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## UNCTAD-ITC partnership on trade facilitation

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) are joining forces to assist developing countries in the implementation of the recent WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The two agencies have today signed a Memorandum of Understanding reaffirming this collaboration.

'The Trade Facilitation Agreement is a real opportunity for developing countries, but only if they can put its provisions into practice,' said Arancha González, ITC's Executive Director.

'The two agencies complement each other very well and can offer meaningful support to developing countries together,' said UNCTAD Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi. 'UNCTAD already has a successful programme in building institutional capacity around effective trade facilitation, while ITC has experience in building the capacity of the private sector and increasing their export competitiveness,' he added.

The programme which the agencies will develop will focus particularly on least developed countries (LDCs).

Initially, the cooperation will concentrate on helping countries to identify and categorize the commitments under the Agreement in categories A, B and C and ensuring support for implementing the transparency provisions of the Agreement. These include ensuring better and easier access to information for traders; helping to develop advance rulings and rights of appeal legislation; facilitating greater predictability and reliability of procedures through simplified formalities and documentation and the use of international standards; and the adoption of single windows for traders.

'These are just some of the areas where ITC and UNCTAD have identified clear needs in developing countries based on UNCTAD's needs assessment programmes and the surveys undertaken by ITC of its SME clients,' Mr. Kituyi said.

'In some cases we will need to ensure better cooperation between the public and private sector,' Ms. González said. 'This is ITC's bread and butter: supporting a trade dialogue between business and policymakers.'

The collaboration between the two agencies is in response to a critical issue identified by developing countries in the lead-up to the WTO Ministerial Conference held in December 2013: whether there was enough financing to support the necessary reforms, particularly in LDCs. This partnership will provide an opportunity to donors and other development partners to demonstrate their commitment to the implementation of global trade facilitation reform by working with UNCTAD and ITC. The agencies will collaborate with other organizations and the private sector to advance implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

'The hope is that donors will see this collaborative venture between ITC and UNCTAD as an effective and efficient platform for helping developing countries, especially LDCs, to take advantage of the benefits an effective facilitating architecture can bring,' Mr. Kituyi said.

The private sector is also urged to explore ways that they can partner with ITC and UNCTAD to provide their expertise to SMEs in developing countries. 'Making the process of trade easier in developing countries is a plus for the global trade reality,' concluded Ms. Gonzalez, 'It is a win-win situation'.

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**Note to Editor:** ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. ITC assists small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economies to become more competitive in global markets, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development within the frameworks of the [Aid for Trade](#) agenda and the [Millennium Development Goals](#).

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