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# BOOSTING BUSINESS FOR TRADE PROMOTION ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH INNOVATION

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The 2012 TPO Network World Conference, Transforming TPOs' Business through Innovation, today opened in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Over two days, against the backdrop of the on-going global economic crisis, Trade Promotion Organizations will, explore how they can promote innovation, improve their operations, and better meet the needs of their exporters.

The 9th TPO Network World Conference & Awards is hosted jointly by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE). The conference takes place at the MATRADE Exhibition and Convention Centre (MECC) in Kuala Lumpur. The 2012 TPO Network Awards will be announced at the awards presentation ceremony during the gala dinner on 18 October at the MECC.

Opening the conference, ITC Executive Director Ms. Patricia Francis said: "We have just spent three days at ITC's World Export Development Forum in Jakarta, discussing the profound changes that are taking place in the world economy, representing both a threat and an opportunity for exporters. The need for trade promotion activities and the role of TPOs in this process is clear. But it is only through innovative approaches that TPOs can rise to the challenge and assist their clients in seizing opportunities."

Ms. Francis also pointed out that TPOs need to serve a wider clientele, including women-owned enterprises, and producers in poor, rural areas. "Women-owned enterprises are often outside traditional business networks, so services, including trade promotion services do not reach them. This is a challenge TPOs of the modern world must face up to. Economic empowerment of women is not only the right thing to do: it is also good development policy," she said.

Delivering the keynote address, Malaysia's Minister of International Trade and Industry Y.A.B. Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed said: "Nations have to look for effective and innovative way to promote trade and investment. SMEs contribute to a large chunk of our GDP. Collectively they are also the largest employers in many countries. Helping SMEs to improve their export capability and create jobs is therefore a matter of great interest to all of us."

Dr. Wong Lai Sum, CEO of MATRADE, said: "Global economic uncertainties have put a damper on international trade, and the business of marketing goods and services have become more challenging. This is therefore really an opportune time for TPOs to meet and discuss and share experiences with one another."

Other topics participants at the 2012 TPO Network World Conference will explore in Kuala Lumpur include benchmarking for TPOs, assessment and performance improvement, employment generation, reacting and preparing for sudden change, green innovation and how to better serve the services industries.

ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, and is devoted to helping small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries become more competitive in global markets and thus to speed up sustainable economic development and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

MATRADE is the national trade promotion organization mandated by the government of Malaysia to develop and promote Malaysian SMEs to compete in international markets. MATRADE has offices in 40 countries worldwide and 5 national offices

For further information, visit <http://www.intracen.org/trade-support/tpo-network-conference-awards/>

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