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RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Brazil to host UNCTAD XI in June 2004

The eleventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XI) will be held at the Anhembi Conference Centre in São Paulo, Brazil, from 13 to 18 June 2004.

For UNCTAD Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero, UNCTAD XI represents an "unprecedented opportunity" to help developing countries meet the challenges ahead. It will, he says, "strengthen the links between international and national efforts to promote economic growth and sustainable development".

At the international level, such efforts involve processes and negotiations ranging from resolving financial crises to multilateral trade talks. Nationally, the focus is on diversifying and enhancing productive capacity. Specifically, Mr. Ricupero says, the conference will endeavour to formulate the best public policies for increasing export competitiveness. Such policies can include the use of national innovation systems, the creation or adaptation of technologies, enhancing value added, and increasing the skills of the workforce.

The theme for the conference is "enhancing coherence between national development strategies and global economic processes towards economic growth and development, particularly of developing countries". The subthemes are:

- Development strategies in a globalizing world economy
- Building productive capacity and international competitiveness
- Assuring development gains from the international trading system and trade negotiations
- Partnership for development

Preparations for the conference are underway, and Brazilian leaders have promised to make every effort at the political, analytical and logistical levels to ensure a successful event. Participants will include representatives of governments, civil society organizations and the private sector worldwide.

Secretary-General of UNCTAD meets with civil society representatives

Contacts between UNCTAD and representatives of civil society are on the rise now that the countdown to UNCTAD XI has begun. The Secretary-General of our organization is personally involved in these initiatives. On 12 June, Mr. Ricupero met with a delegation from the World Confederation of Labour headed by its General Secretary, Willy Thys. This was followed six days later by a meeting with Jeremy Hobbs and Céline Charveriat, Executive Director and Head of the Geneva Office, respectively, of the London-based Oxfam International.

On each occasion, Mr. Ricupero gave an overview of preparations for UNCTAD XI and reiterated his commitment to involving civil society organizations as much as possible in the preparatory process and in the conference itself. He commended the role that civil society, through representative organizations, can play in bringing about a more equitable, humane and sustainable pattern of globalization. He said that UNCTAD XI provided a sound opportunity for civil society to make its views known and influence the future course of the world economy.

Tunis conference considers e-commerce challenges for developing countries

A recent conference in Tunis on e-commerce strategies for development attracted more than 100 participants, including government ministers from Cape Verde, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Mauritania and Tunisia, as well as high-level representatives from 29 African countries. The Regional High-Level Conference for Africa on Electronic Commerce Strategies for Development (19-21 June) was organized by UNCTAD in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Handicrafts of Tunisia. Participating international and regional organizations included the UN Development Programme, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the World Tourism Organization. Representatives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development also participated.

The Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Rubens Ricupero, participated in the final session of the conference.

In discussing the challenges of the digital economy and e-commerce, participants agreed on the need for and principal elements of national and regional strategies on information and communication technologies (ICT) and e-commerce. Sectoral applications relevant for African countries (e.g. e-government, use of open-source technology, and the marketing of agricultural exports via the Internet) were also highlighted. Policy, normative, legal, economic and technical issues related to e-commerce and trade and development generated fruitful discussions among the participants.

The conference adopted a Declaration on Electronic Commerce for Development. This declaration expresses the political commitment of African Governments to supporting ICT as a tool for development, taking into account cultural, social and economic disparities.

More information on this event is available at [Documents](#) and www.unctad.org/ecommerce.

Experts examine effectiveness of FDI policy measures

The recent expert meeting on Effectiveness of Foreign Direct Investment Policy Measures (Geneva, 25-27 June) focused on selected general policy measures (labour, business immigration and taxation) and proactive measures in selected industries important for developing countries (garments/textiles, agribusiness, tourism, and information and communication technology, or ICT). Some representatives of civil society organizations participated in the meeting.

In considering the general regulatory environment, experts stressed the need for effective policy measures in the areas of labour, business immigration, and taxation. Other areas include competition policy, exchange control, intellectual property protection and sectoral and environmental regulation. Experts identified a number of proactive policy measures that would help developing countries attract and benefit from foreign direct investment (FDI) in selected industries.

Home-country measures can also enhance FDI inflows and the benefits of FDI, particularly in the least developed countries (LDCs) and other structurally weak economies. Such measures include tax incentives and trade preferences, as well as the use of official development assistance for capacity building, infrastructure development, enterprise support, and training and technological upgrading programmes. The combination of proactive home-country measures and host-country measures can be a powerful stimulus for attracting FDI in developing countries. Public-private dialogue can also raise corporate awareness and encourage socially responsible actions by companies.

For textiles, cost analysis showed that infrastructure costs, particularly for water and energy, influenced competitiveness more than did labour costs. FDI in agribusiness is expanding in developing countries and economies in transition, attracted largely by the need to locate close to input and consumer markets. Benefits for developing countries include employment, productivity and quality improvements and branding of products for world markets. In tourism, experts emphasized the importance of environmental protection and the preservation of local culture and sites, as well as accessibility via permanent air links. In ICT, important elements for attracting FDI include a clearly defined vision of which segments the government is promoting and supporting with venture capital and tax benefits, along with the presence of a thriving local industrial cluster.

A highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the Investment Policy Review of Nepal, which discussed the challenges of attracting FDI to a landlocked LDC.

UNCTAD also introduced the Investment Compass, a web-based tool that policy makers in developing countries can use to benchmark their own investment environment relative to those of other countries.

For more information please contact Ms. Fiorina Mugione at fiorina.mugione@unctad.org or consult [Documents](#).

Expert meeting focuses on trade in environmental goods and services

Analysing specific cases of development gains or losses from trade in environmental goods and services (EGS) is the best way to guide trade diplomats in their discussions on definition and classification issues as well as on the substance of liberalization negotiations. This was the goal of UNCTAD's expert meeting on Definitions and Dimensions of Environmental Goods and Services in Trade and Development, which was held in Geneva on 9-11 July, back to back with the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Trade and Environment. The meeting was preceded and followed by project activities by UNCTAD in various regions.

At the fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha in November 2001, Members agreed to negotiations on "the reduction or, as appropriate, elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to environmental goods and services". Liberalization of trade in EGS may bring economic, environmental and developmental benefits to developing countries through easier access to environmentally sound technology, as well as improved resource management and environmental conditions. It may also create export opportunities for developing countries in some EGS sectors. The extent to which these potential benefits will translate into real gains in trade and sustainable development will depend on how WTO Members define the scope for negotiations, as well as factors that go far beyond the negotiating process: national policies, regulatory frameworks, the transfer of technology and know-how, and various forms of international cooperation.

NGOs enjoying observer status with UNCTAD were invited to participate in the meeting.

For more information, please contact Mr. Alexey Vikhlyaev at alexey.vikhlyaev@unctad.org or consult [Documents](#).

NEW PUBLICATION

Study analyses energy and environmental services in the GATS context

Energy and Environmental Services: Negotiating Objectives and Development Priorities, a new UNCTAD publication, analyses the negotiating positions of WTO Member countries on energy and environmental services within the ongoing GATS negotiations. The publication was launched on 5 June at a round table held at the Palais des Nations and chaired by Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of UNCTAD. Discussions focused on what is at stake in the negotiations, as well as on the business trends, the major market players and the national strategies in these two service sectors. Representatives of member States, specialized agencies and intergovernmental bodies as well as NGOs in the general and special categories were invited to attend.

For more information, please contact Ms. Simonetta Zarrilli at simonetta.zarrilli@unctad.org or consult [Documents](#).

Upcoming events

- Trade and Development Board, 32nd executive session, 28 July 2003
- Preparatory Process for UNCTAD XI, 28 July - 1 August 2003
- Expert Meeting on Market Access Issues in Mode 4 (Movement of Natural Persons to Supply Services) and Effective Implementation of Article IV on Increasing Participation of Developing Countries, 29-31 July 2003

For more information, please check [Events and Meetings](#).

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