#### UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT



DIVISION ON TECHNOLOGY AND LOGISTICS

ACTIVITY
REPORT 2008





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#### A. Introduction

This report presents an overview of the activities undertaken by the three branches of the **Division** on **Technology and Logistics** (DTL) in 2008. It is complemented by stories from beneficiaries in developing countries.

In 2008, the Division underwent a number of changes, the most important of which was the transfer of the Science and Technology Section from the Division on Investment and Enterprise to DTL. This, among other factors, led to a change in the name of the division from "Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency" (SITE) to "Technology and Logistics" (DTL) in order to better reflect the type of work undertaken.

#### DTL consists of three branches:

- Science, Technology and ICT Branch;
- Knowledge Sharing, Training and Capacity Development Branch; and
- Trade Logistics Branch, including the ASYCUDA programme.

The work programme of the Division is to enhance the economic development and competitiveness of developing countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, and countries with economies in transition, in the globalized world economy and international trade, through efficient trade logistics services, transit transport systems, strengthened capacity to develop, increased access to and sustainable utilization of technology and knowledge including information and communications technology (ICT), and training and capacity-building programmes for local institutions.

This is done through (a) promoting access to - and enhancing the capacity to develop and use - technology and knowledge; (b) strengthening capacity in the areas of trade logistics and trade facilitation - including Customs, trade-supporting services and legal frameworks; (c) following up as a focal point for the Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA) on science and technology, as well as transport; (d) coordinating and contributing to the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development that was launched at UNCTAD XI; (e) coordinating the system-wide follow-up of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), including enhanced access to and efficient application of information and communications technology for development; (f) serving as a secretariat for the Economic and Social Council's Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) and reporting to the General Assembly; and (g) developing human and institutional capacities in the fields of trade and the interrelated areas of finance, investment, technology, enterprise development, competition and sustainable development.

DTL works together closely with other divisions within UNCTAD, United Nations organizations, and partner institutions. The three pillars of UNCTAD - namely research and analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation - are fully integrated into the work programme, and also into cross-cutting issues.

# SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY - Overview



Stimulating outstanding scientific and technological institutions in developing countries, and using them as regional hubs of learning and training for scientists and researchers from these countries.

There are now more than 4 billion mobile phone subscriptions in the world helping to bridge the digital divide. Notwithstanding recent successes, we still have a long way to go. The international community must pursue vigorously its efforts to promote an information society for all.

"Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are helping to drive globalization by lifting enterprises into the knowledge-based economy [...] Access to low-cost ICTs, in particular telecommunications, is crucial to the development of a competitive business sector" (Accra Accord, para. 120).





Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, at the eleventh session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, in May 2008:

"The last two decades have witnessed enormous advances in science and technology. [...] Technology has never been as vital to development as it is today, when varying levels of economic and social well-being are the direct result of differences in the level of technological and scientific development."

On ICTs: "No other technology in history has so deeply and widely permeated every area of our lives, with innumerable implications for development."

# B.1 Science, Technology and ICT

Science and Technology & Policy Review

The upgrading of the technological capabilities of developing countries was identified by UNCTAD XII as a key element of policies to strengthen the productive capacities of developing countries and to harness knowledge for development.

These considerations resulted in specific mandates for UNCTAD:

- 1. To "strengthen its research and analysis in the area of science, technology and innovation, including ICTs", and to "promote effective international and national policies" (Accra Accord, para. 158).
- To "contribute to consensus-building in the international debate on science and technology for development, including ICTs and their implications for development, and continue to provide support as the secretariat to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development" (Accra Accord, para. 159).
- To "provide technical assistance to countries in the area of ICT, notably on ICT policy reviews, pro-poor policies, legal and regulatory frameworks, and measuring the information economy, including through the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development" (Accra Accord, para. 160).
- 4. To "contribute to the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) action lines on capacity building, an enabling environment, e-business and e-science" and to assist the Commission on Science and Technology for Development "in implementing its mandate on the follow-up to the WSIS outcomes" (Accra Accord, para. 161).

"To help upgrade technological capabilities, **Governments should** regularly assess the conditions for technology acquisition and upgrading and should implement and review their science, technology and innovation (STI) policies. **Supportive institutions** may include public-private partnerships and STI policies may be incorporated into national development policies and poverty reduction strategies" (Accra Accord, para. 134).

"North-South and also South-South, partnerships and cooperation should be strengthened for the sharing of knowledge, innovation and technology transfer, and to address the gaps in education and research in developing countries, especially LDCs" (Accra Accord, para. 135).

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