Vi Member, the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Visits Geneva
29 graduate students on the masters program in international trade policy spent 8 days at UNCTAD, the ITC and the WTO in April this year. Their time here was divided between two stages: the first on the international production and trade of commodities, and the second on other issues relevant to Least Developed Countries. "This has been a memorable and invaluable experience," said Charles Lufurano Domician, graduate student at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. Domician was one of 29 students attending the eight-day study tour. "The students who attended the course," said Domician, "are now in a position to advise the Tanzanian government on commodity policies and WTO issues". Whilst in Geneva, the students completed one group work assignment and an exam, set and moderated by staff from the UNCTAD Commodities Branch; on their return to Tanzania the students completed a second assignment based on their program in Geneva. Both will contribute to their final mark.

The Virtual Institute Launches a Fellowship Program
Following the end of the Tanzanian students' stay in Geneva, five 'fellows' from the University of Dar-es-Salaam stayed on at UNCTAD for a further month to pursue research in their fields of interest, thanks to financial support form the government of Finland. The fellows were each supervised by an UNCTAD staff member to help guide and structure their research. At the end of the month, the five students presented their work to UNCTAD staff, the Tanzanian mission in Geneva and the University of Dar-es-Salaam. It is intended for the five fellows to begin teaching on the masters course in international trade policy at the university; the Vi fellowships therefore represented a direct input into the teaching capacity of the university.
University of the West Indies (UWI) completes its Second Study Tour in Geneva

Immediately after the Tanzanian students left Geneva, the Vi welcomed 23 students from the masters program in international trade policy at UWI. The students spent almost three weeks in Geneva, following a tailor made program of seminars and workshops at UNCTAD, the ITC, the WTO, WIPO, and also heard presentations from outside speakers from the WHO and the ILO. The study tour - now in its second year - represents a valuable opportunity for students to gain practical experience and insight into the workings of international trade-related institutions.

The Vi Holds Commodities Workshop in Dakar, Senegal

Following the success of the Vi workshop on the production and trade of commodities held in Dar-es-Salaam earlier this year, the Vi held a second workshop in French for West African universities and research institutes, thanks to financial support from the governments of Finland and Canada and the LDC office in UNCTAD. In total 21 teachers, researchers and students participated in the week long workshop which also trialed the use of a new Vi simulation exercise on the negotiation of an ECOWAS common external tariff (Vi members can access this simulation through the training materials below).

We are now 14… EAFIT University in Colombia Joins the Virtual Institute Network

The Escuela de Administración, Finanzas y Tecnologías (EAFIT), located in Medellín, 250km from Bogota, joined the Vi network this month to bring the total number of member universities to 14. The Vi will be linked specifically to the International Business Department, which is part of the Business School at EAFIT. The department offers undergraduate courses in international business, a postgraduate program in international business, contributions to the Master of Business Administration, as well as vocational courses for policy makers and trade and business practitioners. Over the next two years, the UNCTAD Virtual Institute aims to expand its membership to a maximum 20 members.

The Vi will be hosting a one week workshop in collaboration with several UNCTAD programs, the economic research and statistics division of the WTO and the market analysis section of the ITC, in Geneva in September. The workshop, which is free (although participants will have to pay for travel and accommodation), will provide training on software tools and methodologies for analyzing trade data and policy. The workshop will also examine the implications of these tools for policy making and discuss how research in these fields can best be communicated to policy makers. Anyone wishing to register for this workshop can find out more information about its content as well as a registration form by clicking on the above link; a few places still remain.

> _TEACHING RESOURCES_

New Material Published on the Economics of Commodities Production and Trade

Used as the substantive input for the Vi workshops in Tanzania and Senegal, this material is now available to Vi members online. The material comprises 5 teaching modules covering definitions and trends, the role of national policy and international cooperation, the international trading system and negotiations, market access and market entry conditions, and finally, international finance and risk management for developing countries. All the modules include discussion questions and issues for research, as well as case studies of country experiences and exercises for students.

The material also includes a comprehensive bibliography with suggested further readings and a full glossary of terms and concepts used in the modules. Additionally, a simulation on the negotiation of an ECOWAS common external tariff can also be downloaded, and includes instructions, background information and data, as well as country background information.
Revamped Training Material on International Investment Agreements

This material was originally published in December in 2005 (see Vi Newsletter #7, Dec 2005) but has since had two of the modules redrafted. The first two modules on the economic aspects of foreign direct investment and IIAs have been restructured and now also contain new data, graphs, tables and bibliographies. The other two modules on the legal aspects of IIAs remain unchanged.

CD-Roms of the UNCTAD Virtual Institute Study Tours

Following the study tours of the Universities of Dar-es-Salaam and the West Indies, CD-Roms were made for participants. The CD-Roms contain all of the presentations as well as any accompanying documents used during the tours. To obtain a copy of the CD-Roms, please send an email with your name and address to vi@unctad.org.

> _LINKS

South Centre

Founded in 1995 the South Centre was established to provide information, research and publications to developing countries, as well as promoting south-south collaboration and coordination on international fora and intergovernmental affairs. Its membership is exclusively open to developing countries and currently stands at 49 members, who fund the organization, based in Geneva. The South Centre publishes the South Bulletin, which contains articles from people such as Thabo Mbeki and can be obtained by subscribing online using the above link or by writing to singh@southcentre.org. As a Vi partner, South Centre documents can often be found on our own website as well.

Eldis Gateway to Development Information

Eldis is described as a ‘development gateway’, and as such, collates information on publications produced by most organizations working in the development field. Their subscription service is useful as you can select what field of development you would like to receive information and publications on, such as, trade or education. There are also some useful blogs and news feeds providing up-to-date information on the latest developments in your field of interest.
Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ArtNet)

Established in 2004 by UNESCAP, ArtNet aims to coordinate the research work of higher learning institutions in the Asia Pacific region and improve their capacity to deliver the quality research needed by decision makers. The website contains publications from ArtNet and its members, which can be downloaded either as policy briefs or working papers. Some of ArtNet's research areas include trade facilitation, services trade liberalization, export promotion, and supply constraints. In addition to the WTO, ITC and the South Centre, ArtNet is a partner of the Virtual Institute and its publications can often be found on the Vi website.

> _FEEDBACK_

The Virtual Institute would welcome any feedback, both positive and critical, about the Vi Newsletter. Is it clear? Are the links helpful? Do they work? Equally, if there is any aspect of UNCTAD's work that you would like to see reported in the newsletter, please make suggestions and we will try to cover it. We would also welcome any news items from member universities about their current activities. Send all comments to: joseph.clements@unctad.org

ALSO, if you haven't already, please have a look at our website and familiarise yourself with its structure and content.

The Virtual Institute on Trade and Development is a knowledge-sharing programme designed to strengthen the capacities of academic institutions to teach and research trade issues, particularly in developing countries.

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