

Speech by Ms. Patricia Francis
Delivered on Day One of the 42nd Session of the ITC JAG 2008
Cocktail

Ladies and Gentlemen ... It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this cocktail on the occasion of our annual Joint Advisory Group meeting.

Before I introduce our special guests, I would like to tell you something about our giraffe, which will be on display here for the next month.

Twiga the giraffe was produced in disadvantaged communities in Kenya using discarded flip-flops, plastic and bottle caps. Twiga is a world traveller, and has welcomed the high fashion community in Rome, delegates at WTO and participants of our World Export Development Forum in Montreux before joining us here today. She symbolizes the work we are doing at ITC to ensure that trade contributes to the drive to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Twiga is part of our Ethical Fashion Programme, which links people from very poor African communities with top-end fashion lines. This means bringing some of the world's most disadvantaged people into the export value chain. It is also about empowering women exporters and encouraging green trade.

In our Trade for the MDGs panel tomorrow we will look at more examples of how this works in practice, with the help of guest speakers who are deeply involved in making trade work for development, from all parts of the supply chain.

I am extremely pleased that we have the Kenyan ambassador Her Excellency Maria Nzomo here with us today to launch Twiga, and what she stands for, at the United Nations. Not only does the giraffe come from her country, but Kenya was among the winners of the 2008 World Trade Promotion Organization Awards.

These were the third WTPO awards and a record number of countries applied, demonstrating the importance of the Awards to trade and development.

TPOs are always striving to do their best and to learn from each other. They play a critical role in building businesses and facilitating exports, leading to jobs that are needed more than ever in today's difficult economic climate.

The WTPO Awards recognize the achievements of TPOs and reward the best of them – from the poorest countries to the most advanced.

Five national TPOs were chosen for six prizes recognizing their innovation and excellence. They are New Zealand, Afghanistan, Jamaica, Kenya, and Costa Rica.

We are honoured to have representatives from most of these TPO's with use here this evening.

Mr. Fatimie from Afghanistan,
Ms. Morgan from Jamaica,
Mr. Wabuyele from Kenya
and Mr. Gibson from New Zealand.

They will be happy to speak to you.

I would also like to use this occasion to encourage even more applications from your countries for the 2010 Awards.

Thank you all for joining us these evening. We are looking forward to hearing your ideas and experiences in the efforts we are all involved in to make trade work for economic development.