

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT THE PLENARY SESSION OF
THE 9TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
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Honourable Ministers
Ladies and Gentlemen

An Indonesian proverb says 'Dimana ada kemauan, di situ ada jalan'. "If you are sufficiently determined to achieve something, then you will find a way of doing so."

This is the spirit under which the WTO membership gathers in Bali and this is the spirit under which the ITC was born almost 50 years ago, when it became clear that the international trading system required more than just open trade rules to support development; it required more than opportunities for companies to be able to trade; what was needed was a mechanism and an organization that would assist small businesses in developing countries and their trade support institutions to seize these opportunities to benefit from their participation in the multilateral trading system.

The trading system needs the architects, the WTO. It needs the engineers, UNCTAD. But it also needs the plumbers, carpenters, the designers and many more to ensure that the house of trade is habitable. That is ITC's role.

Fifty years later our role remains even more vibrant and important as ever before. ITC works on the ground to make trade happen. We are demand driven and partner with our clients to develop impact-oriented support programmes to boost inclusive trade.

We are a market leader in providing programmes on "Women and Trade" including through facilitating market linkages between women owned businesses and international buyers.

We support sustainable trade for a green economy through helping rural communities to develop non- traditional medicines from fruits and vegetables.

We work in the leather sector in Zimbabwe; in the IT sector in Bangladesh; in crafting a National Export Strategy in Palestine and Kyrgyzstan; supporting the Pacific islands, Ethiopia and Liberia in their WTO accession process; strengthening trade support institutions in Brazil, Peru and the Gambia and working on creative industries in the Caribbean.

The outcomes of our work are sometimes intangible such as improved understanding of trade rules and regulations by the private sector and a better and more nimble business environment. But in many cases the outcomes of our work are tangible and the impacts clear. We help create incomes and jobs through trade.

This is what the jacket I am wearing today symbolizes. This jacket is a product of ITC's 'Ethical Fashion Initiative' which is a programme connecting marginalised artisans in poor communities in developing countries, 90 percent of them women, to international markets. This jacket, made of natural cotton fibres, was woven in all-women cooperatives in Burkina Faso. Over 600 women are involved in the production of these jackets and from these tiny cooperatives in Burkina Faso this jacket will make it to the fashion catwalks in 2014. This has been possible through our partnership with the private sector- the fashion houses- and the funding support of ITC's partners. For the women involved in this process we have seen socio-economic empowerment impacts on nutrition, education, savings and greater environmental awareness.

The impact of this work is much more than just this jacket. It is about building capacity in-country and within communities to move up the value chain, to connect to markets, to create jobs and to use and retain traditional skills and culture. This is just one example of a business model that we hope to replicate in other parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean such as in Haiti.

This jacket and its inputs have travelled thousands of miles across many borders. It is an example of value chains, of transforming raw materials to intermediate goods and finished products. It is trade facilitation in action. Imagine if at every border and at every stage of the production process, the pieces of this jacket were subject to burdensome procedures and numerous duties. Imagine how cost inefficient that would be? Effective rules on Trade Facilitation will help to reduce trade transaction costs and enable the raw materials and intermediary services which help make the jacket to cross borders across continents without unnecessary restrictions.

What you do here this week in Bali on crafting a multilateral agreement on trade facilitation will have far reaching impact for the small and medium sized enterprises that provide two thirds of global employment and over 80% of jobs in least developed countries. This is not a thesis. It is a fact. This goes hand-in-hand with your much needed commitment to a strong Aid for Trade agenda.

In closing let me make one final appeal for us to collectively work at maintaining and improving our partnership to help trade achieve development goals. Trade is not an end in itself but is an incubator and motor of growth and sustainable development.