

**Opening Statement by
Supachai Panitchpakdi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD**

Launch of the G15 Law Schools Project

**In support of the World Investment Forum and the International
Investment Agreements Conference**

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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the launch of the G15 Law Schools pilot project. I am also honoured to share this opening with Professor David Caron, President of the American Society of International Law; and it is also a pleasure to welcome Professor Susan Franck to this event. We were very happy to benefit from Professor Franck's expertise during 6 months she spent with UNCTAD as a scholar in residence earlier this year. It is thanks to her many efforts that we are now witnessing this launch event, which will connect UNCTAD's work on investment to several centers of excellence in the field of international investment law and development.

Today's launch of a world-wide network of law schools teaching international investment law is a joint initiative between UNCTAD and a pilot group of 15 institutions of higher learning from all six continents.

The selected institutions all demonstrate a commitment to the links between international investment law and development. The network will hopefully deepen the study of international investment law and policy, and feed into the debate on international investment at UNCTAD and within the member States of the United Nations.

In my career I have closely witnessed the development of a corpus of international trade law that both preceded and evolved with the development of the international trading system. In the last fifteen years, we have begun to see how international investment law is following a similar path: concepts have been defined, treaties have been negotiated, and commitments have been made at the international level. As with trade and trade negotiations, countries have a growing need for investment experts and sound analysis of investment law and policy in today's global economy.

Academia is at the forefront of research in this field and their input into policy making is instrumental. Through the establishment of a network on international investment law, UNCTAD and the "G15 of Law Schools" aim to foster collaboration among academics and other international investment law experts. The network will help build institutional and analytical capacity to better respond to the complex issues in international investment law and policy, and enhance the teaching and networking opportunities among academia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At UNCTAD we value collaboration with academia in the various fields we are working on and we are placing much emphasis on intensifying this relationship in the area of international investment and international investment law. In this context, the creation of the "G15 of Law Schools" network is a very important step.

I therefore wish this project every success and look forward to seeing the fruits of this collaboration in the future.

Thank you very much.