

What does it take to be a winner?
Address by Patricia Francis
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Secretary General Datuk Dr. Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished guests,

We have spent a day talking about innovation, sharing good practices and learnings. This morning I talked about some of the takeaways relevant for TPOs from our World Export Development Forum in Jakarta earlier this week. As Minister Y.B Dato' Sri Mustapha Mohamed highlighted, TPOs need to innovate to be able to deliver.

Innovation is a necessary but not in itself sufficient condition for a TPO to be a winner, to meaningfully impact a country's exports. TPOs and their clients also need to have the right market information, the right networks. And for exporters to be successful, they need to be able to navigate easily through the overall regulatory environment in a business friendly manner. The importance of information, networks, trade finance and trade facilitation were all highlighted at WEDF, particularly in the South-South context, where the crucial information link between countries in different regions is often missing.

Of all these important areas, the need for information and market intelligence perhaps comes first: unless companies understand market trends and needs, trade flows and the status of the competition, they will not be able to identify and take advantage of market opportunities. This is particularly the case for South-South trade: exporters in emerging economies often lack the market information and contacts that their competitors in OECD countries have, because they are not used to trading with other emerging regions. If South-South trade is to thrive, this information asymmetry must be addressed. This is the *raison d'être* of ITC's work on trade intelligence.

Just last month we made available via our online market intelligence portal, Trade Map, key data on importers and exporters from more than 60 countries. The goal of this enhancement is to assist in the identification of potential trading partners. We hope to at least double the current database of 250,000 companies, particularly with data from developing and least developed countries. If you have a database of export or import companies, please let us know so that we can find a way to integrate the data and help your companies locate trade contacts more easily.

It is in the spirit of cooperation on market intelligence among TPOs that ITC and selected partners would like to launch a North-South partnership for TPO development later at this conference. Under this partnership, TPOs from high income countries can sponsor free access to ITC's market analysis tools for users in developing and least developed countries.

So what does it mean to be a winner in general and the winner of the TPO Awards in particular? The awards are more than a sign of appreciation from your peers. They are confirmation of your performance to deliver export development initiatives with concrete outcomes and impact on export development. TPOs' success will be measured by the success of the companies they assist.

I look forward to congratulating the winners of the 2012 Trade Promotion Organization awards shortly!