. This offer was endorsed by the African Union and was welcomed by delegations.

The 52nd session of the TDB focused on economic growth and poverty reduction. During a high-level discussion on lessons learned from development and economic reform efforts of the 1990s participants remarked that there was no blanket prescription for economic progress and that investment and aid programmes have to be designed to fit specific national and even local situations. Participants agreed that development cooperation has to be matched by reforms in recipient countries; aid will never work nor will consistent foreign investment be attracted unless corruption is fought and existing governance and investment policies are effective and transparent. Yet it is clear that development policies also have to be home-grown and tailored to match local and regional circumstances. 'Best practices' do not present the best and easiest way out of development difficulties as what works in one place does not necessarily work in another.

Several regional groups and individual countries stressed that social programmes and anti-poverty efforts need to be supported to some acceptable minimum standard regardless of a country's economic performance; it was therefore clear that greater international commitment was needed to combat poverty. Concerned countries need to do more themselves to spur economic growth and increase domestic investment and governments need to retain 'ownership' of their development programmes. Good governance and anti-corruption efforts need to be expanded and history, culture, and politics have to be taken into account in devising development policies. Unrestrained globalization in the 1990s have left developing nations vulnerable to currency fluctuations, capital flight, erratic patterns of investment, and a marginalized role as exporters of raw materials.

Mr. Pascal Lamy, WTO Director-General, addressed the Board during its discussions on review of developments and issues in the post-Doha work programme of particular concern to developing countries, and said that his organization and UNCTAD were cooperating in their work on special and differential treatment (SDT), erosion of preferences and aid for trade to be granted to developing countries.

Representatives of the regional groups all stressed the need to maintain SDT in order to meet the needs of developing countries in the areas of development, financing and trade. Trade was not an end in itself, they said, but rather a means for promoting development. Tariff and non-tariff barriers should be progressively reduced and then eliminated altogether, several speakers said, with a view to restoring the balance of global trade.

To make the Doha Round a success, a 'Doha-Plus' trade-enabling development cooperation agenda was needed, Mr. Supachai said. This would involve helping to meet adjustment costs, including those arising from the expiration of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, loss of fiscal revenue and preference erosion. Aid for trade, in addition to aid for development, was particularly relevant for LDCs and small, vulnerable economies. UNCTAD would continue to develop project proposals with developing countries and the donor community that addressed the needs of these countries at the national, regional and multilateral levels. UNCTAD sought to play a complementary role in the Doha work programme through its research and policy analysis, intergovernmental consensus-building, technical assistance and capacity-building,

Representatives from civil society organizations highlighted the fundamental relationship between trade policies and trade rules. Trade policies must be formulated so as to promote development, and trade rules must allow for this. When discussing liberalization, countries often thought of the expanded export opportunities that could be achieved; however, it was crucial to also consider the impact of liberalization on the importing sector. As shown in studies by various academics and NGOs, this impact was often damaging and devastating for agricultural as well as industrial products. The development deficit in the Doha work programme was more evident than the development dimension.

The debate at the session *on reviewing the progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010* concluded by adopting agreed conclusions that acknowledged the contribution of preferential market access to the economic growth and development of LDCs and reiterated its appreciation to LDCs' trading partners who have granted or have taken initiatives toward granting duty- and quota-free market access to LDCs for all products of export interest to them. The conclusions invited other trading partners of LDCs who are in a position to do so to take similar measures.

The global trend towards eliminating tariffs can benefit poorer nations by opening up new trade opportunities, but some countries could be affected by the loss of preferences given to some of their export products by industrialized nations. The Board called for greater international support to enable LDCs to enhance their productive capacities, diversify their economies into non-preference-dependent activities, improve their use of the preferences they do receive and help them deal with any adverse effects from the loss of preferences. The Board also supported UNCTAD's work to help LDCs, including the Integrated Framework through which a country's trade, development and anti-poverty policies are coordinated to achieve maximum impact.

In considering economic development in Africa: The role of foreign direct investment in growth and development, participants welcomed the conclusions of an UNCTAD report on the benefits of economic integration and its call for agreement on the nature and extent of tax breaks and other incentives for foreign investors. However, the extent to which such agreements could hold in the scramble for limited FDI was debatable.

UNCTAD's report highlighted the dilemma of African countries accepting FDI and invariably foreclosing effective competition in the relevant industry. This could be dealt with through policy realignment taking place in a managed liberalization process, which took into consideration the specificities of the African situation.

For further information, please consult the UNCTAD website at: www.unctad.org

Expert Meeting on Trade Facilitation as an Engine for Development

With its inclusion in the WTO General Council Decision (the July Package), trade facilitation remains at the forefront of the development agenda of most developing countries, with increased activities aimed at raising awareness and capacity building.

Developing countries depend on effective trade facilitation for their development process; they will only benefit from the opportunities arising from the 'new geography of trade', including increased exports of manufactured goods and more South-South trade, if their imports and exports are not confronted with excessive transaction costs, uncertainty and delays.

The Expert Meeting on Trade Facilitation as an Engine for Development which was held from 21 to 23 September 2005 analysed the increased need for trade and transport facilitation and the insertion of facilitation measures into the development process.

Experts discussed ways of establishing national needs and priorities as regards trade and transport facilitation, as well as the requirements in terms of technical assistance and capacity building to implement specific trade facilitation measures that aim at building the required institutional, commercial, legal and operational environment for effective integration into the global economy.

Civil society organizations and private sector entities contributed their views and made presentations (<http://r0.unctad.org/ttl/ttl-ppt-2005-09-21to23.htm>) on priorities and issues discussed at the meeting.

Additional information about the Expert Meeting may be found at: <http://www.unctad.org/ttl>
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Pro-Development Agenda on Services Negotiations: International Civil Society Concerns

Services negotiations represent an opportunity for developing countries to obtain market access in the areas they are interested in, particularly through movement of natural persons. The results of these negotiations may ultimately benefit the poor. Little substantial progress has been achieved to date in this area and few meaningful offers have been made by developed countries. On the other hand, developing countries have been asked to liberalize sectors such as health and education, which could have adverse consequences for these countries. Furthermore, proposals have also been made by certain countries, which seek to alter the positive list architecture of GATS.

The Pro-Development Agenda on Services Negotiations: International Civil Society Concerns was the subject of a meeting co-organized by UNCTAD's India Project and Centre for Trade and Development (Centad), in New Delhi between 15 and 16 November 2005. The overall objective of the meeting was to sensitize and to seek to influence governments on pro-development concerns on services negotiations. International NGOs interested in the area of services participated in this meeting and enriched its deliberations.

The meeting provided a platform for NGOs to express their views on the WTO services negotiations, as well as a channel to feed pro-development opinion into the services negotiations. NGOs met with some of India's key trade negotiators and trade policy makers and obtained a deeper understanding of India's concerns on services negotiations. The main message emerging from NGOs will be widely disseminated and will seek to influence the deliberations at the Hong Kong Ministerial meeting.

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5TH UN Conference on Competition Policy, 14 - 18 November 2005

The Fifth United Nations Conference was held from 14 to 18 November 2005, in Belek (Antalya), Turkey to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices.

This ministerial meeting provided an opportunity for ministers and heads of competition authorities of member States of UNCTAD to discuss the role of competition law and policy in ensuring that anti-competitive practices do not impede or negate the realization of the benefits that should arise from liberalization in globalized markets (São Paulo Consensus). In this connection, the Conference assessed the experience gained so far in the implementation of the UN Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, and made recommendations for possible areas of improvement and effective implementation.

In addition, the Conference held high-level discussions on issues related to techniques for gathering evidence on cartels; the role of economic analysis in competition law enforcement; the role of the judiciary in competition law enforcement; application of competition law and policy to the informal sector; and how to operationalize special and differential treatment for developing countries in competition law and policy.

The Conference provided guidance to UNCTAD on its future work programme in this area, including technical assistance and capacity building for developing countries and LDCs, as well as economies in transition.

Directly concerned civil society organizations were invited to contribute to the Conference.

Dynamic and New Sectors of World Trade

The Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities, at its eighth session in 2004 decided to convene for the first time an expert meeting on promoting participation of developing countries in new and dynamic sectors of world trade. In addition, the São Paulo Consensus decided that UNCTAD should conduct sectoral reviews of dynamic sectors of world trade. Dynamic and new sectors of world trade and their products are understood to fall into three broad product categories: (a) those that have displayed consistently high growth and increased share in world trade, including ones in which developing countries have already achieved some export presence; (b) sectors and items already in existence but new on the list of export activities of developing countries; and (c) altogether new areas of trade in which developing countries have a potential comparative advantage.

The first expert meeting on dynamic and new sectors of world trade was held from 5 to 7 February 2005 and considered three sectors: (a) IT-enabled outsourcing of services; (b) renewable energy products, including bio-fuels; and (c) textiles and clothing highlighting the issues on national and international policies and actions to enhance developing country participation. The report of the meeting is available by clicking on the following link ["Report of the Expert Meeting on Strengthening Participation of Developing Countries in Dynamic and New Sectors of World Trade: Trends, Issues and Policies"](#) (TD/B/COM.1/EM.26/3).

The second expert meeting took place from 24 to 26 October 2005 and reviewed national and international policies and actions to enhance developing country participation in the electronics, fish and fishery products, and steel and related specialty products sectors. Particular focus was placed on LDCs and African countries. The meeting was attended by government officials at the ministerial, senior and expert levels from developed and developing countries, and countries with economies in transition, representatives of private companies and industry associations, academics, and representatives of intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Documents relating to the Expert Meeting are available at:

<http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Meeting.asp?intItemID=3412&lang=1>.

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UNCTAD's activities at the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS)

UNCTAD advocates designing and putting in place ICT strategies for economic development. It also supports the development of ICT statistics that help governments define development strategies and monitor progress.

During the World Summit of the Information Society (Tunis, 15-19 November 2005), UNCTAD organized parallel events, presentations, workshops and an exhibition stand. One of the key events at WSIS was the signing of an agreement between UNCTAD and Brazil to improve training and education in the use of free and open - source software (FOSS).

Additional information may be found at <http://ict.unctad.org>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Expert Meeting on ICT and Tourism for Development, 30 November - 2 December 2005

Tourism is an information-intensive sector and has therefore benefited from ICTs. The distribution of tourism information and products over the Internet is the main area where technological innovation has had the most profound impact on tourism enterprises. The diffusion of ICTs enables tourism businesses themselves to make tourism products and services directly available to a large number of consumers at a relatively low cost, and to interact with them, as well as with other tourism producers and distributors. The increasing number of consumers who use the Internet to plan leisure or business trips represents a major incentive for developing countries to organize and develop their tourism supply and its promotion over the Internet. The use of ICTs for tourism development is expected to produce economic benefits by generating increased revenue for the local economy and contributing to local development.

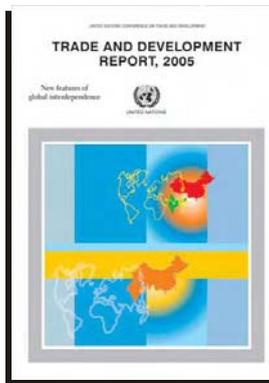
The meeting brought together experts from both developed and developing countries, from international and regional bodies involved in ICTs and tourism issues, and from civil society organizations to learn, through experience-sharing and best practices, how to benefit the most from the opportunities offered by ICTs in the tourism industry. During the meeting experts analysed the process of designing and implementing effective e-tourism strategies and ICT tools from a private and public perspective, based on partnerships among the stakeholders of the tourism industry.

For more information on the meeting, please consult: www.unctad.org

Expert Meeting on Capacity Building in the area of FDI: data compilation and policy formulation in developing countries, 12-14 December 2005

The key issues on foreign direct investment data compilation and analysis and policy formulation in developing countries was at the heart of discussions at this expert meeting. Member States were informed about internationally accepted standards relating to FDI data collection and reporting systems, including with respect to the activities of foreign affiliates in host countries. The expert meeting raised the question of the problems faced developing countries, particularly least developed countries, in providing policy makers with timely and accurate FDI and TNC data that will enable them to make informed decisions and design appropriate policies. The meeting will provide an opportunity for various national and regional agencies to share their expertise and experience with respect to ways and means of addressing those problems.

NEW PUBLICATIONS



UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2005: New Features of Global Interdependence

The Trade and Development Report 2005 was launched on 2 September 2005 by UNCTAD's Secretary-General, Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi. This Report analyses recent trends in the world economy in terms of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and examines new features of global economic interdependence resulting from the rapid growth in the economies of China and India.

The report states that the main engine of growth, the US economy, may run out of steam before other countries or regions are able to take over that role. The countries of the European Monetary Union have been unable to pull out of a long period of economic stagnation, and Japan, despite some improvement, is still struggling with deflation. Instead, several populous Asian countries, in particular China and India, which still have a long way to go to reach the per capita income levels of the world's leading economies, have emerged as new engines of economic growth. Thanks to their vigorous expansion and their appetite for natural resources, many of their developing-country trade partners have, for the first time in 20 years, reaped windfall profits from rising commodity prices and surging demand for intermediate products. UNCTAD economists contend that global current-account imbalances, with the US deficit being the counterpart to two-thirds of the global surplus, have to be tackled in a coordinated, multilateral way if recent progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is not to be lost.

Economic Development in Africa: Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment

In its 2005 report on Economic Development in Africa: Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment, UNCTAD suggests that a focus on attracting FDI may be a poor guide to development policy and may, in certain circumstances, actually distort long-term growth potential. The report argues that a more balanced policy approach is needed if Africa is to benefit from its natural resource abundance and reverse premature de-industrialization.

Policies to attract more FDI through a further push for rapid liberalization and downsizing the state will not suffice and a rethink is now needed. The Report suggests a multi-dimensional approach to the question:

- Take the cost-benefit perspective seriously; gauge the impact of FDI on local costs and profitability, the size of spillovers and linkages and the extent of import dependence and profit repatriation.
- Mix and sequence strategic industrial policies.
- Further process resource-based exports at the domestic level in order to create added value and deepen industrial capacity.
- Enhance the macro policy space.
- Harness FDI to ODA-led infrastructure programmes to galvanize a big financing push.

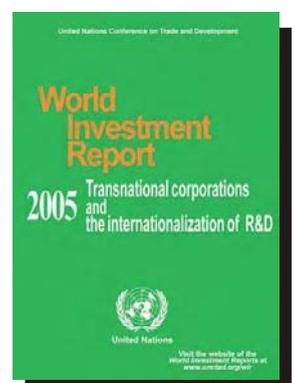
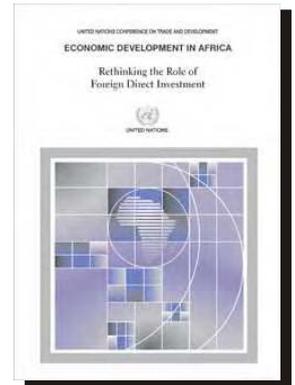
Regional trading arrangements can help expand exports. Larger markets can also attract FDI, including from other developing countries, and can improve bargaining with TNCs through harmonized policies, coordinated taxation systems and other incentives, and improved monitoring of corporations. The report proposes that extractive industries were appropriate sector which could be used to strengthen regional policy coordination. A fresh look at the East Asian experience where industrial policies, FDI and regional dynamics were, to varying degrees, part of a late industrialization drive could also offer useful lessons.

The report also calls for a rethink of the international FDI agenda, particularly where policy space has been constrained in the hope of attracting greater flows. Such a reassessment might usefully begin by mapping the full range of options available to better manage the costs and benefits of hosting FDI, with technical assistance programmes redesigned to better manage integration in light of local needs. Particular attention is also needed with regard to conditionalities on multilateral lending where the 'means' have trumped the 'ends' in designing policies towards FDI.

World Investment Report 2005: Transnational Corporations and the Internationalization of R&D

The World Investment Report 2005 presents the latest trends in foreign direct investment (FDI) and explores the internationalization of research and development by transnational corporations along with the development implications of this phenomenon.

The first part of the report highlights recent global and regional trends in FDI and international production by TNCs. Global FDI flows resumed growth in 2004, but inflows continued to decline in developed countries. This section of the report documents the fact that developing regions are leading the recovery in FDI flows.



The second part assesses the implications of the recent surge in R&D internationalization by TNCs. R&D activities at growing levels of complexity are increasingly being established in selected developing countries. In contrast to past experience, this R&D often goes beyond local market adaptation and involves highly complex activities targeted on global markets. The Report discusses the driving forces behind this trend and considers how host as well as home countries are affected.

The report also analyses the need for active government policies to enhance development benefits from TNCs' internationalization of R&D. It goes on to underline the importance of coherent policies in order to create an environment conducive to fruitful interaction between the R&D activities of TNCs and those of domestic firms and institutions in developing countries.

The World Investment Report and its database are available online at www.unctad.org/wir and www.unctad.org/fdistatistics. A complete set of UNCTAD's major publications on FDI and TNCs - the UNCTAD/UNCTC Digital Library - can be found at <http://unctc.unctad.org>.

NEW UNCTAD PUBLICATION QUANTIFIES TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE

The new UNCTAD annual report, *Developing Countries in International Trade 2005*, released on 2 November 2005, measures in innovative ways the connections among factors affecting a country's foreign trade and its human development. In a first for the UN system, UNCTAD has developed a Trade and Development Index (TDI) capable of monitoring, benchmarking and ranking the trade and development performances of all countries. The TDI is intended as a quantitative indication of the state in which a country finds itself at a given time as a result of interactions among factors affecting trade and development. It provides fresh insights into how international and national policy makers can use world trade to deliver solid development benefits, especially to the poor. The index will also help governments diagnose trade performance problems and will provide tools for improving trade policy.

The report explains the TDI and its ranking of 110 countries, both developed and developing. The chief innovation of the TDI is that it quantifies the complex interplay of factors that determine both trade progress and human development. The 2005 TDI ranks Denmark as the world's most successful trade-and-development nation. Ranking second and third are the United States and the United Kingdom. At number 15, Singapore is the only developing country among the top 20. The Republic of Korea follows at 25, Malaysia at 28 and Uruguay at 33. China, despite its impressive export performance in recent years, is ranked 51st. India, also in the spotlight for recent export-led growth, comes in at number 90. The 10 lowest-ranked nations are from Africa and include nine least developed countries, or LDCs. South Africa and Mauritius are the only African countries in the top 50, ranked 41th and 47th, respectively.

In addition to the new index, *Developing Countries in International Trade 2005* analyses the main factors determining export performance and reviews the often-stressful effects of the economic reforms poorer nations frequently must carry out to comply with international trade agreements. Future annual editions of the report will focus on other issues affecting the use of trade to spur development.

UNCTAD Secretary-General Supachai Panitchpakdi called the report and the TDI a "tool to help stimulate and promote national and international policies and actions for development and poverty reduction".

The report is available at http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditctab20051_en.pdf.

NGOs enjoying observer status with UNCTAD automatically receive official notifications inviting them to participate in and contribute to the debate and discussions of Expert Meetings, sessions of the Commissions of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board, and quadrennial sessions of the Conference. Competent and relevant NGOs interested in contributing to UNCTAD's programmes and activities may wish to consider applying for observer status.

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For more information, please visit UNCTAD's website:

www.unctad.org