### Making Voluntary Sustainability Standards Contribute to the SDGs 11 October 2018

### "Voluntary Sustainability Standards, Trade and Sustainable Development"

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD



3<sup>rd</sup> UNFSS Flagship Download at: www.unfss.org

# Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS), Trade and Sustainable Development

A Platform of International Dialogue on Voluntary Sustainability Standards

# UNFSS

- > UNFSS is a neutral, independent and credible platform to harness VSS potential to achieve SDG by:
  - **Facilitating** developing countries access to global markets
  - **Stimulating** well-informed policy dialogue among key stakeholders on the national and international level
- UNFSS' goal is to make VSS a way to improve the well-being and prosperity of people in developing countries
- > UNFSS functions by **pooling resources from five United Nations agencies**:









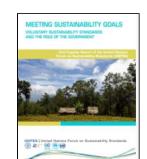


### **UNFSS'** work response to a need....

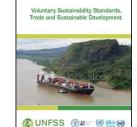
- > Developing countries often have problems with VSS because:
  - they can't find credible standards
  - compliance is **costly**
  - small-scale producers risk being left out
  - standards are not harmonized causing unnecessary multiplication
- UNFSS respond to these challenges through:
  - Informed policy dialogue: Example International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards (New Dehli, September 17-18, 2018)
  - Support for national initiatives: India Private Sustainability Standards Platform
  - Research and Analysis: Flagship reports



Flagship Report 1 Public Policy Issues and Objectives



Flagship Report 2 VSS and the Role of the Government



Flagship Report 3 VSS, Trade and Sustainable Development



## Key Findings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Flagship

#### 1. VSS can potentially be a catalyst of sustainable development

- > Analysis reveals institutional complementarities between VSS and the SDGs
- 2. However, effectiveness depends on the institutional design factors of VSS systems
  - Credibility is fundamental: rigorous standard-setting, monitoring and verification mechanism

#### 3. VSS systems could be facilitators or barriers to trade

To avoid being barriers and reduce costs they should do more to actively support suppliers and increase transparency

#### 4. Concerns for multiplicity of VSS

This increase compliance costs

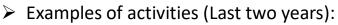
#### 5. Increasing interest of VSS in developing countries

Through multi-stakeholder planforms and by collaborating with International Organizations as a channel to emphasize national priorities



## VSS Move Towards Multi-Stakeholder Approach in Developing Countries

- National Platforms address challenges that producers, consumers, exporters face with regards to VSS, namely awareness and information gaps.
- > They:
- Facilitates dialogue
- Adapts external standards to domestic conditions
- Extends international networking and collaborations
- Knowledge-Sharing: building an ecosystem for VSS
- Links policy making with research and analysis
- Get Governments involved in the discussions



- Study "The Indian Story"
- Qingdao, China Conference (more than 500 participants)
- International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards, New Dehli, (again more than 500 participants)

#### INDIA

Consisting of Multi-Stakeholder Assembly, a Steering Council, Sectoral Committees and a Secretariat, hosted by Quality Council of India (QCI), with the Ministry of Commerce and Trade.

#### CHINA

The Secretariat is being run by the Standardization Administration of China in cooperation with the China Association for Standardization.

#### BRAZIL

The Platform is being run by the Brazilian National Institute of Metrology, Quality and Technology (INMETRO).

#### México

Just launched two months ago. Supported by the Direccion de Normas in the Ministry of Economy, but will be run each year by a different institution A Platform of International Dialogue on Voluntary Sustainability Standards

## **Thank You**

### www.unfss.org

