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World Export Development Forum 2014 targets the private sector for more trade and jobs

(Geneva and Kigali) - The urgent need to create trade and employment opportunities by increasing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will be at the core of the discussions between global thinkers, business leaders and practitioners at the [14th World Export Development Forum](#) (WEDF), to be held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 16-17 September 2014.

For the first time ever, the [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC), which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, will bring its flagship event to Africa. It will be history in the making as the Government of Rwanda through the [Rwanda Development Board](#) (RDB), hosts ITC's premier global forum dedicated to business-led development.

WEDF will bring together over 400 representatives of governments, the private sector and trade support institutions (TSIs) from around the world to contribute to the global debate on ways to achieve trade-led inclusive sustainable development through entrepreneurship, trade competitiveness of SMEs, employment and economic growth. This year, WEDF will be held in conjunction with ITC's [Women Vendors Exhibition and Forum](#) (WVEF), which matches women vendors with international buyers.

'Only a vibrant SME sector can create jobs for young people in developing countries,' said Arancha González, Executive Director of ITC. 'Bringing ITC's key event to Rwanda makes perfect sense as Rwanda has been exceptionally successful in improving its business environment to attract investment in areas such as information and communication technology (ICT) and logistics, which provide trade opportunities for SMEs.'

SMEs serve as the backbone of the economies of developing countries where populations are predicted to increase by 400 million within the next decade, and SMEs can contribute to two-thirds of employment opportunities. Their role is even more important in least developed countries where they account for 80% of jobs across all economic groups, including marginalized groups such as women and youth.

'Rwanda is honoured to host the first-ever WEDF on the African Continent at the occasion of ITC's 50-year celebration. SMEs are at the front and centre of all our efforts to improve the business environment. These efforts are paying off in terms of inclusive growth. WEDF provides the ideal platform for SMEs to build linkages with multinational companies, opening up global opportunities and unlocking their potential,' said Ambassador Valentine Rugwabiza, CEO of the Rwanda Development Board.

Notes 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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The RDB was set up by bringing together all the government agencies responsible for the entire investor experience under one roof. This includes key agencies responsible for business registration, investment promotion, environmental clearances, privatization and specialist agencies which support the priority sectors of ICT and tourism as well as SMEs and human capacity development in the private sector.

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