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ITC, Rwanda Development Board sign MoU to organize World Export Development Forum

(Kigali) – International Trade Centre (ITC) Executive Director Arancha González and [Rwanda Development Board](#) (RDB) Chief Executive Officer Ambassador Valentine Rugwabiza signed a Memorandum of Understanding earlier today to jointly organize the 14th World Export Development Forum (WEDF) in Kigali, Rwanda, from 16-17 September, 2014.

The signature of the MoU follows a joint announcement by the two agencies last month to co-host WEDF, marking the first time ITC's flagship event is held in Africa.

'ITC is extremely pleased to be holding WEDF in Rwanda,' González told the press in Kigali. 'Rwanda is the natural choice: it is a leader in business reform, cutting red tape, creating an investment-friendly climate, economically empowering women and developing its small- and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), much of what ITC stands for.'

González is in Kigali as a panelist at the *Facilitating Africa's Trade* event organized by the African Development Bank as part of its annual meeting.

WEDF will bring together over 400 top policy makers, business leaders, heads of trade support institutions (TSIs) and international organizations from around the world to discuss ways to achieve trade-led inclusive sustainable development through entrepreneurship, increased competitiveness of SMEs, employment and economic growth. A series of business-to-business matching events will also be held, creating opportunities for SMEs to become subcontractors to multinational companies from around the world. ITC's [Women Vendors Exhibition and Forum](#) (WVEF) will take place in parallel with WEDF, matching women vendors with international buyers.

'Rwanda is honoured to host the first ever WEDF on the African Continent at the occasion of ITC's 50-year celebration,' Rugwabiza said. 'SMEs are at the front and centre of all our efforts to improve the business environment. These efforts are paying off in terms of inclusive growth. WEDF provides the ideal platform for SMEs to build linkages with multinational companies, opening up regional and global opportunities and unlocking their potential.'

Rwanda has been ranked as the 3rd most competitive country for business in Africa in the World Economic Forum's [2013-2014 Global Competitiveness Index Report](#). In the World Bank's [Doing Business 2014](#) report, Rwanda was ranked 32nd out of 189 countries for ease of doing business, up from 52nd place previously. This has been attributed to regulatory reform, strengthened property rights and simplification of administrative processes.

WEDF is another milestone in ITC's cooperation with Rwanda, where it is conducting several projects: ITC has facilitated the involvement of SME representatives in the formulation of policies on regional economic integration within the East African Community; in cooperation with RDB, ITC has improved the market analysis and research skills of several SME representatives.

Previous WEDFs were held in [Jakarta](#), Indonesia (2012), [Istanbul](#), Turkey (2011) and [Chongqing](#), China (2010).

For more information on WEDF 2014, including the programme and registration, visit <http://wedf2014.org/>.

