

**WORLD EXPORT DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2012
CLOSING SESSION**

Panel On

Summary of WEDF 2012: Outcomes and Recommendations.

Thank you, Patricia,

I wish to thank the Government and people of Indonesia for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements that have been put in place for WEDF 2012. My sincere appreciation also goes to you, Patricia, and your wonderful team at ITC for all the hard work and successful organisation of the Forum.

My perspectives on the outcome of WEDF 2012 can be grouped into three main headings:

Structure, Scope and Logistics

- I must admit that this is my first participation in the WEDF. As a first timer, therefore, I am very fascinated by the overall comprehensive scope, structure and coordination of the various Panel discussions, as well as the excellent logistics for WEDF 2012. I wish, therefore, to commend the ITC for the good efforts, particularly the extensive and integrated coverage of the issues relevant to the Theme and sub – themes of the Forum. However, in order to take care of the interests of small delegations:
I wish to recommend that ITC consider organising wrap – up sessions, for all Parallel Interactive Sessions, at future editions of WEDF, so that participants who cannot definitely be in all parallel sessions, at the same time, would benefit from the discussions at those sessions that they were unable to attend.

- I found the Opening Remarks by **H. E. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono**, on the theme: *Linking growth markets: new dynamics in global trade* very stimulating, especially regarding issues relating to:
 - increased South – South trade, economic integration, specialization and the removal of barriers to the movement of goods, services, capital and people was a major enabler of growth and job creation; and
 - the integration of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing and least developed countries (LDCs) into global supply chains, particularly as SMEs have been identified as the backbone of the economies of many poorer

countries; and required better access to information, technology, markets and finance.

- I also agree with **Ms Patricia Francis** on the need for African countries to increase their value added exports to Asia and Latin America, by attracting investment from these regions not only in extractive industries but also in manufacturing; and to integrate into value chains of major multinationals based in these regions. In that regard, the focus should be on creating a new model, one that breaks the cycle of dependency, is inclusive of women and the poor, and creates real and long-lasting partnerships.

Under these circumstances, I wish to encourage ITC to strengthen and improve its projects and programmes towards achieving these objectives, in an efficient and effective manner.

Issues Arising from the Panel Sessions

- On the substantive discussions at WEDF 2012, I wish to focus my suggestions or recommendations on a very narrow range of issues, the choice of which is random and not in any specific order of priority:
- **First**, I wish to comment on **trade facilitation** and the need to address business concerns relating to **non – tariff obstacles to trade**.
 - **On trade facilitation**, it is important to note that although this issue has become the “hot topic” of the day, not only at the WEDF but at many other international trade fora, it is critical to pay special attention to all aspects of the subject, including issues of hard and soft infrastructure investment, improving connectivity and reducing costs to increase inter- and intra-regional trade flows. I agree that there is a need address the problem of developing supply capacity, based on economic diversification. However, I believe that trade facilitation alone cannot solve all the problems of the international trading system. **I, therefore, wish to recommend that ITC, going forward, should take into cognisance the fact that these various aspects of trade facilitation are intertwined, including the huge challenges relating distortions to global agricultural markets of subsidies and tariffs in the developed world.**
 - **On non – tariff obstacles to trade**, I note that recognition that NTMs (particularly standards) constitute a major impediment to international trade and market access, including the effective utilisation of trade preferences by developing countries and LDCs. Although I am aware of what the WTO is doing under its Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF):

I still wish to urge ITC to consider how best it would, in future, not only support SMEs to overcome these obstacles but also build the capacity of their governments to take advantage of Mutual Recognition Arrangements. This is more so as the situation is becoming more complex and complicated with the increasing level of private standards, which are usually imposed in addition to the existing public standards.

- **Second**, the key question of how best to integrate SMEs from LDCs into global value chains is another sub-theme I wish to touch on. I note that challenges identified in the discussions arise from the important role of multinationals, including getting multinational corporations to invest in LDCs; strengthening SMEs, so that they can supply global value chains; the ability to attract investment into productive sectors; and the role of government in assisting SMEs in improving their productivity, efficiency and quality, with a view to enabling them to access markets and integrate into global value chains.

I am, therefore, hopeful that ITC will enhance and intensify its support and to SMEs in LDCs in the quest to assist them to improve their productivity, efficiency and quality, so that they would be able improve their capacity to access export markets and integrate into global value chains, including improved procurement opportunities in domestic markets.

- **Third**, relating to the above is the need for **greater ITC assistance and support to smallholder producers to succeed in export supply chains, particularly taking into account the critical challenges from a fragile and unstable global economic environment.**

A general comment

- **Finally**, in order to make future participation in WEDF more meaningful for policy makers: **I think, it would be useful to increase the showcasing of successful policy reform stories around various themes and sub-themes of WEDFs. I believe that this would further enhance the objectives of sharing experiences and best practices. Moreover, it is an incontrovertible fact that business – friendly policies by government**

are critical to any successful efforts to support SMEs and their integration into global value chains.