Second quarter brings four new university members to the Vi network

Four more universities joined the Virtual Institute network in April and May of this year, bringing the total number of core members to 20. The new members, from South Africa, Egypt, Belarus and Chile, bring a diverse wealth of knowledge and a track record of international cooperation.

The Investment and Trade Policy Centre from the University of Pretoria in South Africa was established in 2002 to conduct research and provide training in a range of trade and trade-related areas to allow developing countries to efficiently negotiate their countries’ position in the global trade and investment arena. Professor André C. Jordaan (andre.jordaan@up.ac.za), Director of the ITPC, will serve as member coordinator.

Cairo University's Faculty of Economics and Political Science, founded in 1960, is a leading Egyptian institution in economics education, preparing students for assignments with a research/analytical component in think tanks, the government or the private sector. The faculty has several research centres that deal with trade and development issues, such as the Centre for Economic and Financial Studies, Centre for Developing Countries Studies, and Centre for European Studies, the latter analyzing various aspects of relations between the European Union and the Southern Mediterranean rim. Vi member coordinator Ahmed Farouk Hamed Ghoneim, Associate Professor in the Faculty's Department of Economics may be reached at aghoneim@gmx.de.

Belarus State Economic University, founded in 1933, is one of the largest universities in the country, training specialists in the field of economics, management and law. The graduates of the university work in all the sectors of the national economy both in the country and abroad. International economics/economic relations courses are mandatory in all the specializations at the university. A faculty of more than 1,500 lecturers conducts research work, publishes, and develops teaching materials and manuals for students. BSEU's Vi member coordinator is Alena Petrushkevich (petrushkevich@list.ru), Associate Professor, Department of World Economy.

The Institute of International Studies (IEI) of the University of Chile, founded in 1966, is an educational and research center in the field of international relations - one of the first in Latin America to dedicate itself specifically to international studies. A multidisciplinary faculty of nearly 30 professors combines high academic qualifications with professional experience in the public and private sector to give students the practical and theoretical knowledge necessary to participate in the international arena. IEI's member coordinator, Professor Francisco J. Prieto (fprieto@uchile.cl), directs the Centre for Trade Policy Studies and the WTO Regional Trade Policy Course for Latin America.

For more information on the new members, visit the About the Vi/Member Universities section of our website (vi.unctad.org).
Ten universities become first Vi Affiliate Members

Two Vi member universities, EAFIT from Colombia, and FLACSO from Argentina, have recommended 10 universities in their region to become the first Vi affiliate members.

The Vi membership, in an effort to expand the reach and impact of Vi activities within their countries by involving other universities interested in trade and development issues, decided to add this type of member during the Vi meeting held in October, 2006 in Geneva. Benefits for the new members include access to the Vi network’s private teaching materials.

Our Argentinian affiliate is the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. Affiliates from Colombia come from a national university network coordinated by EAFIT: Academia Diplomática de San Carlos, Universidad Autónoma de Occidente, Universidad Icesi, Universidad Tecnológica de Bolívar, Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano, Universidad de La Sabana, Universidad del Norte, Universidad del Rosario and Universidad del Valle.

For more information on the new members, visit the About the Vi/Member Universities section of our website (vi.unctad.org)

Vi hosts two study tours in Geneva

Students from Russia and the West Indies in April and May took part in Vi tailor-made training programmes designed to complement their academic studies with exposure to the negotiation process and the workings of trade and development international organizations.

In April, in cooperation with the World Trade Organization’s Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation, 12 postgraduate students and professors from St. Petersburg State University’s Masters programme in International Trading System, participated in a half-day session at UNCTAD that discussed the organization’s major areas of work. The themes included: origins, mandate and thinking of UNCTAD, the importance of balancing policy space with multilateral disciplines and UNCTAD’s work on investment and trans-national corporations. The students were particularly interested in some of the differences between UNCTAD and the WTO and the importance of an organisation like UNCTAD for developing countries.

Participants particularly enjoyed the practical approach of the presenters, and said they appreciated learning from UNCTAD experts who “have applied the theory, and have seen the results.”

In May, 23 students from the University of the West Indies in Barbados completed a three-week tour of Geneva-based organisations, including UNCTAD, the WTO, the ITC, WIPO and the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation. The study tour is a compulsory element of the Masters in International Trade Policy Programme, created by Vi member coordinator Pamela Coke-Hamilton. She believes the tour - now in its third year - should remain a seminal part of the students’ training, as it is essential for their development as future trade professionals, officials or negotiators.

The tour included hands-on training using trade-related databases and analytical tools, attendance at official WTO meetings and interactive workshops on UNCTAD’s integrated treatment of trade, investment, finance and development. Students were also given the opportunity to discuss with Geneva-based policy makers and professionals from the European Commission, the Advisory Centre on WTO Law and Oxfam, as well as representatives from Caribbean-region missions in Geneva during the final interactive round table.

In summing up the tour, one student said: “throughout the study tour, I was able to see the practical side of trade and international relations. Continual support to developing countries by such a program is essential and definitely a good thing in fostering knowledge development.”
The Virtual Institute organizes study tours in Geneva as an exclusive service for core university members. Based on the school's objectives, the Vi designs learning activities and coordinates the participation of experts from UNCTAD and other international organizations. Costs associated with travel and stay are the responsibility of participating students. For more information, please contact vlasta.macku@unctad.org.

**Senegal Vi university member launches Master programme**

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Management of Cheikh Anta Diop University in May launched its Professional Master in Business Management and International Trade Negotiations. Twenty-five economic science graduates -- selected from more than two hundred applicants -- will follow the one-year programme offering a specialty in International Trade Policy and Negotiations.

The brainchild of Professor Malick Sané (msane@ucad.sn), the project has been in the works since 2005. Exchanges with the Vi, following a June 2006 Vi professional development workshop on commodities in Dakar, produced a project proposal, which was later fleshed out during Malick's one-month UNCTAD Vi fellowship in September 2006. Vi's input included selection of subjects to be included, providing documentation and facilitating contact with UNCTAD experts, as well as with international organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

**Joint projects between Vi Member Universities - Update**

Initiated at the last Vi meeting in October 2006, the Vi Joint Projects create an opportunity for member universities to collaborate on the development of research, teaching materials, staff/student exchanges, or any other area of mutual interest and cooperation.

Five joint projects involving seven Vi member universities are currently underway. Two joint research projects: one involving Jordan, Mauritius and India on regional trade agreements, and another between China and Senegal on the textile industry and the impact of Chinese investment in Dakar. There is also a project between Colombia and India to develop a generic teaching material on trade and the environment, and lastly two exchanges of staff between the Centre for Trade Policy and Law at Carlton University in Canada and the universities of Mauritius and EAFIT of Colombia.

The diversity of the projects reflects the original intention behind the initiative: to exchange resources and expertise in as wide a range of activities as possible and to strengthen the cooperation between network members for their mutual benefit.

The Vi network hopes to expand its activities in the area of cooperation between members, and to report its experience with this project. All research papers, teaching materials and other documents arising from these activities will appear on the Vi website, and regular updates will be included in the Vi newsletter.

**Peer Review of Generic Teaching Materials**

Having developed several generic teaching materials on topics such as investment and commodities in 2006, the Vi has this year begun development of four new packages for its university members. These include materials on Regional Trade Agreements, the Transfer of Technology, Trade Data Analysis and Trade and Poverty.

The material, chosen on the basis of the network's teaching needs, was conceived at the request, and in close consultation with Vi members. Therefore, it is important that the network itself also peer-reviews the material.

Currently a peer review group of 10 university members, plus UNCTAD staff, have volunteered to review the material, several of whom are reviewing more than one material, according to their interests and needs. The universities involved include: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Mauritius, Senegal and
the Ukraine, as well as UNCTAD. The final drafts of the material will be submitted this summer, after which an editorial and formatting process will take place to make the material user friendly and relevant to the teaching needs of members. We hope to start publishing the material on our website in the fall.

Vi member libraries get boost with latest trade publications

Core members will soon receive a selection of the latest trade- and development-related documents published by UNCTAD and other international organizations. The publications, selected based on regional and/or programme priorities, will serve to update our members’ existing collections.

The documents selected cover themes in macroeconomic policy, multilateral and regional trade negotiations and agreements, trade policy, intellectual property rights, transport logistics and trade facilitation, foreign direct investment, enterprise development, commodities, trade and environment, biofuels and competition policy and law.

All members will receive, among many other publications, the revised and updated version of the UNCTAD Model Law on Competition, based on submissions received from member States in 2007; Asian Foreign Direct Investment in Africa: Towards a New Era of Cooperation among Developing Countries, which examines the opportunities and constraints for Asian investment in African countries; China in a Globalizing World, which examines the country’s economic achievements over the past two decades, and how its development experiences differ from those of many other economies; and World Tariff Profiles 2006: A joint publication of WTO, UNCTAD and ITC, which provides a comprehensive picture of tariff profiles from around the world in an abridged format.

>_UPCOMING EVENTS

Senegal to host Second Regional UNCTAD course - Call for applications

African policy-makers and academics can apply to participate in the next UNCTAD Course on Key International Economic Issues (http://p166.unctad.org) to be hosted by the Ministry of Trade, Consumer Affairs and Handicrafts and Vi university member, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, October 22 to November 9.

The three-week course, originally targeted at high-level government officials, has in its last four sessions, benefited from the participation and expertise of Vi members in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Participants must submit their application to UNCTAD through their country’s Permanent Missions in Geneva by August 17. University members interested in contributing to the course as resource persons are asked to contact mohan.panicker@unctad.org by the end of July.

Application forms and other information are available on our website.
**> _TEACHING RESOURCES_**

**Materials from UNCTAD short courses on ICT, Transport and FDI now available**
Presentations and publications distributed at the latest sessions of the Short Courses on Key International Economic Issues for Geneva-based delegates can be accessed through the website.

The April course, *Promoting growth and development through Information and Communication Technologies*, examines the impact of ICTs on broad economic performance and on businesses and introduces different policy options available to Governments in the context of national ICT strategies.

The May course, *Enhancing competitiveness through trade and transport facilitation*, provides introductions to trade facilitation and the logistics of international trade and discusses the relationships between trade, transport costs and effective access to global transport networks. In addition, it examines global trends in trade logistics as they relate to trade facilitation measures, and the WTO negotiations on Articles V, VIII and X of GATT.

The June course, *Attracting FDI through International Investment Agreements*, provides an overview of recent trends in worldwide FDI flows and in national policies related to FDI, analyses the main features of IIAs and issues resulting from the growing patchwork of bilateral, sectoral, regional and plurilateral investment treaties.

Members experiencing internet access difficulties may request CD-Roms by contacting susana.olivares@unctad.org.

**> _PUBLICATIONS_**

**Implementing Competition-related Provisions in Regional Trade Agreements: Is it possible to obtain development gains**
Following up on the 2005 United Nations publication on *Competition Provisions in Regional Trade Agreements: How to Assure Development Gains*, this report considers the interrelationship between competition law and policy, economic development and trade. It shows the constraints faced by developing countries in using existing cooperation mechanisms, and suggests ways to foster a culture of competition in developing-country markets. The book also stresses the importance of improving the institutional capacities of recently established competition authorities in developing countries to deal with anti-competitive practices in their own markets and help their enterprises deal with them in international markets.

**World Economic Situation and Prospects 2007**
A joint product of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), UNCTAD, and the five United Nations regional commissions, this report provides an overview of recent global economic performance and short-term prospects for the world economy and of some key global economic policy and development issues. For 2007, modest inflation, insufficient employment growth and a deceleration in the world economy are expected, although developing countries and transition economies will continue to show robust growth. A downturn in the U.S. housing market, increasing oil prices and a lack of coordination in macroeconomic policies are cited as some of the challenges countries will have to contend with this year.
LATN Brief April 2007: Economies of China, Colombia and Peru - Impact on growth and income
China has managed to reduce poverty levels considerably over the past decades, albeit at the cost of increasing inequality. Many Latin American countries in contrast have lived through a period of stagnation and have not been able to reduce poverty and inequality levels. The last brief published by the Latin American Trade Network (LATN) summarizes the results of a study on the factors underlying the different growth, poverty reduction, trade, and investment experiences of China, Colombia and Peru. In addition, the study sets up a dynamic Computable General Equilibrium model to examine the consequences of enhanced trade and investment relationships between Colombia and China. The findings of the study suggest positive effects on the Colombian growth rate and wages, but negative impacts on the levels of employment and inequality. The brief is available in Spanish.

In the aftermath of the Asian economic crisis, East Asian countries including ASEAN member states, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, have increasingly sought to establish a regional system of financial cooperation. The study looks at the main drivers of this process and examines the progress made. The two key initiatives are the 'Chiang Mai initiative', which is designed to provide liquidity to member countries with short-run balance of payments problems and could develop into an Asian Monetary fund, and the 'Asian Bond Fund initiative', a regional bond market aiming to keep foreign reserves in the region and to reduce vulnerability to external financial shocks. The author also discusses the prospects and the challenges faced by the initiatives, such as regional economic diversity, geopolitical rivalry (in particular between Japan and China), and the relation to the IMF, the US and the EU.

>_LINKS

WTO Online Forum kicks off with dispute settlement topic
The WTO has started a series of webcasting debates where experts from around the world discuss major issues facing the WTO and the multilateral trading system. The first forum highlights potential improvements of the dispute settlement system. When you visit the site, you can watch a short video of William Davey from the University of Illinois College of Law, and John Jackson from Georgetown University Law Center, giving their views on dispute settlement reforms. You can contribute to the debate by posting your comments in the online forum on the subject.
http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/debates_e/debate1_e.htm

Partners wanted for international marketing student project organized by the EAFIT University in Colombia - join EAFIT’s blog
Anne Maria Zwerg, from VI member university EAFIT in Colombia, is seeking partners from around the world to participate in an international marketing activity for the fourth year undergraduate students in International Marketing. Teams from each of the participating universities will be responsible for selecting a product or service to market in each of their home countries. Within an established budget, the teams must determine the complete marketing mix for each of the distinct markets. Students will work on this project by means of electronic communication throughout the semester (August - November). Students may choose video-conferencing or other creative means to broadcast their final presentation. The blog set up by EAFIT (http://blogs.eafit.edu.co/azwerg.aspx) can be used by students to communicate with each other, or by lecturers from other universities to propose joint activities. Professors interested in joining this activity may contact Anne Marie Zwerg at azwerg@eafit.edu.co
dgCommunities links development professionals
dgCommunities provides resources and an interactive platform for professionals working to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development worldwide. Created by the Development Gateway Foundation, the website is divided into "communities" facilitated by one or more volunteer guides from around the world that have expertise in a domain that is relevant to their communities. Community categories include: economic and human development, technology and development, education, conflict and development, development effectiveness and environment. Link: http://topics.developmentgateway.org/

ACP-EU-Trade.Org
This site, managed by the European Centre for Development and Policy Management (ECDPM), brings together several useful resources for anyone with an interest in Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) and the ongoing negotiations on European Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The site contains a searchable database of resources related to RTAs as well as a section called In Brief, which aims to synthesise all the issues and elements of the EPA negotiations, and contains briefings summarising each of the six EPAs - essential reading for anyone wanting to keep abreast of ongoing developments. You can also subscribe to their newsletters, one of which - Trade Negotiations Insights - is published bi-monthly by both the ECDPM and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development and contains articles from authors working in the private sector (e.g. PWC), international organisations (e.g. UNCTAD) and NGOs (ICTSD).

> FEEDBACK

The Virtual Institute welcomes 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: susana.olivares@unctad.org

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

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

***NOT A MEMBER? Sign up as an associate member by clicking here.

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