

Preface

The study on which this book is based was originally commissioned by the World Bank in order to build better foundations for future investment decisions, particularly in Uganda and the South Pacific Islands. When we started this work, our research group, the UCL QASER Lab, was relatively new. But, we all share the idea that in order to develop a strategy for more inclusive and balanced economic development, we would have to not only leverage the trade comparative advantages of the regions under investigation but also begin with the premise that joint efforts to create connections and collaborations among the main players in trade are complementary to competition. In keeping with our starting point, we agreed that we might require methodologies and models not generally within the orthodox trade and logistics studies toolkit. In the end, we proposed to the World Bank a vision and methodological means of arriving to the objectives which were challenging and innovative at the same time.

We are grateful to the World Bank and particularly to Charles Kunaka and Daniel Saslavsky for having accepted this challenge and for their support in the completion of the study. Their experience, knowledge and insights, along with those of the World Bank team, have greatly helped us to refine the initial ideas, to improve the analyses and above all to interpret the obtained results. The World Bank has published two reports based on the analyses in this volume.

We have approached the study and in particular the two regions, Uganda and the South Pacific Islands, with a sense of reverence. When we began we did not know much about either of the two regions; we were just in London, in an office. So with great commitment and energy we asked questions, compiled data and information and listened to those ‘in the know’. Thereafter, we developed and tested the models and then applied them to the proposed challenges. Over the course of these months, we have learned and drawn conclusions from our analyses, showing how these regions, identified as lagging, indeed have concrete potentialities for emerging from an idled economic growth. Some of the policy recommendations proposed here we think will boost development in these so-called lagging regions, enhance trade activity and ultimately improve the welfare of their citizens. As global connections

have become paramount for economic growth more so now than in the past, these connections are also becoming extremely complex due to the fact that they intertwine many interests and trends which are cultural, environmental, demographic and political, to mention a few. We therefore argue in this book that the dilemmas occur when decisions are made on short-term single interests, whereas we need to facilitate collaborative actions and approaches in order to capture and create value from the interdependency of these different interests.

In sum, the book does not aim merely to be a showcase for advanced regional science analyses applied to trade; the models and techniques used in this volume were selected in relation to the defined objectives. These methodologies were best suited for us to tackle the complexity of trade connections and to delve deeply and bring to the surface the types of problems whose solutions are effectively reached through a collaborative approach to trade. For this reason, Uganda and the South Pacific Islands are exemplars of the analytical approach we are proposing in this book.

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Collaborative Approach to Trade
Enhancing Connectivity in Sea- and Land-Locked
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