UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

DTL

DIVISION ON TECHNOLOGY AND LOGISTICS



activity report **2009**

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NOTES

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This report presents an overview of the activities undertaken by the three branches of the Division on Technology and Logistics (DTL) in 2009. It is complemented by stories from beneficiaries in developing countries, a world map in which project activities in the field are marked and a list of publications for the biennium 2008-2009.

DTL consists of three branches:

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

The work programme of the Division is to enhance the economic development and competitiveness of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in the globalized world economy, 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.

In light of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Summit to be held in 2010, emphasis has been put in this report on the work undertaken in the area of its international development goals 1 (poverty and hunger) and 8 (expanding and strengthening international partnerships).

- Access to new technologies and information and communication technologies, reducing the technology gap and enhancing innovative and low-cost development solutions were core elements of the work plan on science, technology and ICTs;
- Local competencies in key areas relating to trade and development were enhanced through training, research and capacity-building activities;
- Supply-side and transport constraints, as well as lack of trade facilitation were addressed through training courses, needs assessments, meetings and technical assistance programmes, including for the most vulnerable countries.

In addition, particular attention has been given to another important upcoming event, the Fourth United Nations Least Developed Countries Conference in 2011, with figures on the number of least developed countries that received support and the type of assistance provided.

Furthermore, special focus has been put on technological connectivity that has an impact not only on trade, but also on the operation of supply chains, the diffusion of knowledge and human interaction beyond borders.

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

At the twelfth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 2008 (UNCTAD XII), the following mandates were given in relation to science, technology and ICTs:

"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).

"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).

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 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).

To "further 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 "[…] 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-launched at UNCTAD XI"

(Accra Accord, para. 160).

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).

Work undertaken in the areas of STI and ICTs for the benefit of Least Developed Countries (LDCs):

The building of a sound **science, technology and innovation (STI)** capacity in the LDCs is a prerequisite for long-term economic growth and poverty reduction. At the national level, policymakers throughout the LDCs have markedly increased their awareness of the importance of science and technology for development and are putting in place policies and strategies that would help them build up a solid science, technology and innovation capacity in order to raise productivity, combat poverty and improve the standards of living of citizens.

Improved access to **information and communication technologies (ICTs)** represents one of the most positive developments in the **least developed** countries in the past decade (UNCTAD Information and Economy Report 2009). At the same time, there is great variation both between and within countries in the extent and nature of ICT use by businesses. Despite positive trends in ICT diffusion, more needs to be done to achieve an information society for all. Important gaps remain within economies and societies that affect the demand for and the ability to use ICT. An extra and concerted effort is required to bring marginalized and disadvantaged groups into the information society.

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. In this context, the Science, Technology and Information and Communications Technology Branch of the Division on Technology and Logistics serves as a source of intellectual leadership and expertise on science, technology, innovation and information and communication technologies (ICTs) within the United Nations system. It comprises the Policy Review Section, the ICT Analysis Section and the Science and Technology Section. The following pages present the work undertaken in 2009.

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