

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

UNCTAD Annual Report 2004



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Message from the Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD

The year 2004 was an important one in the life of the organization. UNCTAD celebrated its fortieth anniversary and received a new impetus in its work through the substantive outcomes of the eleventh session of the Conference, held in Brazil. The Spirit of São Paulo and the São Paulo Consensus provided new policy directions aimed at enhancing the role of UNCTAD in key economic areas and at better anchoring its activities in the mainstream processes of the global development agenda. UNCTAD's contribution to the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits and to the preparations for the 2005 review of the Millennium Declaration was reinforced.

The practical dimension of the work of the organization was strengthened by a sharpened focus of its activities on issues of real interest to developing countries, by enhanced integration of its research and policy analysis with the delivery of technical cooperation on the ground, and by effective involvement of all development actors—member States, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and parliamentarians. Assuring development gains from multilateral trade negotiations and assisting developing countries in developing their productive capacities and enhancing their export competitiveness so as to take full benefit of the concessions arising from the Doha Round was part of the same result-oriented approach. Other major inroads were made in the areas of investment, ICTs for development, trade-related infrastructure and trade facilitation, and by the launching of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The Conference also brought a fresh look at development issues against the background of the current state of the global economy by emphasizing the emergence of a new geography of international economic relations. Countries in special situations, in particular LDCs and African countries, received special consideration. Cross-cutting issues, such as trade and poverty and trade and gender, were integrated into the regular activities of the organization. Overall, this gave a new sense of direction to the work of UNCTAD as a forum for advancing the interrelationship between trade and development, from both a national and an international perspective.

The implementation of the outcomes of the Conference began almost immediately with the preparation of the Strategic Framework for the period 2006-2007 and the holding of the 2004 regular session of the Trade of Development Board, which addressed key issues relating to the new geography of international relations, the problematique of Africa as well as that of LDCs, interdependence and developments in the WTO negotiations of interest to developing countries.

It is now my pleasure to present the annual report for 2004 with a new format that came out of the Conference. It highlights the emphasis on tackling the pressing development issues of concern to the developing countries, which is an essential part of UNCTAD's mandate and mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Carlos Fortin'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Carlos Fortin
Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD

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