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CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON TOURISM SOLUTIONS FOR LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is bringing together tourism experts from the private and public sectors to work on tangible projects for some of the world's least developed countries at the World Export Development Forum (WEDF). The one and a half day event opens on 10 May in Istanbul, Turkey, within the framework of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries.

'Tourism-led growth is possible for many least developed countries,' said Patricia Francis, Executive Director of ITC. 'The the variety of goods and services involved in the tourism supply chain leads to a broad impact in terms of poverty reduction. But it also requires a commitment from the private sector and the public sector to work together in the development of sustainable tourism for local benefit.'

The theme of the WEDF is Private Sector Engagement with LDCs for Tourism-led Growth and Inclusive Sustainable Development. ITC chose the theme of tourism as 30 out of 49 of the world's least developed countries (LDCs) identify the development of tourism as a feasible way to participate in the global economy and thereby reduce poverty, in their Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS). ITC consulted with public and private sector partners, and identified the ways in which it can work towards tourism development.

In the WEDF welcome session, addresses will be given by H.E. Mr. Ali Babacan, Deputy Prime Minister, Turkey; Mr. Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the WTO; Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD; Mr. Ed Fuller, President and Managing Director, Marriott International Lodgings; Dr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); and Ms. Francis.

Plenary sessions on 10 - 11 May will address the issues of Private Sector Engagement with LDCs for Sustainable Tourism-led Growth and Sustainable Partnerships and Ethical Investment in the Tourism Sector.

Two workshops will focus on developing pilot projects - 1) Inclusive Tourism as a Market Opportunity for the Developing World: Ugandan handicrafts and Ethiopian cultural heritage and 2) Integrating Horticulture into the Tourism Supply Chain, with a focus on Tanzania.

The workshop on Engaging Women Vendors in the Tourism Value Chain will highlight case studies from the Asia-Pacific region. The final workshop, Recovering Tourism after a Crisis, is being held in collaboration with UNWTO and will create a guide for restoring tourism in an LDC after a natural or man-made crisis.

The event will conclude with the outputs of the workshops in the area of tourism development.

ITC is the joint agency of WTO and the United Nations and is devoted to helping SMEs 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.

For more information:

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