

EIF GLOBAL WORKSHOP

WTO – 8 JULY 2009

ITC PRESENTATION BY MS. PATRICIA FRANCIS, ITC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- I am particularly happy to be here with you today after such a long preparatory process, but finally successful!
- Since the inception of the Integrated Framework in 1997, ITC, in close cooperation with the other Agencies and development partners, is responding to LDCs' demands for assistance to address priority needs and develop a multi-year programme of trade-related technical assistance as part of their long-term dialogue with donors. One of the main objectives of ITC is to support LDC governments in formulating and implementing export development actions and strategies. Special attention is put on strengthening the national capacity of LDCs to participate actively in the EIF and to support their enterprises to integrate the world trade system.
- To date ITC has assisted LDCs to implement some 24 IF projects in 20 LDCs.
These projects, in the areas of tourism development, institutional strengthening, quality assurance, export financing and sectoral development systematically involve a strategy to harness the entrepreneurial capacity of producers and to link it to the export markets.
To be more specific, a few concrete examples of ITC cooperation under IF are:

- ✓ Cambodia: we are assisting to strengthen the supply response in key product sectors identified by the DTIS such as agriculture and handicraft;
 - ✓ Guinea: ITC is advising the Government to enhance its trade support services and identifying new products to diversify exports;
 - ✓ Lao PDR: we are helping in the upgrading of skills of workers of the garments sector etc.
- ITC's contributions to the EIF initiative have been designed with some specific objectives in mind:
 - ✓ To show immediate and concrete results by promoting the participation of the private sector;
 - ✓ to use to the largest extent locally available expertise to maximize resources and enhance the local capacity;
 - ✓ to optimize the potential for a broad based participation of development partners.
- A key area in which ITC has been solicited under IF by the LDCs is to reduce their dependence on a narrow production and export base. ITC is committed to continue enhancing LDCs supply-side capacities by helping with product development and certification, the identification of new market opportunities and the formulation of export strategies. ITC's interventions are designed to impact on specific sectors (e.g. coffee, cotton and fishery); cross cutting themes (e.g. empowering women, E-commerce, national and sector-strategy formulation) and the strengthening of national Trade Support Institutions (TSIs) and Trade Promotion Organisations (TPOs).
- As you are aware of, such interventions can play a powerful role in reducing poverty through trade. In fact, export development facilitates the process of sustained economic growth through the

development of productive capacities and the expansion of employment opportunities and sustainable livelihoods. Trade expansion is closely linked to the issue of private sector development, where ITC has a key role to play. Hence, the basic condition for ensuring a better trade-poverty relationship is the emergence in the LDCs of an entrepreneurial class oriented towards productive activities and export development. This is to be supported by effective technical assistance to build local production and sustainable trade capacities. Through recent IF projects, ITC has assisted thousands of families in the LDCs to develop their skills and increase their incomes by supplying the international market; likewise hundreds of Burundian farmers with potential for supplying essential oils for the perfume market are being assisted. Many additional workers from different poor communities in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda etc. are learning, through ITC activities, how to upgrade their products and earn more from supplying export markets. National Pro-poor export development strategies have to be formulated to link labour-intensive sectors to the international demand. Adequate resources need to be allocated for implementing export strategies and for sustainable export-led poverty reduction programmes.

- As regards LDCs' ownership of EIF, ITC, in close collaboration with the EIF Agencies is about to finalize an integrated capacity building programme for the EIF National Implementation Units (NIUs). This programme will help NIUs to seize the best opportunities from the EIF by translating and elaborating the finding of the DTIS into concrete projects and supportive policies and reforms. The Programme, to be tailored to the specific needs of the different LDCs will provide concentrated support to the NIUs and establish a long-term partnership between them and their development partners. IF is meant to complement the efforts already undertaken by the LDCs to participate more effectively in the EIF process.

- Responding to the requests of some Focal Points present here today, ITC has also promoted the integration of the regional dimension under EIF. In this sense ITC has supported the creation of a regional EIF Working Group in West Africa which is today piloting the formulation of regional EIF approaches. Indeed countries within a sub-region typically share similar concerns, and the most effective way to address these concerns is often the regional approach. Examples are the management of shared resources (e.g. the Nile river basin), plant health problems (e.g. fruit fly), regional infrastructure (e.g. North-South Corridor) and the development of a regional value chain. Following the regional EIF workshop held in Burkina Faso, in October 2007, a regional Working Group of Western African countries comprising Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal has spontaneously been set up under the leadership of Burkina Faso to consider addressing through EIF some of their priority needs identified in the DTIS on a regional basis.
- Finally, coming now to the MDGs, ITC acknowledges that new efforts are required to mainstream gender issues into export strategy planning and national development plans. Accordingly, a workshop on EIF and gender was organized in May 2008 by Zambia, Lao PDR, ITC and WTO to ensure the integration of gender into EIF in a coherent and sustainable whole. Among the key ITC objectives are the improvement of market analysis and business development skills of business woman, creation of business linkages for women entrepreneurs in the services and fashion sectors, promotion of regional trade for businesswomen through TSI's etc.
- ITC strongly believes in the export development potential of LDCs and in the EIF principles. In partnership with other agencies, foundations, Non-governmental organizations, donors and more importantly with the engagement of the private sector, ITC is fully committed to generate trade and promote sustainable development in LDCs.

At the request of our clients, the LDCs, ITC strives to contribute actively to the achievement of the objectives enshrined in the EIF initiative to reduce poverty by facilitating the integration of enterprises into the multilateral trading system, supporting the design of trade development strategies, strengthening key trade support services, improving sector performances and building enterprise competitiveness in LDCs. We mean to support the conversion of export opportunities into concrete business deals, creating export impact for good.