

Summary Feedback: Regional Information Sharing Meeting on WBG Trade Strategy

African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP)

Dakar, Senegal

April 16, 2010

1. Sectoral and Cross cutting issues

- Agriculture: food security and possible role for subsidies and government policies; Increase technical assistance in agriculture for exports; fluctuation of commodity prices.
- Increase knowledge on informal and services trade to identify what opportunities lie there
- Poverty reduction
- Services opportunities are not being seized even though this is the most important sector in the economy
- Gender in the service sector and small and medium enterprises
- NTB and standards and product quality
- More pro-active IPR policies for developing countries: health and indigenous knowledge

2. Collaboration

- Involve in a more sustained way local researchers and expertise rather than on a short term and ad hoc basis as is traditionally done. Local researcher do interesting work and have local comparative advantage for information collection and diffusion
- Work more with regional economic communities such as Ecowas
- WB must focus on areas of comparative advantage rather than ad hoc intervention: one such area is coordinating role on regional level policy issues
- Collaboration with UNCTAD and ITC since they are involved in capacity building and manpower is often limited
- Beware of replicating the same assistance over without clear value addition and countries starting designing their own policies

3. Reach out

- Assistance should not be limited to government but also include professional associations and parliamentarians.
- Extend assistance and capacity building to private sector
- Population is generally not aware of trade policy making, which limits buy in for reform (e.g. regional integration)
- Work with leaders on policy rather than provide infrastructure
- Continue building the capacity of negotiators that is very weak. National trade committees also lack expertise.

4. Private sector

- Support chambers of commerce as strong allies for trade expansion

5. Data

- Assistance to help gather data an. Website access of data and tools seen as of limited use.
- Increase fact finding effort in areas such as intra-African trade (link with informality)