



World Export Development Forum (WEDF), 8 – 11 October 2008

PRESS RELEASE: MONTREUX

09.10.08

FOOD CLAIMS NEED URGENT STREAMLINING: UNCTAD

The Secretary-General of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi, has called for an urgent rationalization of the confusing labels plastered on supermarket products.

Speaking during the World Export Development Forum (WEDF) in Montreux, Switzerland, Dr Supachai said even *he* got confused when he did the shopping.

"I look for cornflakes and there are 35 different boxes with lots of various health effects or requirements – it is very confusing and I end up making a selection out of sheer boredom," Dr Supachai said.

"I think consumers are at a loss at what to base their decisions on," he said.

Dr Supachai said many international bodies were making great headway, including UNCTAD, the International Trade Centre, United Nations Environment Program and the World Trade Organization, into streamlining the rules around certification.

"We need international action and collaboration between the United Nations agencies and global bodies that deal with food, trade and standards setting," Dr Supachai said.

"Rules for food labelling should not be misleading and should only be implemented when necessary but there should also be no impediment to trade flows – the rules must be transparent and inclusive."

"This labelling should also not be able to be used to distort the market and create monopolization."
"Consumers need to know what is reliable."

Dr Supachai said consumer consciousness was growing and that UNCTAD's role was to ensure that it became a force for good.

www.intracen.org/wedf

For more information:

Contact: Natalie Domeisen
Chief

Communications and Events

P: +41 22 730 0370

M: +41 79 239 1825

E: domeisen@intracen.org

