



# WTO-ITC High Level Event on Women and Trade

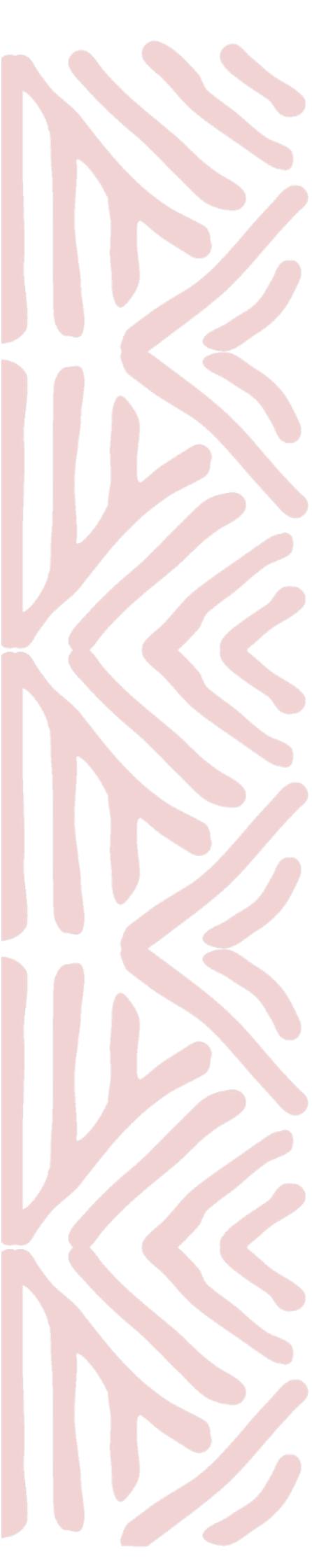
25 March 2026  
Yaoundé, Cameroon



Trade for Women



SheTrades



## **ANCHORING EQUALITY IN THE FUTURE OF TRADE**

Over the past decade, women have moved closer to the centre of the multilateral trading system. In 2017, the Buenos Aires Declaration on Women and Trade marked a key milestone, attracting strong support from WTO Members and Observers, elevating gender equality as a priority on the global trade agenda, and paving the way for the establishment of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender in the WTO, in 2020. Since then, the focus has shifted from why to how: what policies, partnerships and investments actually expand women's participation and leadership in trade.

But this progress is not guaranteed. In a volatile global landscape marked by disrupted supply chains and shifting priorities, momentum can stall without sustained commitment, partnership and delivery.

On the margins of the 14<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference in Yaoundé, the WTO Secretariat and the International Trade Centre (ITC) will co-host a high-level event to spotlight solutions that are delivering results for women entrepreneurs in the digital and green transitions.

## **ONE GLOBAL STAGE. THREE FORCES FOR WOMEN IN TRADE.**

On 25 March 2026, the event will spotlight three global initiatives advancing women in trade: the Women Exporters in the Digital Economy (WEIDE) Fund, launched in 2024 by the WTO Secretariat and ITC, the ITC SheTrades Initiative, and the WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender.

The session will showcase the WEIDE Fund in action, exploring how digital trade is opening new markets for women entrepreneurs across diverse regions. Later, the ITC SheTrades Summit will celebrate a decade of impact through remarks by key funders as well as the 2nd edition of the SheTrades Innovation Festival, a pitch contest that zooms in on young African women's innovations.

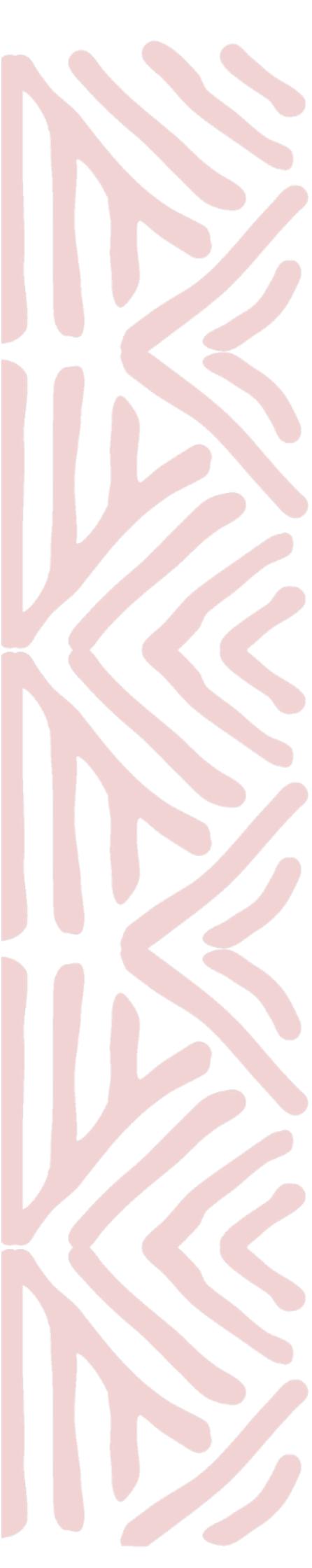
Finally, WTO Members of the Informal Working Groups on Trade and Gender and MSMEs will close the programme, launching the IWG Co-Chairs' joint statement, an IWG compendium of work since 2020, and a new joint policy mapping initiative on women and digitalisation.

## **OBJECTIVES**

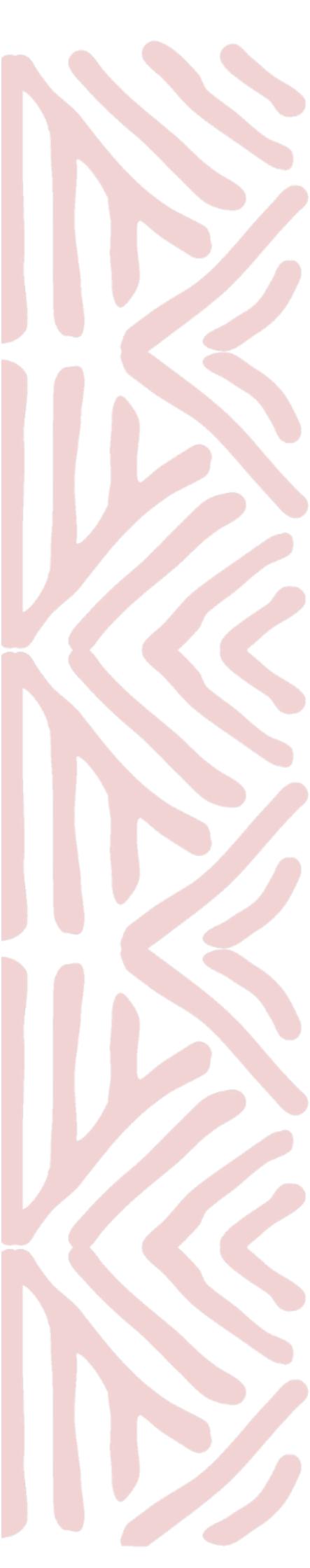
- Reaffirm global commitment to equitable trade through proven initiatives
- Highlight progress and partnerships from the WEIDE Fund and ITC SheTrades
- Showcase innovative solutions by young African women innovators.

## AGENDA

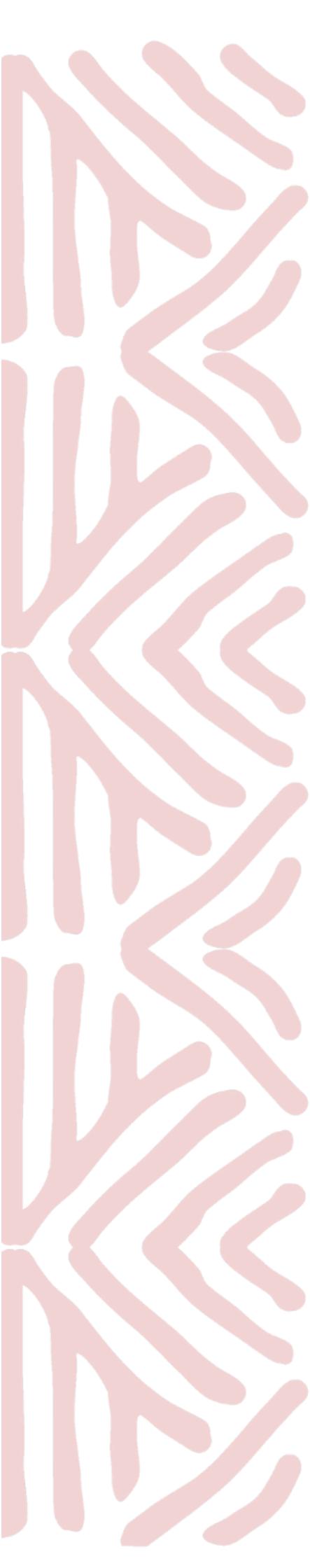
| TIME (CAT)    | DESCRIPTION  |
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| 11:00 – 12:00 | <p><b>Welcome snacks and coffee tasting</b></p> <p><i>Participants register, connect and caffeinate over coffee tasting and snacks before the programme begins.</i></p> <p><i>Supported by the WEIDE Fund and EU-funded ACP Business-Friendly Programme.</i></p> <p><b>Venue:</b><br/>Outside Room B</p>   |
| 12:00 – 12:20 | <p><b>Opening remarks</b></p> <p><i>Launched by the WTO Secretariat and ITC at MC13 in Abu Dhabi in February 2024, the Women Exporters in the Digital Economy (WEIDE) Fund is a US\$50 million initiative supporting women entrepreneurs to grow through international trade and digitalization.</i></p> <p><i>Two years on, WEIDE has backed hundreds of women-led businesses across the Dominican Republic, Jordan, Mongolia and Nigeria through grants, training, mentorship and pathways to scale internationally.</i></p> <p><i>WTO Director-General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala reflects on what WEIDE is delivering and why women must be at the forefront of the digital trade opportunity, and shares what comes next for the Fund.</i></p> <p><i>ITC Executive Director Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton will connect WEIDE and ITC SheTrades as twin drivers of the women and trade agenda, highlighting results and partnerships. Building on SheTrades' 10-year milestone in 2025, she will share key achievements and outline the next big idea for SheTrades' second decade.</i></p> <p><i>Building on these reflections, H.E. Mr. James Baxter, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the WTO, will highlight how the WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender is helping sustain momentum on inclusive trade, and</i></p> |



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|               | <p><i>the role that Members and partners can play in translating commitments into practical support for women entrepreneurs.</i></p> <p><b>Delivered by:</b></p> <p><b>Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala</b><br/>Director-General<br/>World Trade Organization</p> <p><b>Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton</b><br/>Executive Director<br/>International Trade Centre</p> <p><b>H.E. Mr. James Baxter</b><br/>Ambassador and Permanent Representative<br/>Australian Permanent Mission to the WTO</p> <p><b>Venue:</b><br/>Room B</p>   |
| 12:20 – 12:45 | <p><b>100 WEIDE Women Said</b></p> <p><i>This interactive session brings the voices of 100 women entrepreneurs supported by the WEIDE Fund to the stage. Four country teams — each featuring a Minister, a Business Support Organization (BSO) representative, a Donor, and a woman entrepreneur — will compete to guess the most popular answers to survey questions on women’s participation in digital trade.</i></p> <p><i>Designed to be engaging, with clear takeaways on what is holding women back, what is helping them move faster, and where partners can focus next.</i></p> <p><i>The winning team receives a curated showcase of products from WEIDE-supported businesses.</i></p> <p><b>Hosts:</b></p> <p><b>Nicole Mensa</b><br/>WEIDE Fund Manager, World Trade Organization Secretariat</p> <p><b>Judith Fessehaie</b><br/>WEIDE Fund Manager, International Trade Centre</p> <p><b>Venue:</b><br/>Room B</p> |



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| 12:45 – 12:50 | Group photo  |
| 12:50 – 13:15 | <p><b>Champions of ITC SheTrades</b></p> <p><i>At its core, ITC SheTrades is anchored in people, institutions and policy. This quickfire session spotlights donors and partners who have helped shape the strategy, reach and real impact for hundreds of thousands of women globally.</i></p> <p><b>Moderated by:</b></p> <p><b>Judith Fessehaie</b><br/>Head, ITC SheTrades Initiative<br/>International Trade Centre</p> <p><b>Venue:</b><br/>Room B</p>  |
| 13:15 – 13:40 | <p><b>ITC SheTrades Innovation Festival – Made by African Women, Ready for the World</b></p> <p><i>Africa has one of the world’s highest rates of women’s entrepreneurship. Women are innovating at the frontlines of the continent’s most urgent challenges, from climate resilience and food systems to fintech, healthcare and digital inclusion.</i></p> <p><i>This second edition of the ITC SheTrades Innovation Festival centres the women whose solutions are grounded, tested and designed for the needs of home, with the potential to scale globally.</i></p> <p><i>Selected through a competitive process, innovators share what they have built, what traction they are seeing, and what support would help them scale to regional and global markets.</i></p> <p><b>Hosted by:</b></p> <p><b>Danielle Asah Mantho</b><br/>Founder<br/>DiDreams</p> <p><b>Venue:</b><br/>Room B</p> |
| 13:40 – 14:00 | <p><b>Session by WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender (IWG) and Informal Working Group on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME Group)</b></p>   |



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|               | <p><i>The event will first review current work and achievements on inclusive trade carried out by WTO members (including the launch of the IWG Co-Chairs ' joint statement and the IWG compendium compiling the Group's work since 2020). Members will also focus on future collaboration, notably the launch of a new joint IWG– MSME Group initiative new compendium on "Empowering Women to trade through Digitalisation: Policy Insights" (INF/TGE/COM/13, INF/MSME/W/68)</i></p> <p><b>Moderated by:</b></p> <p><b>Anoush der Boghossian</b><br/>Head, Trade and Gender Office<br/>World Trade Organization</p> <p><b>Venue:</b><br/>Room B</p> |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | <p><b>Networking Reception</b></p> <p><i>This networking reception will spotlight the ACRAM Gender Committee's roadmap and next steps to expand women's opportunities in the coffee value chain. It will also feature a pilot on women's access to finance in coffee, designed to inform regional approaches.</i></p> <p><i>The ITC SheTrades Innovation Festival winner will be announced at the reception.</i></p> <p><i>Made possible through the EU-funded ACP Business-Friendly Programme.</i></p> <p><b>Venue:</b><br/>Outside Room B</p>  |

# Funders and partners

## WEIDE Fund



## ITC SheTrades Initiative



In partnership with



From  
the People of Japan

