



UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

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Rubens Ricupero retires from UNCTAD

After nine years as the head of UNCTAD, Secretary-General [Rubens Ricupero](#) ended his mandate on 14 September 2004.

Rubens Ricupero, a Brazilian national, will be remembered above all as the architect of the "new" UNCTAD. In 1996, at a time when the UN faced acute financial problems and UNCTAD's very existence was in question, Rubens Ricupero restructured the organization and helped redefine its mandate.

In 1995, UNCTAD had been affected by a number of changes facing the international community: the economic effects of globalization, the emergence of financial and monetary crises in the early 1990s, the finalization of a multilateral trade agreement... To help developing countries face these challenges, UNCTAD took on a new vocation. It became a laboratory of innovative ideas at the service of developing countries. This was done through research and analysis, technical cooperation and consensus building among countries with different structures and at different stages of development. For the first time in the history of the UN, there was a greater involvement by "civil society" (non-governmental organizations, churches, research centres and universities, the press...).

Until the appointment of a new Secretary-General, Carlos Fortín (Chile) will serve as Officer-in-Charge.



Rubens Ricupero: 12th Raúl Prebisch Lecture

On his last day as Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Rubens Ricupero delivered the 12th lecture in the Raúl Prebisch series. The full text of the [lecture](#) is available on the UNCTAD website. The Secretary-General also launched the book "Beyond Conventional Wisdom in Development Policy: An Intellectual History of UNCTAD 1964-2004".

The Raúl Prebisch Lectures were instituted in 1982 in honour of Dr. Raúl Prebisch, the founder and first Secretary-General of UNCTAD. Previous speakers include Indira Ghandi, Jagdish Bhagwati, Dani Rodrik and Joseph Stiglitz.



Governing body meets in Geneva (4 - 15 October 2004)

On 15 October, UNCTAD's governing body, the Trade and Development Board, wound up its annual two-week session. The Board examined global economic trends and reviewed the organization's work priorities. The meeting was the first since UNCTAD's 11th ministerial meeting held in June 2004 in São Paulo, Brazil.



Mr. Carlos Fortin

In his [introductory statement](#) to the Board, Carlos Fortin, Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD, emphasized one of the key messages of the São Paulo conference on the development role of trade. "It is not only, he said, the "quantitative" but also the "qualitative" – that is, the "beneficial" – integration of developing countries into the international trading system that is required."

A special session of the Board was devoted to reviewing new developments in international economic relations and their policy implications, based on a note by the secretariat. It highlighted the emergence of a new geography of trade and international relations characterized by an increase in South-South trade, investment and economic cooperation. But how can the international community ensure that this new trend benefits all countries and peoples? An important element is development solidarity on the part of developed countries, appropriate national development policies and corporate responsibility. Referring to the role of corporations, Carlos Fortin noted that "a company that is respectful of the environment of its host country is likely to be better received, to last longer and in general to have an easier life than a company that does not".

The Board reviewed the findings of the UNCTAD [Trade and Development Report 2004](#). As highlighted in the report, speakers stressed the need for a more global policy framework to strengthen the coherence between the international trade system and the international monetary and financial systems.

Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, addressed the Board during its review of developments and issues in the post-Doha work programme of concern to developing countries. The "[July package](#)", he said ensured that the work programme (the Doha development agenda) was back on track.

African debt: main concern of international community

The Board agreed that the debt burden of African countries is one of the main concerns of the international community. There is a growing consensus that a condition for economic growth in African countries is the cancellation of their debt. "Cancelling debt is a priority to avoid bleeding an economy to death", said Ann Pettifor, co-founder of Jubilee 2000 and guest speaker at the panel discussion on Debt and Development in Africa.



But debt write-off alone is not a panacea. It should be accompanied by measures to improve market access, in particular the end of agricultural subsidies, and enhanced production capacity.

Sub-Saharan Africa still owes close to US \$200 billion in debt to multilateral and bilateral creditors, although it has already disbursed some US \$270 billion to service the US \$300 billion it has borrowed over the past 30 years. In other words the continent has largely repaid its debt, and much needed resources are now being diverted from financing basic social services to debt repayment.

For more details, see the UNCTAD report on [Economic Development in Africa 2004](#).

Linkage between international trade and poverty reduction: a complex issue

During a panel discussion on linkages between international trade and poverty reduction, a number of success stories were identified. Among the conclusions on how best to replicate these successes, the need for cooperation between public and private sectors was emphasized – in particular in the area of investment. This would ensure increased investment inflows and greater coherence between production capacity and international demand.

Civil society hearings institutionalized

On the first day of its session, the Board held [hearings](#) with civil society representatives as part of its efforts to include all development actors in its work. The [São Paulo Consensus](#), one of the two documents adopted at UNCTAD XI, has institutionalized these efforts.

Participants agreed that UNCTAD should strengthen its development policy analysis. It should, for instance, help developing countries find the right balance between their national policy strategies and their international commitments

NGOs outlined three areas where UNCTAD's work on commodities should be strengthened: increasing transparency in commodity markets; encouraging commodity diversification; and implementing income stabilization mechanisms. The creation of a commodities task force to find solutions to the problems of commodity-producing countries was, said Carlos Fortin, one of UNCTAD XI's main achievements.

Other items on the agenda included the [Report on UNCTAD's Assistance to the Palestinian People](#), the review of UNCTAD's [technical cooperation activities](#) and progress in implementing the [partnerships](#) launched in São Paulo.

A summary of the Board meeting will soon be available on the UNCTAD website.



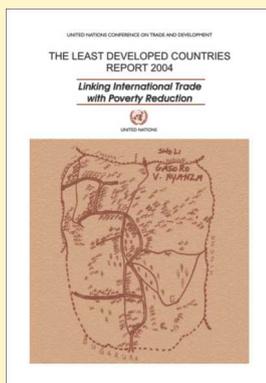
TRAINFORTRADE

Part 1 of the Course on Competition Law and Policy for Development for Laos and Cambodia has been completed. The course was attended by government officials, the private sector, academia and the international community. Its objective was to help Laos and Cambodia to develop and implement appropriate competition policies and laws.

(For more information on Laos, please contact: linh.vu@unctad.org; on Cambodia: sven.callebaut@unctad.org and on competition issues: hassan.qaqaya@unctad.org)

The Port Training Programme held its coordination meeting for 2005 activities in Geneva in September.

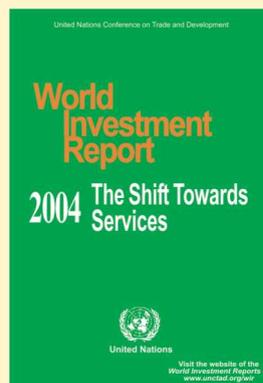
New publications



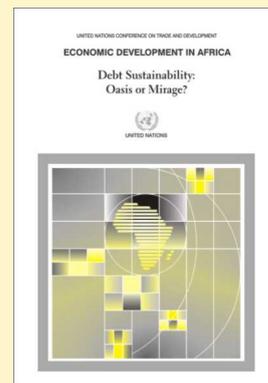
Least Developed Countries Report 2004: Linking International Trade with Poverty Reduction



Trade and Development Report 2004: Policy Coherence, Development Strategies and Integration into the World Economy



World Investment Report 2004: The Shift towards Services



Economic Development in Africa: Debt Sustainability: Oasis or Mirage

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