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ITC announces the Trade for Sustainable Development Principles

(Geneva) – Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and multinationals alike face challenges in understanding and implementing sustainability standards. The International Trade Centre (ITC) is working to increase harmonization and transparency of standards for all supply-chain actors, from consumers to businesses and policymakers, by today launching the Trade for Sustainable Development Principles.

The principles were launched at the inaugural [Trade for Sustainable Development Forum](#) held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 1-2 October. The four principles put focus on supporting sustainable trade practices in the production, processing and trading of goods and services; being transparent in global supply chains through the sharing of best practices; harmonizing resources to avoid duplication of audits, codes and initiatives; and aligning activities to the [United Nations post-2015 development agenda](#).

Speaking at the Forum, ITC Deputy Executive Director [Dorothy Tembo](#) said: ‘We need to find ways to leverage the dynamic nature of these sustainability initiatives while making their adoption by all actors – from consumers and governments to SMEs and multinationals – more efficient and transparent.’

Many businesses are already responding to the ‘conscious consumer’ by taking more social and environmental responsibility for production and processing conditions in their supply chains. Still, understanding and meeting sustainability standards, codes of conduct and audit protocols is a complex process, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which may not have access to information or the means to meet those standards.

‘That is why we expect everyone will embrace, support and enact the Trade for Sustainable Development Principles. They are a set of core values that are intended to support more equitable and impactful trade,’ Ms. Tembo said.

The Trade for Sustainable Development Principles

Principle one: Sustainability

Support and promote sustainable trade practices, namely with regards to social, environmental, economic, management, quality and ethics issues in the production, processing and trading of goods and services.

Principle two: Transparency

Enhance transparency by sharing good practices and fostering trust and inclusiveness among trade actors at all levels of global supply chains.

Principle three: Harmonization

Build on existing resources and methodologies in a collaborative way, fostering efficiency and avoiding duplication of efforts that may create unnecessary obstacles to trade, such as proliferation of standards, audits and assessment methodologies.



Principle four: Sustainable development goals

Act in alignment to the United Nations post-2015 development agenda, which builds upon the Millennium Development Goals with a view to develop a set of global sustainable development goals.

Note to the 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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