

New transparency initiative launched at UN-backed global trade review



Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the WTO

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Several United Nations agencies and their partners today launched an open information initiative designed to eliminate the “transparency gap” in world trade, as a global review of the six-year-old Aid for Trade initiative got under way in Geneva.

The Transparency in Trade Initiative (TNT), launched in Geneva today by the UN Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)), the World Bank, the UN Statistics Division and other UN

agencies, is “a joint project aiming to eliminate the transparency gap resulting from the lack of access to data on country-specific trade policies,” according to UNCTAD.

“Free access to data will make it easier for exporters and policy-makers to meet relevant standards and requirements,” the agency stated.

“Increasing transparency in trade will improve the trading environment in Africa and in Africa’s export markets; it will facilitate the continent’s exports to both regional and international markets,” said Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank.

The two-day Global Review of Aid for Trade, which opened today, is aimed at assessing what has been achieved since the launch of the Aid for Trade Initiative in Hong Kong in 2005.

Aid for Trade aims to help developing countries, particularly those classified as least developed countries (LDCs), acquire the trade-related skills and infrastructure to implement and benefit from WTO agreements and to expand their overall trade.

The participants at the global review include senior officials from the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as well as dozens of international trade organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private corporations. [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon is scheduled to address the group tomorrow.

Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the WTO, [opened](#) the meeting by detailing some of the results of Aid for Trade implementation activities on the ground worldwide.

“This covers projects and programmes from countries as geographically and alphabetically distant as Azerbaijan and Zimbabwe – and most countries in between,” he said. “Results range from increased export volumes to more employment, to faster customs clearance times and impacts on poverty.”

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