

Les stratégies territoriales des FTN

La mondialisation est l'expression du développement économique et du déploiement spatial des firmes transnationales, acteurs majeurs de ce processus. Les définitions du terme FTN sont variables d'une source à l'autre, mais l'on pourra se référer à la définition des TNCs (en anglais) ci-dessous. Une FTN ou société mère est une entreprise d'une certaine taille économique, développant son activité à l'échelle internationale à travers la présence de filiales productives ou commerciales dans au moins cinq Etats différents. Laurent Carroué précise que ces « entreprises très nationalisées gardent cependant de fortes caractéristiques nationales et un fort ancrage national ou bi-national de nature économique (vente), industrielle (production), technologique (recherche), culturelle ou géopolitique ». Se pose alors la question de leur impact sur les territoires dans la mondialisation.

Companies that operate in several countries by inward investment are called transnational corporations (TNCs). A TNC is a for-profit enterprise marked by two basic characteristics: it engages in enough business activities - including sales, distribution, extraction, manufacturing, and research and development - outside the country of origin so that it is dependent financially on operations in at least two different countries and its management decisions are based on regional or global alternatives. A Transnational Corporation operates worldwide; it is said to operate on a borderless basis.

Le thème invite à appréhender le rôle des FTN dans l'organisation et la transformation de l'espace mondial selon la problématique suivante :

Comment et selon quelles stratégies ces firmes utilisent-elles les différences entre les territoires et, en retour, contribuent-elles à les façonner et à organiser ainsi l'espace mondial ?

PROBLEMATIQUES –ENJEUX

Les FTN réalisent aujourd'hui 20% du PIB mondial et directement un tiers du commerce mondial. Si quelques puissances régionales et pays émergents du Sud se dotent de FTN, les trois-quarts appartiennent aux pays développés.

Les FTN, au-delà de leurs caractéristiques communes, sont d'une **très grande diversité structurelle**. Selon leurs nationalités d'origine et leurs branches d'activité, elles développent **des stratégies territoriales très diversifiées**.

Leur organisation doit s'adapter en permanence à une valorisation emboîtée des différentes échelles géographiques, tenant grand compte des **territoires comme bases productives et marchés de consommation**. Elles gardent cependant un ancrage national privilégié (de nature économique, industriel, technologique, culturel et géopolitique).

Les FTN substituent **une implantation locale** aux importations dans le cadre de stratégies de marché afin de s'imposer dans un cadre très concurrentiel : les FTN sont en concurrence pour **l'obtention des marchés mondiaux**. Pour gagner de nouveaux marchés, leurs produits et leurs stratégies s'adaptent aux lieux dont elles tirent avantage (législations sociales, politiques salariales avantageuses, main d'œuvre ou matière première abondante ...) et qu'elles façonneront en retour. Cette adaptabilité à l'espace mondial et ses disparités, la mobilité qui en découle est l'une de leurs caractéristiques majeures.

Pour les produits de base (agricoles, agro-alimentaires, mines, énergies) les FTN déploient des **stratégies d'approvisionnement ayant pour objectif le contrôle des espaces de production** dans les biens à haute valeur ajoutée.

A l'opposé, **les stratégies de main d'œuvre** se déploient dans des branches à faible contenu

technologique. Les FTN organisent à une échelle mondiale la segmentation fonctionnelle, technique, sociale et spatiale de leurs appareils productifs débouchant sur une division géographique du travail et participant à la nouvelle division internationale du travail. L'externalisation de nombreuses tâches oblige à une réorganisation du processus de production.

Les FTN rencontrent de **multiples limites et résistances au déploiement de leurs logiques hégémoniques**. La résistance des différents territoires à la mondialisation oblige les FTN à s'adapter aux valeurs culturelles et représentations géopolitiques des populations. Les préoccupations sociétales prennent une part croissante dans le débat autour de la mondialisation. Les FTN sont de plus en plus interpellées sur des sujets d'ordre éthique (nouvelles formes de pollution, licenciements, rigueur salariale, travail des enfants).

DEMARCHE - EXEMPLES POSSIBLES

Deux démarches sont possibles pour aborder ce thème :

1. La première consiste en une étude par échelles : ce plan multi - scalaire qui permet de partir des stratégies globales des FTN pour ensuite étudier leurs stratégies d'approvisionnement et de marché qui mettent en concurrence les territoires à l'échelle régionale. Dans cette partie, on peut insister par exemple sur le phénomène du *landgrab* ainsi que sur les conséquences des logiques de prédation des ressources sur l'environnement (l'on peut insérer ici les idées de contestations des FTN). La nouvelle division internationale du travail est abordée également à plusieurs échelles : entre pays ou à l'intérieur de ceux-ci (métropoles, périphéries, ports...). L'échelle locale permet d'étudier des territoires impactés par les TNCs et totalement polarisés, alors que d'autres sont mis à l'écart de la mondialisation.

Proposition de plan :

- I. At world scale, TNCs participate in the reshaping of territories
 - A. TNCs still largely based in developed countries
 - B. New leading TNCs from emerging countries
 - C. Towards an "archipelago economy" (P. VELTZ)
- II. At regional scale, various territorial strategies apply
 - A. Securing raw materials
 - B. Conquering new markets
 - C. New international labour division and relocations
- III. At local scale, are TNCs creating or destroying territories?
 - A. Free trade zones
 - B. TNCs and global cities

2. Cette question peut également être traitée sous l'angle d'un exemple (comme il est proposé dans le programme officiel des trois académies de Paris, Créteil et Versailles), exemple qui sera suivi d'une mise en perspective pour étudier le thème dans toutes ses dimensions. Ce n'est pas sans rappeler les démarches adoptées en géographie auxquelles les élèves sont désormais bien habitués depuis la classe de seconde. L'exemple permet une approche concrète de la mondialisation et de ses acteurs. Elle peut largement être reliée au **thème « espaces et échanges » du programme de langue vivante** qui invite les professeurs à étudier avec leurs élèves « La géographie des circuits commerciaux et des réseaux d'influence » pour mieux comprendre l'inscription de la société britannique ou de la société américaine dans le monde. L'étude d'une FTN en géographie peut faire écho à l'étude de documents en langue vivante relatifs aux débats ouverts aussi bien en Grande Bretagne et

en Europe qu'aux Etats Unis sur l'impact de la mondialisation. Des mouvements comme celui des indignés ou « *Occupy Wall Street* » questionnent aussi bien le modèle libéral que la société de consommation dont les FTN sont le fer de lance.

L'exemple d'une FTN agro-alimentaire : Nestlé

Cette étude est inspirée d'une fiche de révision du GCSE. L'étude de cas sur la labellisation 'Fairtrade' de certains produits de la marque permet d'aborder les stratégies d'approvisionnement (échelle locale), et les stratégies de marché (plaire au consommateur mondial). Des articles élogieux ou critiques sur cette labellisation se trouvent aisément dans la presse anglo-saxonne. Des liens vers des documents précis sont cités dans les sources.

Nestlé is the world's largest food and nutrition company. Today, the company operates in 86 countries around the world, has 456 factories worldwide and employs over 283,000 people. Nestlé boasts some 6,000 brands, with a wide range of products across a number of markets, including coffee (Nescafé, Nespresso), bottled water (Perrier), beverages (Nesquik), chocolate (After Eight), ice cream (Häagen-Dazs), breakfast cereals, infant foods, performance and healthcare nutrition, soups and sauces (Maggi, Buitoni), frozen and refrigerated foods (Findus etc.).

With globalisation, Nestlé can get raw materials where markets make them cheapest, it can locate factories where wage costs are lowest and as a result it can make sure that it can compete for price in every market in every country in the world. But the 2010 documentary *The Dark Side of Chocolate* alleged that Nestlé purchased cocoa beans from Ivory Coast plantations that used child slave labour.

On October 7, 2005, Nestle launched its new coffee, "Nescafe Partners Blend." This coffee was promoted for being Fairtrade in the countries from which Nestle sourced the coffee beans. While not the first, Nestle is the largest food and beverage company to do so. For a company with a yearly turnover of US\$67 billion, which buys 750,000 tons of coffee beans a year, the decision to offer Fairtrade coffee prompted some activists to laud this decision as a milestone. Others dismiss the decision as mere exploitation of a profitable trend. Many other medium-sized and a few multinational companies, such as Starbucks, Walmart, and Procter and Gamble (the largest coffee supplier to the United States) preceded Nestle in offering Fairtrade products.

There is a steadily growing demand for such products: North American sales of Fairtrade coffee doubled every year from 1998 to 2001, with over 10 million tons sold in 2002.

TNCs are becoming increasingly environmentally aware. Because they have a global corporate image to uphold they can't get away with the same type of environmental abuse of the past. Most TNCs are now trying to flat up their green credentials.

The intention of the development of Fairtrade products and the fair trade movement is to promote equitable trading conditions for developing countries. With the extension of Fairtrade certification, Nestlé has shortlisted high-priority commodities and developed sourcing guidelines: provide incomes for thousands of families, training for farmers to be more sustainable; build 40 schools and support community projects; pay a premium for quality cocoa). The company is also committed to tackling deforestation, child labour, water use in agriculture, rural development.

The growing number of Fairtrade certified goods indicates a widespread public interest in international human business practices.

L'exemple d'une FTN des télécommunications : Apple

En ce qui concerne l'exemple d'Apple on pourra se référer en Français à la fiche pédagogique intitulée « Apple une entreprise transnationale », publiée en novembre 2011 sur Strabon par

Geoffrey Gekiere (<http://www.histoire.ac-versailles.fr/spip.php?article938>) qui fourmille de références bibliographiques et d'informations en français très utiles aussi pour construire l'étude de cas sur un produit mondialisé dans le cadre des cours en français. Ce qui suit en est une adaptation pour des cours en anglais avec une mise à jour et une actualisation des documents qu'il proposait.

Apple Computer INC was founded in 1976 when Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak invented the first personal computer in their parents' garage in Cupertino, California.

Steve Jobs became the symbol of the cool but efficient American businessman.

In 2007 he decided to remove the word "computer" from the name of the company to reflect the wide range of activities the company was then developing that is not only manufacturing and selling electronic devices such as iPhone, iPad, Mac, and iPod but also delivering digital content and applications through online or retail stores.

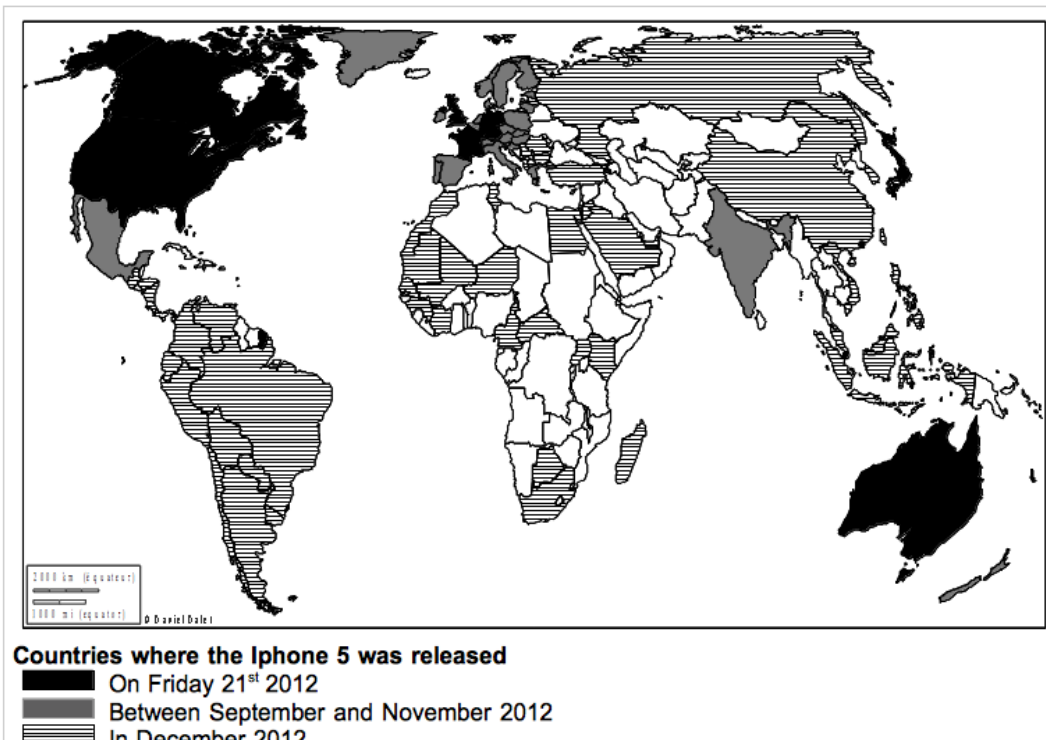
In 2011 Apple INC employed 43,000 people in the United States and 20,000 overseas but many more work for Apple contractors with an additional 700,000 who engineer, build and assemble Apple electronic devices throughout the world.

As an example of TNC adopting specific strategies in the global economic system three main aspects of Apple's strategy can be developed in class :

- the company's worldwide marketing strategy;
- the way it takes advantage of the international division of labor and how it raised criticism throughout the world especially from those denouncing the pitfalls of a free market global economy;
- this last point may prompt new ideas in class about the debates raised by environmentalists and anti globalization movements in the US, Britain and elsewhere.

Plenty of sources are available about Apple and Steve Jobs. *The New York Times* article "How the US lost out on Iphone Work" by CHARLES DUHIGG AND KEITH BRADSHER really hit the headlines when published in January 2012. It came along with a series of books published in the US when Steve Jobs passed away in October 2011.

The Californian firm's marketing strategy has been studied and admired by economists and PR specialists throughout the world but in a geography class the aim is to focus on the world distribution of Apple's products. The brand was able to create a world tribe of consumers celebrating the release of their new favorite device in 2012 (see pictures and video on line). Geographically speaking the implantation of Apple Stores and the release of the Iphone 5 only concerned a restricted number of countries.



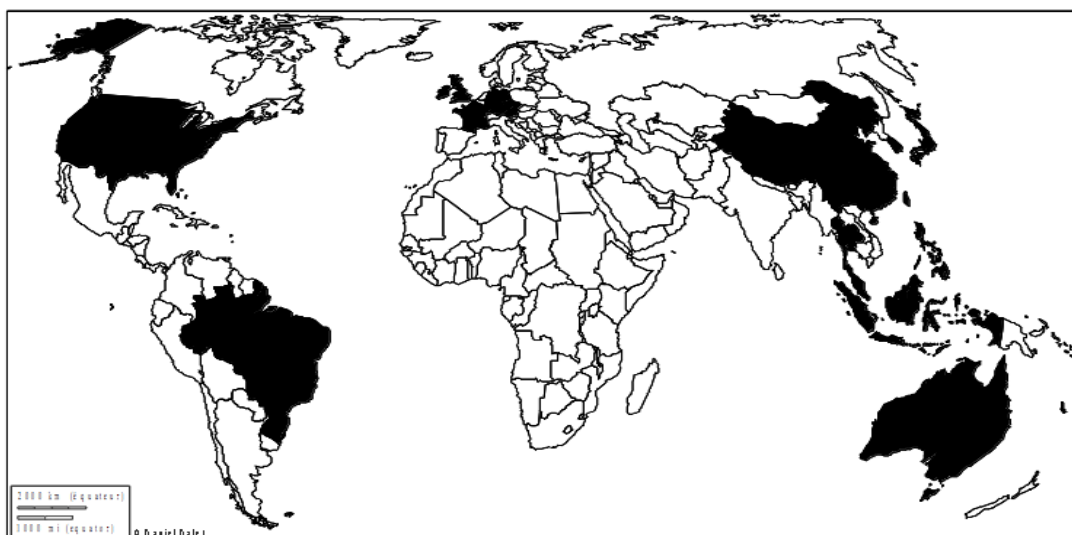
(Source : Nathalie Harrison, Apple Press Info (Sept, Dec 2012).

<http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2012/09/12Apple-Introduces-iPhone-5.html>

This emphasizes the fact that Apple's target remains the middle-upper class student or white collar with a high level of education and high purchasing power living in global cities. Anyway the fact that this kind of consumers are also thriving in emerging countries is also relevant as the Chinese, Brazilian or Indian upper-classes are also reaching substantial purchasing power and yearning for cutting edge technologies (see video) .

One can also show how Apple takes advantage of the international division of labor using skilled work force through suppliers - among which some influent TNCs - based in developed countries and the unskilled workforce in emerging countries (Fox Conn 's assembly lines in

Shenzhen China and Jundai-Brazil). The New York Times article shows that not only does the cost of labor seem to be an advantage in emerging countries such as China but also how flexible and adaptable this workforce can be. As map n°2 shows, the strategy of high tech firms is to take advantage of the differentials between emerging and developed countries in terms of technological know-how, flexibility and labor cost.



Countries that host the major manufacturing locations of suppliers who provide raw materials and components or perform final assembly for Apple in 2013.
http://images.apple.com/supplierresponsibility/pdf/Apple_Supplier_List_2013.pdf

For students to get an accurate vision of Apple's strategy three facts are to be mentioned:

- at least 60% of Apple's benefits are returning to the US;
- their headquarters remain in Cupertino, California;
- the label "designed by Apple in California assembled in China" now features on any item of the brand.

All this shows that the nationality and the home country of the firm still matters.

Like Apple most TNCs have not lost their national roots.

To raise a new issue on how controversial a global economy led by TNCs can be, one can also show other aspects of their strategies such as the use of differentials between the different countries' tax systems (Apple's European headquarters were set up in Ireland and Luxemburg; see Apple's European web site). Finally a petition launched in 2013 by Greenpeace blaming Apple for neglecting environmental issues can also be used to introduce a new kind of actor (NGOs) of our global economic system and show that the power of TNCs are not "unlimited".

La mise en perspective :

The majority of TNCs come from MEDCs such as the USA, Western Europe, Japan, South Korea but one also has to measure the growing influence of Chinese (Sinopec Group) , Indian (TATA, Mittal), or Brazilian TNCs . According to UN data, some 35,000 companies invest directly in foreign countries and the largest 100 of them control about 40 percent of world trade.

The world's 500 largest companies now control at least 70% of the world's trade and produce more than half of the world's manufactured goods.

One can refer to the *Financial Times* internet pages to measure the revenues of the major TNCs. Being sometimes richer than states themselves they are able to develop efficient strategies in the Global system to increase their influence:

- **tailoring their business to meet the consumers' need everywhere in the world.** TNCs spread Globalization through the concept of the 'Uninformative Product' which is where a company will release only one product, one after the other. For example, Apple released the Ipod Classic, then the Ipod Nano, shuffle, Iphone, Ipad etc. This means that everyone will crave the latest and best product the company has to offer. Firms are then key actors in the spreading of mass consumption behaviors especially in emerging countries where the new middle class demand for low cost cars, electronic devices or Ikea furniture among others is increasing dramatically.

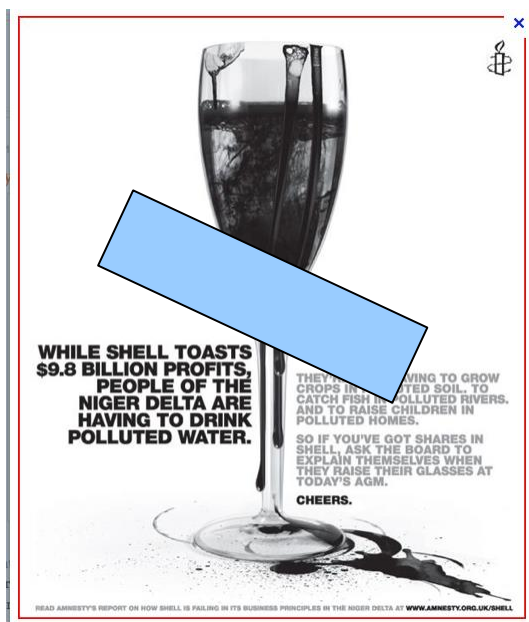
- **taking advantage of the International Division of Labor** to save on workforce, to gain in flexibility, to work with the best suppliers. By investing in a developing country, a TNC is able to benefit from cheap labour as developing countries usually do not have any form of national minimum wage.

- **taking advantage of the competition between territories** not only as far as taxation is concerned. Other factors attracting TNCs to a country may include: cheap raw materials, good transport, access to markets where the goods are sold, friendly government policies.

All this means that the TNCs costs are kept to a minimum thus creating productive efficiency. If costs are low, profit should remain high which can then be used to reinvest into product innovation and new technology.

But one must keep in mind that even though TNCs are blamed for their little concern about social or environmental issues (see Amnesty International 2013 campaign below) their powers are limited by other actors of the global economic system such as states, NGOs etc. The rise of « tax shaming » (see the British government campaign against Starbuck and Amazon) and the EU policy against tax evasion should allow to put their influence into perspective.

Amnesty international's campaign against SHELL in the Niger delta. (2009-2010)



See also

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/campaigns/shell-agm-keep-shaming-shell>

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Durand M.F, (dir). Firmes globales, des entreprises monde. Atlas de la mondialisation, Presse de Sciences Po., 2000

« A Brief History of Transnational Corporations », by Jed Greer and Kavaljit Singh, Corpwatch, 2000
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/221-transnational-corporations/47068.html>

SITES DE REFERENCE

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Classement de référence des firmes transnationales en fonction de leur chiffre d'affaire sur le site du *Financial Times* (FT500) : <http://www.ft.com/indepth/ft500>

La Chine et la Mondialisation : articles nombreux sur
<http://www.pbs.org/kqed/chinainside/edarticle1.html>

« Why China Matters Labor Rights in the Era of Globalization », Global Labor Strategies, April 2008
http://laborstrategies.blogs.com/global_labor_strategies/files/why_china_matters_gls_report.pdf

Sur les critiques des firmes transnationales

Example of “tax shaming” on Amazon and Starbuck : Vanessa Barford & Gerry Holt, *BBC News Magazine*, 21 May 21st 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-20560359>

About the E.U. Policy against TNC's tax avoidance strategies / Laurence Peter BBC News 22 May 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22607256>

LIENS PONCTUELS

En fonction de l'exemple choisi il est possible de consulter les sites internet officiels des firmes qui peuvent donner des informations sur leur implantation, leurs stratégies internationales etc.

Nestle

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006mg74/features/fairtrade-chocolate>

<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/nestle-fairtrade-kit-kat-ivory-coast>

<http://nestlecocoa.com>

Affiche publicitaire :

<http://www.infographicsarchive.com/food-facts/infographic-nestles-two-fingered-kit-kat-goes-fairtrade/#prettyPhoto/1/>

Le site du SUNY Levin Institute de New York propose une analyse de la firme :

<http://www.globalization101.org>

Apple

video : <http://www.telegraph.co.uk> : “Iphone 5 goes on sale all around the world” Sept 2012,
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/technology-video/9559539/iPhone-5-goes-on-sale-around-the-world.html>

CHARLES DUHIGG AND KEITH BRADSHER, “How the US lost out on Iphone Work”, New York Times, January 2012 <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/22/business/apple-america-and-a-squeezed-middle-class.html>

WALTER ISAACSON, *Steve Jobs*, october 2011,

ADAM LASHINSKY *Inside Apple: How America's Most Admired -- And Secretive -- Company Really Works*, published in January 2012 ,

KEN SEGALL *Insanely Simple: The Obsession That Drives Apple's Success*, October 2012.

Sur les critiques de la stratégie d'Apple :

CHARLES DUHIGG and DAVID KOCIENIEWSKI, "How Apple Sidesteps Billions in Taxes", The New York Times, April 28, 2012 <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/29/business/apples-tax-strategy-aims-at-low-tax-states-and-nations.html>

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/climate-change/cleanourcloud/apple/>

Text 1:

The globalization of production is reshaping the international economic landscape. (...) The geography of international investment flows is changing. Developing countries are emerging as outward investors, and their importance as recipients of foreign direct investment in more knowledge-intensive activities is increasing. The World Investment Report 2005, focusing on the internationalization of research and development by transnational corporations, illustrates some of these changes.

As global competition intensifies, transnational corporations are internationalizing even the most knowledge-intensive corporate functions, such as research and development. Until recently, this trend was limited almost exclusively to developed countries. Today, corporations in industries such as automobiles, electronics, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals are establishing research and development facilities in selected developing countries. They do this to enhance their efficiency, to access expanding pools of scientists and engineers, and to meet the demands of increasingly sophisticated markets in these countries.

These recent trends have important implications for the international division of labour. The traditional view, of more complex production activities being undertaken in the North and simpler ones in the South, is less and less a true reflection of the reality. Firms now view parts of the developing world as key sources not only of cheap labour, but also of growth, skills and even new technologies. As transnational corporations are the dominant players in the creation of new technologies, it matters where they undertake their research and development. Currently, only a few developing countries attract such activities on a significant scale. Most low-income countries are not participating in global research and development networks, and consequently do not reap the benefits that they can generate.

The internationalization of research and development by transnational corporations has important implications for policy-making.

Kofi A. Annan, New York, July 2005 Secretary-General of the United Nations

http://unctad.org/en/docs/wir2005_en.pdf

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