CONCLUSIONS

- Trade and investment promotion organizations (TIPOs) have a strong role to play in the advocacy for and development of a conducive business environment. It is vital for them to be flexible to deal with continuously fast markets and requirements.
- TIPOs must work together towards transparency so that standards become an opportunity for partners to collaborate.
- Incorporating international standards into domestic regulation facilitates compliance is vital, particularly for small and medium-sized farmers and producers.
- TIPOs have a key role in facilitating both access to standards for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the partnership between international organizations and certification bodies.

SUMMARY

The integration of SMEs from developing countries into global value chains is hampered by the proliferation of private standards. TIPOs need to collaborate in the harmonization and mutual recognition of standards, particularly within the area of the Free Trade Agreements. Trade and investment support agencies should work in partnership with both private and public sector stakeholders. TIPOs could also advocate international standards incorporation in national legislations, increasing SME competitiveness in both national and international markets.