

CONSUMER CONSCIENCE

HOW ENVIRONMENT AND ETHICS
ARE INFLUENCING EXPORTS



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ABSTRACT FOR TRADE INFORMATION SERVICES

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE (ITC)

Consumer Conscience: How Environment and Ethics are Influencing Exports.

Geneva: ITC, 2009. ix, 60 p.

Report reflecting views, examples and suggestions on how exporters can benefit from the emerging opportunities in the area of ethical trade, as expressed by the participants of the ITC World Export Development Forum, "Consumers, Ethics and Environment", Montreux, Switzerland, 8-11 October, 2008 discusses the concept of "ethical consumerism" across the entire supply chain; innovation in meeting consumer demand for products created by ethically and environmentally acceptable means; public and private standards; sustainability-related finance, social entrepreneurship, and transparency via the Internet; global partnership in the service of poverty reduction and development, and the role of women in business; outlines ways in which governments and trade support institutions can help ethical traders.

Descriptors: **Corporate Social Responsibility, Fair Trade, Competitiveness, Export Strategy.**

English

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Foreword

Globalization is changing the concerns of consumers. While shoppers still pay attention to quality and price, more than ever they are concerned about the environmental and social impacts of their purchases. They want to know that people involved throughout the process are being paid fairly, that the products are sourced in an environmentally sound manner, and that the supply chain is handled ethically.

Because of this change in attitude, fair trade and ethical markets are growing at a faster pace than regular markets. But how can entrepreneurs in developing countries break into these markets?

That was the overriding question at the three-day World Export Development Forum of 2008, where over 250 experts debated a wide range of issues related to consumer conscience. To small producers, ethical commerce offers a stable market; for large distributors, it offers differentiation. But there are challenges that are not easily overcome: trade institutions are not always clear about what kind of support to offer and how; and applying international and private standards can be costly for producers in developing countries.

For ethical trade to be sustainable, experts stated that producers are advised to focus on innovation, and not only to seek out low-cost solutions. More support is needed for sustainability-related finance, scaling up social entrepreneurship and transparency via the Internet.

Among all of the topics discussed, there was one bottom line: how to grow ethical trade as a tool to raise the standard of living for everyone involved.

To those of you who joined us at the Forum, ITC thanks you for your participation. Gatherings like this are invaluable in helping ITC to advise its clients better. For those of you unable to join us, ITC hopes that this book helps deepen your understanding of the issues and offers advice that you can put into practice.



Patricia R. Francis
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The coordinator and chief editor for this book was Peter Hulm. Owen Skae and Anton J. Said were co-editors.

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