

PRESS RELEASE

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Multilateral Initiative to Provide Free Access To Trade-Related Data

GENEVA, 18 July 2011 – The African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Bank, and in cooperation with the UN Statistics Division (UNSD), today launched the Transparency in Trade Initiative (TNT), a global program aiming to give more access to influential trade data.

The TNT Initiative is a joint project aiming to eliminate the transparency gap resulting from the lack of access to data on country-specific trade policies. Once fully developed, it will give free and easy access to information on trade policy instruments like tariffs, non-tariff measures (NTMs) and services regulations. In addition, the initiative will generate new and more accurate data on NTMs and policies affecting trade in services and investment. All data will be freely accessible on a web portal serving as a platform for users in both developed and developing countries.

“We need a revolution in Open Information for trade, to support Open Trade,” said Robert B. Zoellick, President of the World Bank Group. “This important initiative will make information on trade flows, tariffs and non-tariff barriers – including those policies that affect trade in services – publicly and freely available and easily accessible to all users.”

Free access to data will make it easier for exporters and policy-makers to meet relevant standards and requirements and therefore prevent rejection of their exports at destination. The data will also allow for better monitoring and analysis of trade-related projects. Such analysis is essential to provide a basis for assessment of current projects and inform the development of new initiatives. In addition, access to trade information will allow governments to identify policy constraints and prioritize areas for reform and trade negotiations.



“The TNT initiative will allow all collaborating organizations and client countries to utilize existing resources to a mutual advantage. It will substantially improve the capacities for informed policy making in the area of trade policy and negotiations to the benefit of developing countries, economies in transition and LDCs,” emphasized Petko Draganov, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

“Increasing transparency in trade will improve the trading environment in Africa and in Africa’s export markets; it will facilitate the continent’s exports to both regional and international markets,” said Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank. “The launching of the TNT initiative is thus a most welcome development.”

“The TNT project provides coherence to trade data not seen before. Its development is due to a strong cooperation among agencies,” said Patricia R. Francis, Executive Director of ITC. “With access to this platform, exporters and policymakers will be able to make more informed decisions on where their comparative advantages lie and which markets have the greatest potential for their exports.”

The parties signed an agreement to collaborate on the initiative of Transparency in Trade, which signified the closer coordination and partnership that will evolve around this multi-year initiative.

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