

SITE

ACTIVITIES REPORT

2007



DIVISION FOR SERVICES
INFRASTRUCTURE FOR
DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE
EFFICIENCY



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Development and Trade Efficiency**

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Notes

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A. Introduction

The Division for Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency (SITE) covers issues related to:

- Information and communication technologies (ICTs);
- Human capacity-building for trade and development; and
- Transport, logistics and related services.

The objective of the division's work programme is to enhance the economic development and competitiveness of developing countries and countries with economies in transition through (a) efficient trade logistics services; (b) strengthened capacity to develop and increase access to and sustainable utilization of technology and knowledge, including information and communication technology; and (c) human resources development.

To achieve this objective, the division aims to promote access to – and capacity to develop and use – technology and knowledge, and to promote the strengthening of supply capacities through access to trade logistics services. In particular, it focuses on (a) the strengthening of transport efficiency, trade facilitation, customs and legal frameworks; (b) economic applications of information and communication technologies; and (c) development of capacities in the fields of trade, investment, tourism and other interrelated issues through human resources development, networking, training and e-learning. It pursues the objective by (a) carrying out timely and forward-looking research and analysis; (b) formulating policy recommendations for appropriate development strategies at the national, regional and international levels; (c) fostering dialogue for consensus-building; (d) providing technical assistance upon request; and (e) building capacities in the fields of trade, investment, e-tourism and trade-supporting services. The reports and documents prepared under the subprogramme are widely used in connection with the provision of advisory services, training and workshops at the national, regional and international levels. They also draw upon the knowledge gained through the implementation of a wide range of technical cooperation activities. In particular, the division produces two major annual reports: the flagship *Information Economy Report* and the *Review of Maritime Transport*.

The UNCTAD SITE Activity Report provides detailed information on the outputs and activities during 2007. The presentation is structured according to the branches within the division.

B. Information and communication technologies and e-business

The Information and Communication Technologies and E-business Branch (ICTEB) undertakes research and analysis on ICT-related development issues, as well as technical assistance on ICT measurement and policies, and contributes to intergovernmental debate through expert meetings and seminars, and the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development.

In 2007, work covered such areas as (a) national ICT policies and strategies, in particular the establishment of a legal framework for e-commerce in developing countries; (b) the monitoring and measurement of the information economy and its impact on development; and (c) ICT-related economic development issues. Particular attention was given to ICTs that address the needs of poor populations and disadvantaged regions. Best practices that promote innovation and access to knowledge and technology, such as free and open-source software, were analysed with the view to highlighting their impact on development in general, as well as on the efficiency gains for users, including enterprises and public agencies.

B.1 Research and analysis

B.1.1 Information Economy Report 2007–2008

In the context of a global knowledge economy fuelled by a fast pace of technological innovations, the challenge for developing countries is to harness knowledge to take advantage of the opportunities offered by globalization and to address emerging global challenges. ICT can facilitate developing countries' access to knowledge, according to the *Information Economy Report 2007–2008*. ICT as a “general-purpose” technology can have a pervasive impact on an economy. It can create new modes of organization of production and consumption, and new opportunities for developing countries to integrate into the global economy. The reduced cost of access to ICTs offers greater opportunities for poorer people to use them to improve their livelihoods. ICTs are also particularly effective channels for the transfer of technology and have given rise to open knowledge access models, whether in open source software, open innovations, or common knowledge associations.

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