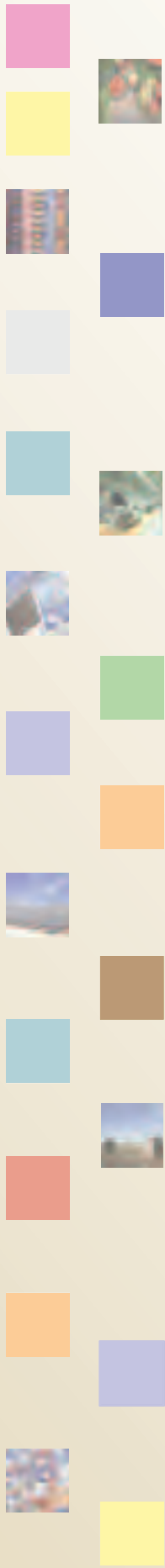


NON-TARIFF MEASURES TO TRADE: Economic and Policy Issues for Developing Countries

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE STUDIES





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FOREWORD

Due to the proliferation of various non-tariff rules and regulations affecting international trade, trade policy is becoming increasingly complex and multifaceted. Understanding the uses and implications of these trade policy instruments is essential for the formulation and implementation of effective development strategies. This is particularly important for developing countries, as their market access depends to a great extent on compliance with trade regulatory measures that are beyond the scope of traditional tariffs and existing preferential schemes. Restrictive and distortionary effects of non-tariff measures may be systematically biased, although in many cases unintentionally, against developing countries and more so against low-income and least developed countries. Non-tariff measures are also becoming a key topic of negotiations not only in North-South, but also in South-South contexts. Therefore, it is crucial for developing countries to be fully aware of the effects of non-tariff measures, in regard to both market access and import competition. Unfortunately, the impacts of non-tariff measures on international trade, or more generally on social welfare, are not always well understood. In fact, the analysis related to non-tariff measures has not kept pace with their increasing complexity, resulting in a knowledge gap.

This publication by the UNCTAD secretariat is an effort to improve existing knowledge on relevant issues related to non-tariff measures, with particular attention to those more relevant for developing countries. A better understanding of non-tariff measures will help policymakers to formulate appropriate policy responses and direct the necessary technical and financial resources to where they are needed. It will also contribute to more balanced international trade agreements and improved multilateral dialogue on trade policy issues. I am confident that this study will assist UNCTAD member States to strengthen their capacity to conduct more efficient trade policies for development.



Supachai Panitchpakdi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

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Guillermo Valles

Director

Division on International Trade
in Goods and Services, and Commodities

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