



## MR. SUPACHAI PANITCHPAKDI

Secretary-General of UNCTAD  
as of 1 September 2005

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE** Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi began his first four-year term as Secretary-General of UNCTAD on 1 September 2005, following his endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly. Earlier, he served as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce of Thailand, in which capacity he successfully coordinated his country's response to the Asian financial crisis of the mid-1990s. He was also the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) from September 2002 to August 2005, being the first national from a developing country to head the organization.

At UNCTAD, Mr. Supachai has brought about comprehensive improvements in the role and effectiveness of the Organization. These efforts began early in his first term when he established the Panel of Eminent Persons, chaired by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil. The reform actions have encompassed the prioritization and reinforcement of UNCTAD's research agenda, the consolidation and better focusing of its technical cooperation programmes, a revamping of the inter-governmental machinery, and improved cooperation and coordination with other parts of the United Nations system.

Mr. Supachai has also strengthened UNCTAD's policy, intergovernmental and capacity-building work in the key areas of commodities, economic cooperation and integration among developing countries, science, technology and ICT, competition policy, the accession of developing and transition countries to WTO, customs modernization, investment policies, and trade and climate change. He also has ensured enhanced focus on Africa, on the Least Developed Countries, and on other countries with special needs. In the midst of the current global economic crisis, he is leading UNCTAD's contribution to United Nations efforts towards finding sustainable and development-oriented policy responses.

These actions – along with his successful leadership of the UNCTAD XII Conference in Accra in 2008, his engagements with world leaders, and his participation in major global forums – have contributed to substantial enhancement of the visibility and impact of UNCTAD.

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Mr. Supachai began his professional career at the Bank of Thailand in 1974, working in the Research Department, the International Finance Division and the Financial Institutions Supervision Department. In 1986, Mr. Supachai was elected to the Thai Parliament and appointed Deputy Minister of Finance. In 1988, he was appointed Director and Advisor, and subsequently President, of the Thai Military Bank. In 1992, he was appointed Senator, and that same year he became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, entrusted with oversight of the country's economic and trade policymaking.

In 2001, he was appointed Visiting Professor at the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne. He has published a number of books, including *Globalization and Trade in the New Millennium* (2001) and *China and WTO: Changing China, Changing World Trade* (2002, co-authored with Mark Clifford).

Born in Bangkok on 30 May 1946, Mr. Supachai attended school there at St. Gabriel's College and Triam Udom School. He received his Master's Degree in Econometrics, Development Planning and his PhD in Economic Planning and Development at the Netherlands School of Economics (now known as Erasmus University) in Rotterdam. In 1973, Mr. Supachai completed his doctoral dissertation on Human Resource Planning and Development, under the supervision of Professor Jan Tinbergen, the first Nobel laureate in economics. Mr. Supachai is married to Mrs. Sasai and has a son and a daughter.

