



Global Services Forum

21 July 2016, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Room Tsavo 3

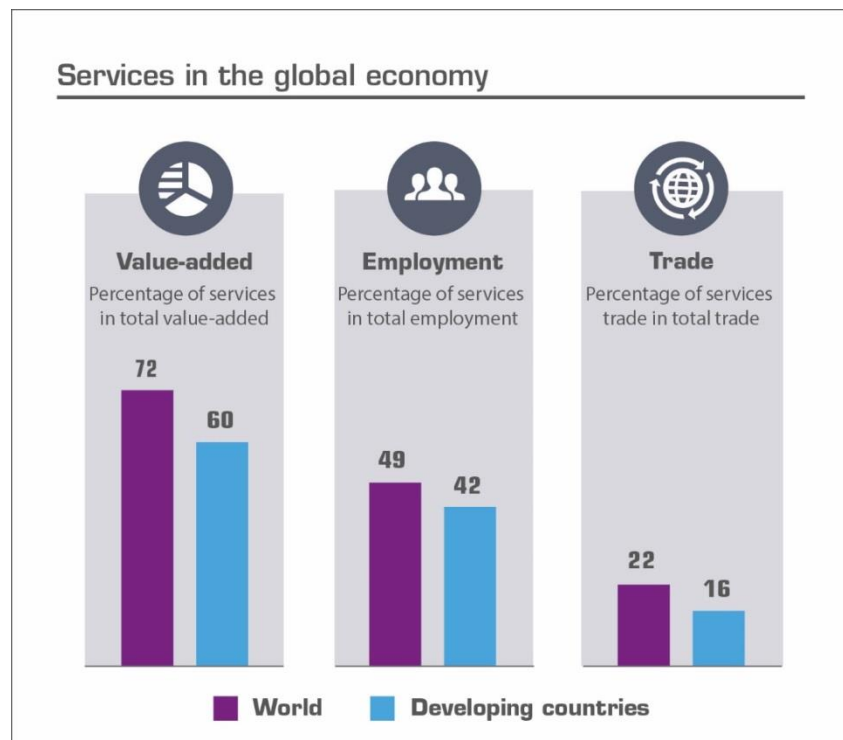
Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Nairobi

DESCRIPTION

The services sector forms the dominant segment of the global economy, and has been the main creator of jobs in developing countries since the turn of the century. In relation to trade, the sector represents a growing component of world trade and the key enabler of global value chains, thus the “servicification” of national economies and trade is manifest.

Developing countries have increased their participation in this trade. Indeed, some have gained substantially by exploiting emerging areas through comparative advantage, such as movement of natural persons and outsourcing of information technology-enabled business services, while others are acquiring important capacities to follow suit.

However, while the services sector has matured in developed countries, it is a new frontier for developing countries where the weakness in supply capacity, as well as regulatory and institutional capacities, have constrained their ability to use the sector’s potential as an effective instrument for inclusive and sustainable development. Positively integrating developing countries into the global services economy and trade in services has therefore assumed a strong developmental significance.





Building upon its pioneering and comprehensive work on services, UNCTAD first launched the Global Services Forum on 19 April 2012 on the occasion of UNCTAD XII (Doha, Qatar). The second session was held on 28-29 May 2013 in Beijing, China, in association with the second China Beijing International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS).

This third session of the Global Services Forum will be held on the occasion of UNCTAD XIV and will deliberate the ways and means for optimizing the contribution of the services economy and trade in services to the sustainable development goals.

KEY ISSUES

With 200 million people unemployed worldwide, consideration of the potential of services is more important than ever in creating employment. Given the multifaceted contribution of services to the overall economy, growth and employment, there is a real opportunity for exploring a services-driven growth and development strategy. Indeed, services in general and infrastructure services in particular – inter alia energy, transport, water and sanitation – remain indispensable for the achievement of the 2030 agenda of sustainable development goals.

The Forum will discuss the following topics:

- Leveraging infrastructure services as key enablers of the 2030 Agenda (with a focus on financing and regulation of energy, water and sanitation and transport);
- Facilitating trade in services (with a focus on reducing transaction costs and explore if the lessons resulting from the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement could be applied to trade in services);
- Promoting Tourism as an Engine of Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa (organized in collaboration with the United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa).

Questions to be addressed may include:

- What are the new and innovative approaches to close the finance gap facing by developing countries and least developed countries in particular in building and maintaining sufficient provision of water and sanitation, energy and transport services?
- What policy mixes, regulations and institutions are effective and conducive to the efficient provision of these fundamental services?
- What are the elements that could facilitate trade in services?
- What can be done in the WTO and regional trade agreements to facilitate trade in services?
- What opportunities does a peaceful and secure Africa create for tourism and how can African countries create better linkages between tourism and other sectors of the economy?
- What advocacy role could tourism play in facilitating an effective implementation plan?
- How can tourism contribute to the envisaged increase in intra-Africa trade in services?

A lunchtime event will present national and international initiatives to improve services trade data collection, analysis and dissemination for informed policy-making (organized in collaboration with the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine).

PARTICIPANTS

The Forum will bring together Ministers and high-level policymakers, thought leaders, business leaders, coalitions and associations of services industries, international organizations and services regulators.

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