HIGHLIGHTS

Study tour to Geneva for Economic Diplomacy students from Brazil
"It was a unique opportunity to learn more about international trade organisations, it gave us the chance to network, and to see how what we had learnt on the course in theory actually works in practice".
One students’ response to the University of Campinas/Vi Study Tour. More »

A new Vi member - Carleton University, Canada
"We welcome the Vi membership as an opportunity to broaden our network of expertise and establish partnerships with other institutions around the world who share similar goals, namely, to exchange information and resources, design and deliver high quality research and training programs relevant to member countries and promote local capacity building", says Rosemina Nathoo, coordinator of the Vi project at the Carleton’s Centre for Trade Policy and Law. More »

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1. Vi ACTIVITIES

1.1 Virtual Institute/University of Campinas Study Tour to Geneva

The study tour provided students with insight into policy-making processes and with a greater understanding of trade and development issues.

1.2 Needs Analysis - an overview

Among the numerous recommendations, member universities expressed the need to adapt teaching resources developed by UNCTAD to their own local contexts.

Opening up the trade policy process - the next generation of trade policy practitioners visits UNCTAD

Twenty-seven post-graduate students from the University of Campinas (UNICAMP) benefited from an extensive two-week study tour in Geneva in February 2005. The programme, planned in close cooperation with relevant UNCTAD experts, included interactive simulation exercises, lectures and presentations from experts on a wide range of issues relevant to international trade, investment and development. Students also enhanced their knowledge and understanding through access to other key international organizations, diplomatic representations, NGOs and private companies, such as the International Trade Centre, the World Trade Organization, the World Health Organization, the Brazilian and the Canadian Missions, Nestlé, Novartis and Oxfam. The tour was the culmination of an innovative economic diplomacy programme launched with UNCTAD’s support in 2003.

Students were enthused and inspired by much of what they experienced and felt that it gave them an invaluable inside view that made concrete much of what they had learnt on the course. One participant commented that the tour has given her skills and knowledge of international trade rules and regulations that will help the company she works for expand into international markets. Another, a specialist in agriculture commented how the course helped her see things from a more international perspective and has enhanced her understanding of trade negotiations.

How to build the teaching and research capacity of universities in international trade? The Virtual Institute Member University Needs Analysis

What do Universities from five different continents with different student populations, exam structures and histories all have in common when it comes to building capacity in trade-related subjects? They all feel the need for resources and activities that are relevant, practical and related to real-world policy. This was one of the key findings of the recently conducted Vi Member Universities Needs Analysis. As Talib Awad, coordinator of the Vi project at the University of Jordan puts it, “It is important to make our teaching relevant and practical to what the students may do professionally after the course”.

The analysis also shows that members want access to UNCTAD publications and research in a variety of UNCTAD subjects. They would also like to benefit from regular access to UNCTAD expertise through interviews, Q+A opportunities on particular subjects, forums on the Vi website and video-conferencing. Working with UNCTAD to create hands-on activities that can be used in courses was also something that universities are interested in. Mario Presser, Vi coordinator at the University of Campinas, explains: “Freely available exercises, case studies and simulations are always in short supply”.

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<th>1.3 New Virtual Institute website</th>
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<td>Building capacity is about building knowledge through research as well as teaching. The analysis also showed a strong interest from members in developing research projects through the Vi. And finally, members are interested in meeting each other in order to develop a community, identify and implement joint teaching and research projects. An opportunity you will have in July in Geneva!</td>
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<th>1.4 Planned meeting of Virtual Institute members</th>
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<td>Building an enhanced virtual space for the Virtual Institute - the new website</td>
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<td>Based on your feedback and on the needs analysis we are in the process of creating a new website to reflect the interests and work of universities and researchers working in trade-related subjects. The new site will provide easier access to documents and allow members to customise teaching resources by creating their own portfolios of materials. Regular communication features and events will also be a major component of the site allowing members to have regular news’ updates and to interact with experts in Geneva. We intend to launch the site at the upcoming Virtual Institute meeting in July 2005 and count on your involvement and participation for its success.</td>
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<th>2. UNCTAD RESOURCES</th>
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<td>2.1 Selection of resources on Globalization posted on the Vi site</td>
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<td>To access the resources,</td>
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<th>2. New teaching materials on World Trading System and Globalization</th>
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<td>Teaching materials on globalization, development and the international economic system are now available to Vi members. The materials consist of a presentation on &quot;Globalization, World Trading System and Industrialization&quot; prepared by Mr. Mehdi Shafaeddin, in charge of the Macro-Economic and Development Policies Branch at UNCTAD, accompanied by key questions and discussion points.</td>
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The presentation looks at the ways globalization has led to increased international economic integration and highlights the key
characteristics and trends that lie behind economic globalization such as increases in market concentration and mergers and acquisitions. It also explores some of the contradictions within the international trading system and its detrimental impact on industrialization and the development of developing countries. This presentation not only raises questions about the impact of globalization on development but also encourages students to think about the kinds of strategies that developing countries should follow in their trade policies and international negotiations.

The presentation is based on Mr. Shafaeddin’s recently published book "Trade Policy at the Crossroads: Recent Experience of Developing Countries" (2005) published by Palgrave Macmillan, London, as well as two discussion papers by the same author: "Free trade or fair trade? An enquiry into the causes of failure in recent trade negotiations" (UNCTAD 2000, Discussion Paper No. 153) and "Who is the master? Who is the servant? Market or government? An alternative approach: towards a coordination system" (UNCTAD 2004, Discussion Paper No. 175).

New materials on Research and Development through offshoring

A recent UNCTAD expert meeting discussed the issue of the globalization of research and development through offshoring activities and the implications for developing countries. Presentations and discussions addressed the question of what possibilities this process had for development: What types of R&D can contribute to development? If R&D takes place abroad - how will this affect the transfer of technology? What is the most desired by-product of FDI? What are the risks and benefits and how can national and international policies help to maximise the impact on development?

A new resource from the meeting - an UNCTAD background paper providing definitions on all relevant concepts (offshoring and outsourcing, R&D units etc.) and includes an overview of the current trends for the main drivers of global R&D, the implications for development and the policy environment - is now available to members. The questions posed following each chapter could serve as input for discussions during lectures. The paper is accompanied by a corresponding presentation on “The globalisation of R&D by TNCs and implications for developing countries” by Ms. Anne Miroux, Chief of UNCTAD’s Investment Issues and Analysis Branch.

In addition, other papers and presentations by experts are available providing in-depth explanations on the reasons and consequences of the rise of offshored and outsourced R&D, with particular focus on developing countries. Two papers present specific cases of globalization of R&D by companies in both developed (example of financial services) and developing countries (case of China). Two papers and presentations look into country-specific cases and analyse the role of FDI in R&D in India and Brazil. Finally, three documents suggest possible national and international policies in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of global R&D.
Can trade contribute to fighting poverty? The importance of making the link between trade and poverty

Resources exploring this crucial question are now available to members on the website. Four presentations from Charles Gore, Lisa Borgatti and Michael Herrmann of UNCTAD’s Special Programme for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries have been posted. In the presentation “Mainstreaming trade in Poverty Reduction Strategies”, Mr. Charles Gore analyzes the current situation of trade in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and deals with two alternative approaches to mainstreaming trade in Poverty Reduction. Mr. Gore stresses the importance of the establishment of a durable, efficient and country-owned trade policy. The presentation contains valuable references for more in-depth reading.

In another presentation, "Linking International Trade with Poverty Reduction", Mr. Charles Gore provides an analytical examination of the relationship between trade and poverty and the national and international policy implications of linking international trade more effectively with poverty reduction in LDCs.

"Improving the Trade-Poverty Relation through the International Trade Regime" by Mr. Michael Herrmann focuses on liberalization. It looks first at tariff barriers and agricultural subsidies and how they impact on trade and poverty, and then examines measures that could enhance the contribution of trade to poverty reduction, including generally applicable as well as LDC-specific measures and South-South cooperation.

"Trade Liberalization and Poverty Reduction in the LDCs" by Ms. Lisa Borgatti also concentrates on liberalization and deals with the extent and sequencing of trade liberalization and the relationship between trade liberalization and some post-liberal development strategies.

New Vi member from Canada: Carleton University

The Centre for Trade Policy and Law (CTPL) of Carleton University, Canada, became a member of the Virtual Institute Network in March 2005, bringing the number of members to seven. CTPL is jointly sponsored by Carleton University and the University of Ottawa and works with other institutions around the world.

CTPL offers courses and conducts research on globalization challenges, foreign direct investment, development strategies, international trade, international trade relations, and international economic law. Courses are offered to students at the post-graduate level as well as to policy-makers and professionals on a non-degree basis for career advancement. CTPL has so far trained professionals from 60 developing countries and countries in transition mainly on WTO-related issues.

CTPL is a leading Canadian publisher of books, articles, and monographs on a variety of trade policy and law subjects. Its...
research areas include: Trade Policy, Canada-US Trade Relations, the North America Free Trade Agreement and other Regional Trade Agreements, Trade and Investment, and WTO Implementation and Accession. CTPL's associates involved in training and research are professors and academics based at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa.

CTPL welcomes the opportunity to broaden its network of expertise and potential partnerships with other education/training institutions around the world sharing similar goals. The Vi Network will also make it possible to promote CTPL projects and training activities. CTPL, in turn, expects to benefit from the expertise and knowledge of other members. For more information about CTPL click [here](#).

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<th>3.2 University of Dar-es-Salaam: Master of Sciences course on Trade Policy Management</th>
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<td>The University of Dar-es-Salaam is launching a new trade policy management course at the MSc level. The course has been specially designed to provide current and future policy-makers with the analytical and practical skills to formulate and implement relevant and sustainable trade policies. The new course will help students understand the links between their country’s trade policies and what is going on globally. This global perspective and the importance of networking are behind the University’s involvement in the UNCTAD Virtual Institute. The Vi facilitated Prof. Francis Matambalya’s visit to Geneva in order to discuss the development of the new course. It has also played an important role in developing the programme.</td>
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<td>For more information on the programme contact Francis Matambalya, the Vi project coordinator at the University of Dar-es-Salaam.</td>
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<th>3.3 University of Jordan to launch an e-learning course on economics and to introduce a course on microeconomics of competitiveness</th>
<th>University of Jordan</th>
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<td>The University of Jordan is launching an e-learning course on economics at the undergraduate level starting this semester, which later on will be extended to all academic programmes.</td>
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In addition, the university is planning to introduce a course on the microeconomics of competitiveness in cooperation with the Harvard Business School as soon as the final agreement between the two institutions is ratified.

The university is also organizing an open seminar on 30 March on the role of the qualified industrial zone in the Jordanian economy.

For more information about these events contact Talib Awad, the Vi project coordinator at the University of Jordan.
## 4. FORTHCOMING UNCTAD MEETINGS: opportunities for further information

UNCTAD will organize the eighth meeting of the **Commission on Science and Technology** in Geneva from 23 to 27 **May 2005**. The main topic of this meeting, “Science and technology promotion, advice and application for the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals”, could be of interest to Vi member universities. We will make available any relevant presentations and documents on the Vi site and announce them in the next issue of the Vi Newsletter.

## 5. INTERESTING LINKS

### Resources on trade facilitation - new agenda item in the WTO negotiations

**Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade**

Trade facilitation reduces transaction costs and improves the capacity of countries to supply goods and services internationally. It does this by simplifying and harmonizing the formalities, procedures and laws that affect international trade transactions. Trade facilitation is now being negotiated at the WTO so is very pertinent to the international trade agenda. The Vi has therefore been looking for good sources of information for members on this subject.

The website of the Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade, of which UNCTAD is a member ([http://www.gfptt.org](http://www.gfptt.org)), offers a wide range of materials on Economic Development and Trade Facilitation, Border Agency Modernization, Customs Issues, Transit, Electronic Commerce and Business, Trade Liberalization and Facilitation, Trade Logistics and Facilitation, Regional Transport Integration, Transport Operations, and so on. Each topic includes recommendations, reference documents, activities, existing working/discussion groups and training opportunities that might be of interest to Vi members. You can register free-of-charge registration on the GFP website and promote any activities you have in this area.

### The next Vi Newsletter will be posted in June 2005

Please send news items or articles to us by the end of May at the latest for inclusion in the next newsletter.

The aim of this newsletter is to provide members with details of the current activities and future projects of the Virtual Institute, abstracts of recent UNCTAD publications, and links to other trade and development related sites. The newsletter will also serve as a means by which the network of members can communicate and share ideas on a regular basis.

Our next newsletter will be posted in June. We invite you to submit suitable material for inclusion in it. Material may consist of articles, abstracts, reviews or letters relating to development issues and/or news concerning your university department.