

CONFÉRENCE DES NATIONS UNIES SUR
LE COMMERCE ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT



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(à rappeler dans la réponse)

21 August 2003

Dear Mr. Kinniburgh,

I refer to the letter dated 16 June, addressed to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD by Mr. Desai, requesting UNCTAD's contribution to the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/110 entitled "Economic assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans".

The attached text provides information on the principal activities carried out by the UNCTAD secretariat during the period under review. I trust that you will find this material of relevance with regard to the report you are preparing. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Victor P. Busuttil
Officer-in-Charge
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United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
General Assembly resolution 56/110: Economic Assistance to the Eastern European States
affected by the developments in the Balkans

1. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has continued to provide technical assistance to several affected countries in the areas of trade facilitation, investment promotion, transport services and training, including through the training for government officials on key international economic issues.

2. As at mid-2003, UNCTAD's Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) is operational in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Slovakia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. ASYCUDA speeds up customs clearance through the introduction of computerization and simplification of procedures, thus minimizing administrative costs to the business community. It increases customs revenue, which is often the major contributor to national budgets in most countries, and produces reliable and timely trade and fiscal statistics to assist in the economic planning process.

3. In November 2002, in accordance with the wishes of the Member States, UNCTAD's Trade Point Programme was officially transferred from UNCTAD to the World Trade Point Federation (WTPF). A new mandate was provided to UNCTAD to offer its assistance to the WTPF's Secretariat and capacity building needs for Trade Points. Besides already established Trade Points in Sofia (Bulgaria), Budapest (Hungary), Chisinau (Republic of Moldova), Bucharest (Romania), Detva (Slovak Republic) and Ljubljana (Slovenia), new Trade Points are being set up in Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro) and Skopje (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

4. UNCTAD's Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) programme continued to provide technical assistance in the area of public debt management and financial analysis in Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova and Romania. This assistance focussed on further support and training in the use of the computer-based debt management software package.

5. UNCTAD's World Investment Reports provide analysis of investment issues. WIR 2002 : Transnational Corporations and Export Competitiveness (Section III.C: Central and Eastern Europe (trends); Section IV.C: The largest twenty five TNCs from Central and Eastern Europe; and Section VI.C.3: Hungary (patterns of export competitiveness: some winner countries). World Investment Report 2003: Section II.B: Central and Eastern Europe (trends). UNCTAD produced the World Investment Directory: Central and Eastern Europe 2003, Volume VIII; printed, CD-Rom and internet versions. Eastern European affected countries have participated in joint UNCTAD/WTO regional seminars on "The Relationship between trade and investment" (Geneva, Switzerland, 2 July 2002; Geneva, Switzerland, 2 April 2003, Prague. Czech Republic, 18-19 June 2003; Islamabad, Pakistan, 18-19 June 2003). UNCTAD made a presentation on "Integrating Developing Countries into the Global Economy", for visiting students from the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, International Relations Division, Ljubljana, Slovenia, in Geneva, 15 May 2003. UNCTAD will make a presentation to the IHT-UNDP "Expanding the European Investment Frontier" Summit, Bucharest, Romania, 14-15 October 2003. UNCTAD's work on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) issues in the region are reflected in the following press material: "Privatization and greenfield FDI in Central and Eastern Europe: does the mode of entry matter?" ("e-brief", 4 March 2002); "Bucking Global Downward Trend; Region's TNCs Continue to Expand" (press release # TAD/INF/PR52, 17 September 2002); "Outward FDI from Central and Eastern European countries" (press information note, 12 December 2002); "Enlargement of the European Union: A Boost to FDI in Central and Eastern Europe?" (note to correspondents #TAD/INF/NC/51, 9 April 2003); "Foreign Direct Investment in Russia: Is it Taking Off?" (press release # TAD/INF/PR73, 16 May 2003).

6. UNCTAD continues to provide technical assistance and advisory services to the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the process of accession to the World Trade Organization and was also providing these services to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which completed its accession in April 2003.

