



## PRESS RELEASE

# **15 Countries Trained by SME Corp. Malaysia and JICA in the Third Country Training Programme (TCTP) on SME Development for African Countries Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Look East Policy**

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**Kuala Lumpur, 7 - 10 March 2022** – In fostering regional and sub-regional technical cooperation, particularly among developing countries, SME Corp. Malaysia collaborated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia (MOFA) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to organise the Third Country Training Programme (TCTP) 2022 on SME Development for African Countries which took place virtually from 7 to 10 March 2022 in Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

The Opening Ceremony of the programme was graced by the Chief Executive Officer of SME Corp. Malaysia, Mr. Rizal Nainy and the Mr. Takizawa Masahiko, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on 7 March 2022. In his opening address, Mr. Rizal Nainy emphasises that it was crucial to recognise the integral role of SMEs in shaping the future and must constantly look at new and alternative ways to address ongoing challenges. Mr. Takizawa highlighted in his special remarks that this year marks the 40th Anniversary of the Look East Policy announced by the Malaysian government in 1982, and the 30th anniversary of cooperation in joint international training programmes between the Government of Malaysia and Japan. Building on the successes in the last 3 decades, JICA aims to strive further in enhancing joint endeavours with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia (MOFA) and SME Corp. Malaysia.

The Programme culminated on 10 March 2022 with a Closing Ceremony in the presence of YBhg. Dato' Sri Syed Hussien Al Habshee, Chairman of SME Corp. Malaysia. In his keynote speech during the ceremony, he reiterated the importance of ensuring that a successful cooperation can only come from the collective effort of the stakeholders. Ms. Hafizah Abdullah, Undersecretary, International Cooperation and Development Division (ICADD) who was also in attendance at the Closing Ceremony expressed hope that the training programme would strengthen friendly exchanges and create opportunities for further mutually beneficial engagements and strong people-to-people ties across a wide range of sectors and interests.

This year, the capacity-building training programme under the ambit of the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCP) centres around the sharing of Malaysia and Japan's experience in SME development with special emphasis on COVID-19 recovery measures for SMEs with selected African countries. Participants from Kenya, Mauritius, and Uganda joined the TCTP alumni this year making a total of 150 participants from 15 African countries successfully trained by SME Corp. Malaysia since the inception of the Programme in 2011. The Programme forms strong commitments of the Government of Malaysia towards the promotion of technical cooperation among developing countries by providing a platform to share experiences, knowledge, and technology to the chosen countries that will benefit from the exchange of information while enabling SME development stakeholders from Malaysia to strengthen network and outreach globally.

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### About SME Corp

SME Corp. Malaysia is a Central Coordinating Agency under the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development (MEDAC) which serves as a one-stop collection and reference center for information and advisory services for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), coordinator of SME development programs, economic assessment and SME accreditation, business development. and support programs, as well as facilitating SME access to domestic and foreign markets.

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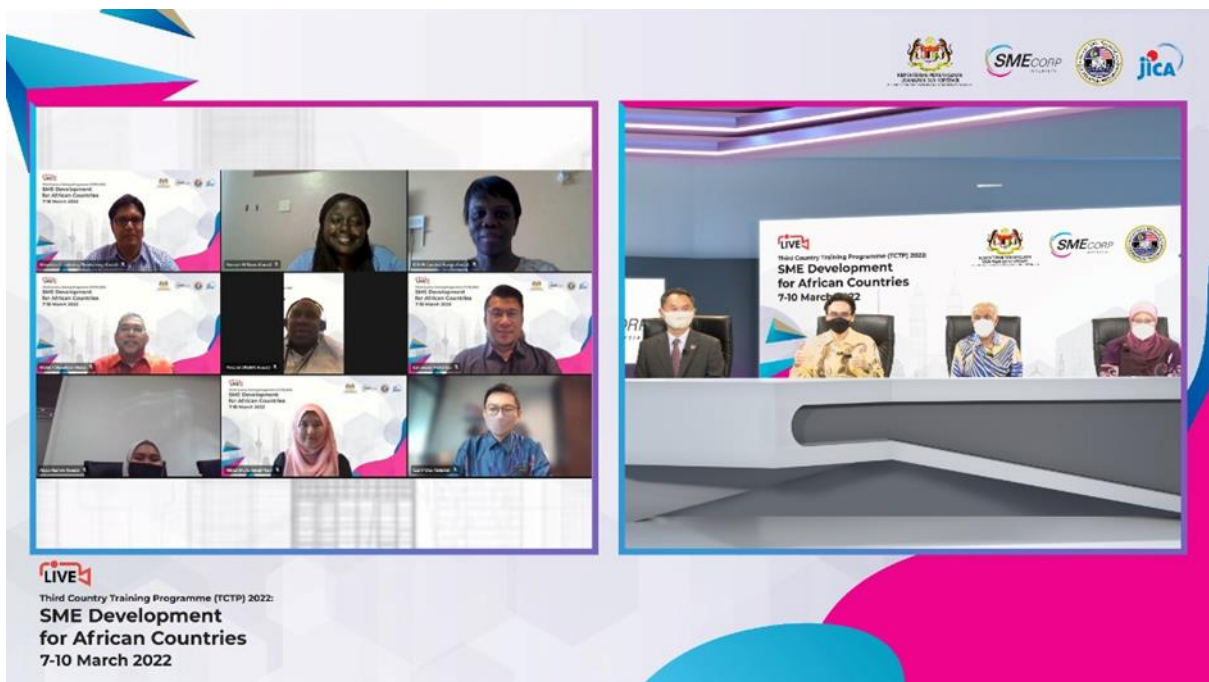
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*The Opening Ceremony of the Third Country Training Programme (TCTP) 2022 on SME Development for African Countries (7 March 2022)*

Left panel: Participants, the Management team of SME Corp. Malaysia and Ms. Hafizah Abdullah from MOFA.

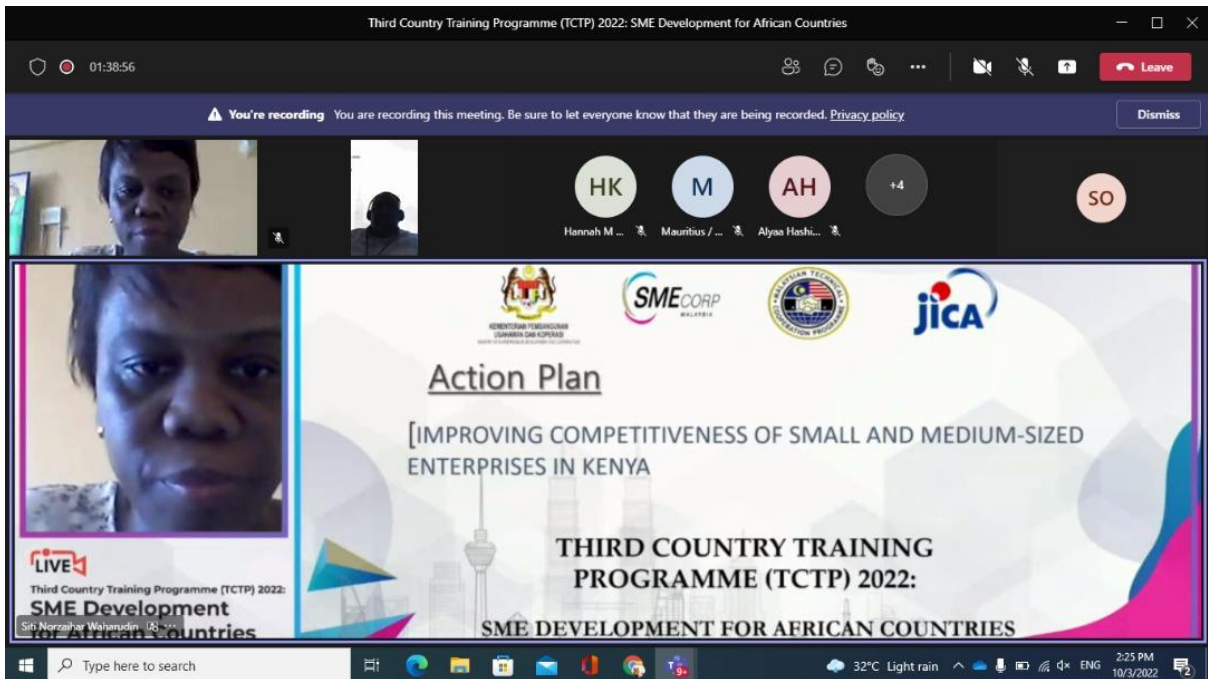
Right panel (from left): Mr Takizawa Masahiko (Chief Representative of JICA), Mr. Rizal Nainy (CEO of SME Corp. Malaysia), and Mr. Egawa Zenjiro (Project Formulation Advisor from JICA)



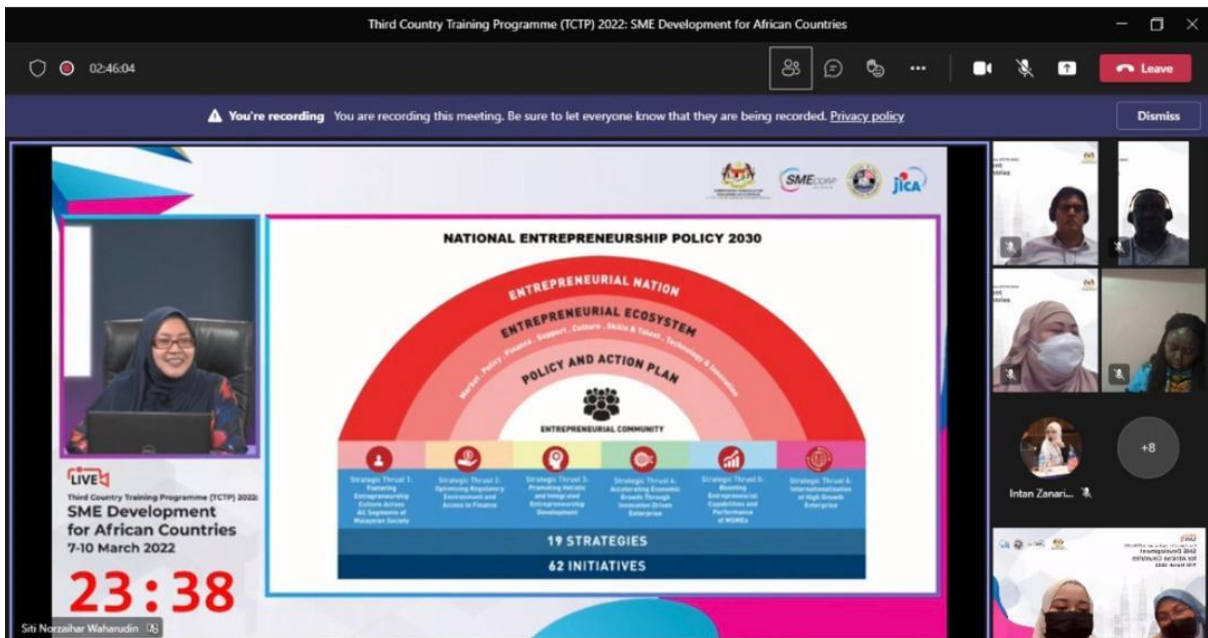
*The Closing Ceremony of the TCTP: SME Development for African Country (10 March 2022)*

Left panel: Participants from the African region and the management team of SME Corp. Malaysia

Right panel (from left): Mr. Takizawa Masahiko (Chief Representative of JICA), Mr. Rizal Nainy (Chairman of SME Corp. Malaysia), YBhg. Dato' Sri Syed Hussien Al Habshee (Chairman of SME Corp. Malaysia), and Ms. Hafizah Abdullah (Undersecretary, ICADD, MoFA).



Ms Caroline Atieno Kungu from the Ministry of Industrialization Trade & Enterprise Development presenting the Plan of Action for Uganda to apply new strategies for developing their SME ecosystems.

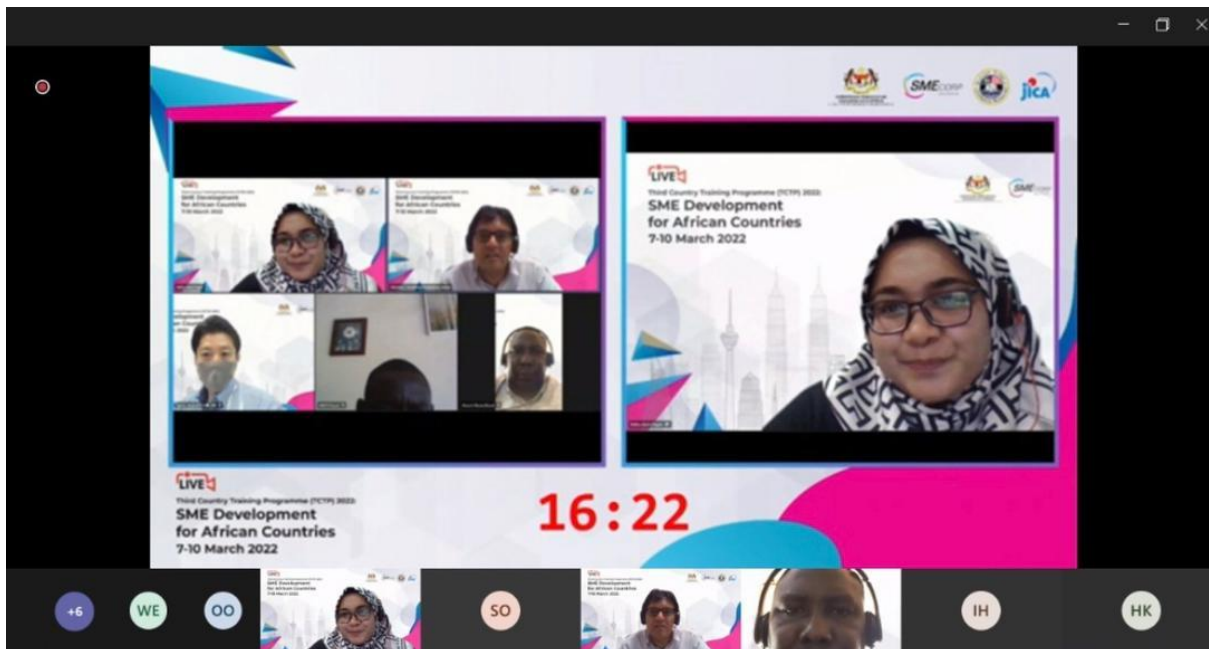


MEDAC sharing on the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 to TCTP participants.

Picture on left handside: Ms. Aida Syukrena Mohd Idris, Principal Assistant Secretary, Policy and International Relations Division, MEDAC



*Participants having a discussion with Mr. Aizul Fidy Kamarudin, Principal Assistant Secretary, Policy and International Relations Division, MEDAC and Programme Coordinator, Ms. Intan Zanariah Hamdan from SME Corp. Malaysia on the various initiatives conducted by the government to facilitate SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic.*



*Ms. Rafiza Abdul Rajab, Deputy Director, Programme Coordination Division of SME Corporation Malaysia sharing about the roles and functions of a central coordinating agency on SME development to the TCTP participants.*