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In September, Prime Minister of Barbados, Ms. Mia Mottley, delivered the 16th Raúl Prebisch Lecture in Geneva. She outlined the world’s need to improve international rules and do better by small-island States that are on the frontlines of the climate crisis. Fighting for their survival was a war they did not start. Speaking on the topic “Invisible yet indispensable”, Ms. Mottley drew attention to the daunting challenges facing small-island States, saying “Even if many were not,” we are not dispensable.” Ms. Mottley was the second woman to deliver the lecture, established in 1992 by honour Argentinian economist Raúl Prebisch, the founding Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

Trade and Development Board: Rising inequality a blight on our development hopes

The sixty-sixth session of our Trade and Development Board, held in June in Geneva, binned on inequality, with various speakers warning that the development gains of the 20th century are being eroded by growing inequality – UNCTAD calculations show that inequality between countries increased from 1.4 in 1980 to 2.6 in 2018, a period characterized by the Great (2008-2009) and the second Great (2019-2020) recessions, structural reforms and economic instability in most of the developing world. The fast growth of the global economy from 2003 reversed that trend, and something needs to be done about it. UNCTAD calculations show that inequality between countries increased from 1.4 in 1980 to 2.6 in 2018, a period characterized by the Great (2008-2009) and the second Great (2019-2020) recessions, structural reforms and economic instability in most of the developing world. The fast growth of the global economy from 2003 reversed that trend, and something needs to be done about it. UNCTAD calculations show that inequality between countries increased from 1.4 in 1980 to 2.6 in 2018, a period characterized by the Great (2008-2009) and the second Great (2019-2020) recessions, structural reforms and economic instability in most of the developing world. The fast growth of the global economy from 2003 reversed that trend, and something needs to be done about it. UNCTAD calculations show that inequality between countries increased from 1.4 in 1980 to 2.6 in 2018, a period characterized by the Great (2008-2009) and the second Great (2019-2020) recessions, structural reforms and economic instability in most of the developing world. The fast growth of the global economy from 2003 reversed that trend, and something needs to be done about it.

The Least Developed Countries Report 2019

We called on the world’s most impoverished nations to proactively ensure external finances from all levels, especially development providers, to manage their debt servicing and eventually escape it.

World Investment Report 2019

We noted that rules of origin – the criteria needed to determine the nationality of a product – could be a game changer for Africa if they are made simple, transparent, business friendly and predictable.

UNCTAD assists developing countries to spur trade development by creating obstacles to trade, such as long waiting times at borders, inappropriate fees, cumbersome formalities and inadequate or unclear rules and regulations, in order to continuously increase the capacity of developing countries to implement trade facilitation reforms and comply with international and regional rules and standards. We organized workshops and seminars at the regional and national levels.

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We called for bold actions to finance a global green new deal and meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

Trade facilitation spurs development

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In 2019, we continued to support developing countries in conducting science, technology, and capacity policy reviews of four countries. We published the reviews of Ethiopia and Panama, finalized the review of Uganda and launched new projects in the Dominican Republic and Zambia.

Digital Economy Report 2019

We draw attention to the vast disparity in wealth creation in the digital economy, which is highly concentrated in the China and the United States of America, with the rest of the world trailing considerably behind.

Digital entrepreneurship is a new era

Our entrepreneurs’ Fellowship Programme continues to offer a platform for game-changing entrepreneurs at the digital space in Africa. It helps to address problems into business opportunities, create jobs and improve lives. Since 2017, the successful fellows’ programmes’ have created direct jobs and generated revenue in annual revenues.

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Taking the pulse of the global goods

In June, we launched the Sustainable Development Goals Pulse, “SDG Pulse”, an online statistical tool equips companies to report contributions for entity reporting on the global goals. Our guidance tool on core indicators for entity reporting on the global goals. We called for bold actions to finance a global green new deal and meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

Relation of the 2030 Agenda to the WEO

We highlighted how commodity-dependent countries will be deeply affected by climate change and vulnerability to migration and adaptation policies must be the first order of business of any trade.

Review of Maritime Transport 2019

We reported that world maritime trade and momentum in 2018 was slightly better than 2017, but lower than 2016, regionally, encouraging Asian States of the Americas have been battling with congestion and mounting costs of labor trade policies and political cross-currents that is seen through global markets.

Commodities and Development Report 2019

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Rapid eTrade readiness assessments

Our rapid eTrade readiness assessments help countries to quickly identify barriers to further their e-commerce development. In 2019, we launched rapid eTrade readiness assessments for various discussions related to e-commerce and e-commerce and e-commerce.

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Science, technology and innovation policy reviews

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Investment policy reviews

Our investment policy reviews continue to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition to reframe their investment policies, including foreign direct investment, while improving their business climate. In 2019, we finalized investment policy reviews of Arubá, Botswana, Mauritius, and Tonga. We also launched a review of Madagascar.

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