

STDF/UNIDO Session Sri Lankan Cinnamon – DDG REMARKS

Good morning everyone – welcome to the WTO.

I hope you enjoyed the cinnamon treats from Sri Lanka with your coffee this morning. My personal favourite were the cinnamon "cigars". Before we get started, please allow me to thank Mr Sarada de Silva, for his generosity in adding some spice to our lives.

We're here today to share thoughts on ways to achieve the multiplier effect so dear to the heart of development assistance community. We will do that through the lens of a joint STDF/ UNIDO project, implemented in collaboration with the Spice Council of Sri Lanka, which is represented here today by Mr de Silva.

Before getting into the details of this project, I'd like to highlight a few facts about the Standard and Trade Development Facility, also known as the STDF. The STDF is an excellent example of an aid-for-trade Partnership focused on a very specific area, that is strengthening sanitary and phytosanitary capacity to help developing countries gain and maintain market access. The STDF seeks first and foremost to promote the exchange of knowledge, and to facilitate dialogue and collaboration, to make SPS capacity building more effective. But it has also a funding mechanism, which despite its limited scope, has accomplished a great deal:

- It has delivered 150 projects to help developing countries improve their SPS capacity and promote safe trade in food and agricultural products.
- More than 60% of project resources have been dedicated to LDCs.

One essential feature of projects supported by the STDF is their reliance on innovative, collaborative and cross-cutting approaches. In many cases, STDF projects also serve as catalysts for further interventions.

The project on the agenda here today is an excellent example of this approach. It originated from the findings of ITC's Non-Tariff Measures Survey in Sri Lanka that pointed to some SPS challenges in the spice sector. The Spice Council of Sri Lanka requested STDF's support to address these challenges. Subsequently, STDF joined forces with UNIDO, the Spice Council and other local stakeholders to build a public-private partnership that has effectively managed to strengthen SPS capacity all along the cinnamon value chain.

A number of other organizations also contributed to this success. The WTO provided legal and policy advice on diverse issues related to cinnamon trade based on the SPS, TBT and TRIPS Agreements. This ensures effective protection of the term 'Ceylon Cinnamon' as a geographical indication in export markets. FAO's expertise was also leveraged to elaborate a roadmap to register and implement this GI. The Spice Council also benefited from WIPO's advice on broader matters related to Intellectual Property Rights protection.

I believe I can safely affirm that this project has had positive spill-over effects that have reached far beyond its original scope.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in making this initiative such a success, in particular UNIDO, The Spice Council and the Government of Sri Lanka, and the STDF. All the partners involved can be very proud of their efforts, which have benefitted the pure Ceylon cinnamon industry and people in Sri Lanka who rely on it for a living, as well as the economy as a whole.

I know that we can continue to count on the STDF to keep up the good work, and that we can deliver even more in the years to come.

Thank you – and enjoy today's session.