

**ARTNeT Capacity Building Workshop on Trade Research, 2-6 June 2008, Phnom Penh,
Cambodia**

**Opening Statement from Mr. Ravi Ratnayake,
Director, Trade and Investment Division, UNESCAP**

Mr. Yiseang Chhiv, Mr. Robert Teh, Mr. Evan Due, distinguished participants and resource persons,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the Fourth ARTNeT Capacity Building Workshop on Trade Research. This workshop is indeed one of the core activities of the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT), whose aim is to build the capacity of Asia-Pacific's developing countries to conduct relevant and high quality research on trade and investment policy and facilitation issues.

As you may know, this workshop marks the first activity of ARTNeT Phase II and is the fourth regional workshop of this kind organized by ESCAP in cooperation with ARTNeT core partners. The review of ARTNeT Phase I revealed that these workshops were among the most useful activities facilitated by ARTNeT, in particular as they provided an opportunity for junior researchers from the region to get together to learn and update their knowledge on trade policy related issues, data and research techniques. We hope this will continue to be true in this new phase, in which we have further increased emphasis on trade and investment-related capacity, so as to develop an effective regional group of junior researchers to implement the evolving research programme of the network.

Over twenty researchers are assembled in this room today, from 16 developing countries of the region and with a special interest in trade issues. I look forward to seeing you work together and learn from each other as the week unfolds. Indeed, the objective of the workshop is not only to enhance your individual knowledge of the multilateral trading system and learn a specific analytical technique, but also to promote intra-regional exchange of information and knowledge among researchers.

Distinguished participants and resource persons,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank once again WTO and, through my dear friend Evan Due, the International Development Research Centre for providing generous financial and substantive support to this event. I would also like to thank WTO, UNCTAD and CDRI for providing resource persons for this event, and the Royal School of Administration of Cambodia for hosting the workshop.

Finally, I am grateful to the Government of Cambodia, in particular the Ministry of Commerce, for supporting the work of ARTNeT and for generously hosting us today. We look forward to continuous and strengthened collaboration throughout ARTNeT Phase II.

I wish you a successful workshop and a pleasant stay in Phnom Penh.

Thank you.