Tanzania Workshop Successfully Concluded in January

A five day workshop on commodity production and trade was attended by 15 participants from universities and research institutes of 8 East African countries and Senegal. The UNCTAD Commodities Branch and the Virtual Institute jointly developed a training package on commodities production and trade which aims to strengthen academics' ability to teach and research these issues, in line with the objectives of the Virtual Institute. Several of the workshop sessions were therefore dedicated to the presentation of this training material and how to teach and research commodity issues. The material will shortly be available for Vi members on our website.

University of Mauritius Builds Local Links

At the end of February this year, the University of Mauritius, one of the 13 Virtual Institute member universities, hosted a seminar on WTO issues and the impact on firms' competitiveness. The seminar was aimed at local business people to help them understand the impact of recent WTO issues, particularly on the services sector, following the conclusion of the Hong Kong Ministerial. 26 people participated in three afternoon sessions held after the working day which made the workshop more accessible for local business. The seminar forms part of a multidisciplinary approach by the university to become the leading national think tank on trade and development and other issues of national importance.
Vi Member University Represented at Dakar Conference

Aly Mbeye, member coordinator for the Virtual Institute at the University of Dakar, Senegal, recently participated in a seminar, where he presented a paper entitled "Globalisation and the emergence of new development poles: implications for Africa". The seminar was convened by the President of Senegal and sought to bring together government ministers and national development agencies to discuss the role of Africa in the global economy.

The economic growth that has been seen in Asia and the movement of international capital to this region, have not been repeated in Africa and further discussion focussed on the reasons for this: notably Africa's weakness integrating its economies into global value chains, caused by institutional deficiencies and a lack of well skilled human capital.

University of Dar Es Salaam Jointly Hosts Workshop on Hong Kong Evaluation

In collaboration with the South Institute for Trade and Development (SITRADE), and International Lawyers Against Poverty (iLEAP - see Links), the Trade and Integration Studies Programme of the University of Dar Es Salaam organised a two day regional workshop on "experiences and lessons" learnt from the sixth WTO ministerial. The workshop aimed to bring together delegates to share their experiences with local stakeholders from 9 East African Countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti).

The output of the workshop is expected to generate better comprehension of the WTO process among public sector and non-public sector stakeholders in the East Africa region. It is also hoped that the stakeholders will, in the future, be able to contribute towards establishing the negotiating positions of developing countries and facilitate the implementation of WTO agreements.

University of the West Indies Study Tour 2006, in Geneva

The Virtual Institute is organising a study tour of the Geneva based institutions for the University of the West Indies (Vi Member). 23 students on their masters programme in trade policy will visit Geneva for three weeks in May. The tour aims to deepen students' understanding of international trade issues and provide them with an insight into the work of UNCTAD, the WTO, the ITC and the Caribbean missions based in Geneva. The students will follow a programme of seminars, workshops and simulation activities as well as having face to face meetings with staff from the international organisations and regional missions. It is hoped that many of the resources developed for this tour as well as any work arising from the tour sessions will be available to members in the future, either online or as a cd-rom.
New Material on Negotiation Skills and Strategies Available to Vi Members

This new material has been developed by the UNCTAD Vi as a simple introduction to trade negotiations. It is intended for use by teachers as background material to give students an overview of the field, to raise questions and promote discussion. The material comprises an overview of negotiation theory, which provides descriptive information on the main strategies and tactics used in negotiations. This document links to several other resources: a brief history of negotiations; papers on the WTO and recent negotiations under the Doha round; a paper on theoretical models of negotiations; a discussion paper on RTAs and multilateralism; and a link to our simulation based on WTO agriculture negotiations.

This new material is published primarily as an introduction to negotiations, which the Virtual Institute has initiated. However, it is intended that the material could be complemented with contributions from members, which, for example, would localise the issue of negotiations.

UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2005 Now Available Online

The UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics On-line provides a comprehensive collection of statistical data relevant to the analysis of international trade, investment and development, for individual countries and for economic and trade groupings.

The handbook presents reference statistics considered of particular importance for describing, in the context of globalization, how developing countries have evolved in recent decades. The time series cover periods that are as long as figures obtainable permit (going back to 1950 when data are available). A user-friendly data browser allows users to sort data and to simultaneously view, for example, values and percentages, thus enabling quicker reference and improved analytical insight. The data available from the Handbook of Statistics On-line are structured into the following chapters: International merchandise trade; Trade and commodity price indices; Structure of international trade by region; Structure of international trade by product; International trade in services; International finance; Indicators of development; Special studies.
Intergovernmental Group of 24 (G-24) Meets in Geneva

For its spring meeting this year the G-24 put together a stimulating programme of presentations dealing with a range of monetary and development finance issues of concern to developing countries. It was a fascinating two days and provoked lively discussion among the audience on many of the issues raised. Emphasis was made on the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, their importance for developing countries and the effects of the openness of labour, capital and commodity markets for developing countries. All of the papers are available on the G-24 website. The papers are well worth a look and could inform a discussion on the prospects for the global economy, the role of the IMF and the changing position and needs of developing countries in the international monetary system.

The Intergovernmental Group of Twenty Four (G-24) is a grouping of 24 countries which aims at strengthening the cooperation among developing countries and serves, furthermore, to prepare participating developing countries for negotiations on monetary and financial issues that take place in the IMF and other bodies. The G-24 holds meetings twice a year before the annual meetings of the World Bank and the IMF. For this year's spring meeting, the G-24 convened in Geneva on the 16th and 17th of March.

Joseph Stiglitz Speaks at UNCTAD/Commonwealth Secretariat Aid for Trade Meeting

One of the most important development-related outcomes of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in December 2005 was the Aid for Trade (AfT) initiative. This initiative should aim at helping developing countries to improve supply-side capacity and trade-related infrastructure in order to benefit from the outcomes of the WTO agreements. The joint UNCTAD/ Commonwealth Secretariat meeting on AfT which took place in Geneva on 21/22 of March contributed useful ideas and discussions to support these efforts.

Besides country representatives, prominent speakers from the World Bank, the IMF and UNCTAD as well as the Nobel laureate Prof. Joseph E. Stiglitz participated in the Aid for Trade Meeting, and whose presentation can be found by clicking here. The response to Stiglitz's argument by Jean-Pierre Chauffure can also be read by clicking here.

Within the discussion on AfT, fundamental questions have been raised: is temporary aid beneficial or does it prevent sustainable development? Which requisites should AfT meet? How should it be financed and which countries
should benefit from the AfT programme? Should the openness of a country's economy influence whether and how much AfT is paid? Does AfT have to be demand driven or should the donors determine the purpose of the aid? For a full list and access to the papers presented at the meeting click here.

>_LINKS

**International Lawyers and Economists against Poverty**
ILEAP is an independent, not-for-profit organization whose overriding goal is to promote pro-development outcomes in international negotiations. Established in 2002, ILEAP provides professional backstopping capacity and support in trade negotiations to a variety of beneficiaries in Africa and the Caribbean.

The site contains useful background and advisory briefs for trade negotiators from developing countries (particularly countries in Africa) on key issues in WTO negotiations, such as the GATS. Some of the papers provide advice on which sectors to prioritise in making requests and offers, and could be used as useful background material for students or adapted for a simulation activity.

**World Customs Organisation Website**
The website of the WCO contains useful information for anyone interested in, or working on trade facilitation or using trade data. As well as containing a searchable database of documents on customs, tariffs and trade facilitation issues, the site also has useful statistical data on customs and tariff rates. The data can be searched on a country or tariff basis.

>_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](http://www.unctad.org) 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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