TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT, 2007

Regional cooperation for development







UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT GENEVA

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Report by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development



UNITED NATIONSNew York and Geneva, 2007

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UNCTAD/TDR/2007

UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION

Sales No. E.07.II.D.11

ISBN 978-92-1-112721-8 ISSN 0255-4607

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FOREWORD

Over the past five years, the expansion of the world economy and trade has served as an engine of growth for many developing countries and helped to support progress to the Millennium Development Goals. Even the poorest countries have been able to reap benefits from sustained growth of the world economy, largely because of favourable price developments in many primary commodities. Thus the global external environment for development has strongly improved since the turn of the Millennium.

But as the *Trade and Development Report 2007* points out, this beneficial environment has some unsettling features, such as persistent imbalances and net capital flow from developing to developed countries. If we are to avert serious negative repercussions for economic growth and development, major deficit and surplus countries must work together to address these issues.

For developing countries, the most important challenge is to translate recent gains into lasting progress through successful integration into the global economy. Appropriate policies at the national level are crucial. So are efforts to bring multilateral trade negotiations to a successful conclusion, with a strengthened development dimension in international trade rules. But at the regional level, too, collective and coordinated responses can offer additional possibilities for improving growth and structural change in the globalizing world. By working together more closely and building on common and complementary interests, partners in the same geographical region can significantly strengthen their efforts to meet the challenges of globalization. The *Trade and Development Report 2007* examines the role that such cooperation can play.

In recent years, policymakers in developing countries have paid increasing attention to regional cooperation and integration in support of national development efforts. The assessments and policy proposals presented in this *Trade and Development Report* are likely to meet with considerable interest, and make a valuable contribution to the debate on how best to make regional cooperation work for development.

Ban Ki-moon Secretary-General of the United Nations

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