

International Trade Center Joint Advisory Group
Afghanistan's Statement
23rd of November 2020

Dear Madam Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me the floor and allow me to congratulate you on your chairwomanship of the 54th session of the ITC joint advisory group.

Excellencies, Ms. Coke-Hamilton, ITC's Executive Director, distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin with thanking the ITC, WTO, and UNCTAD for convening this meeting aimed at examining the activities and achievements of the ITC and its future plans.

I want to once again congratulate Ms. Coke Hamilton for her appointment as the new Executive Director of ITC and wish her every success in leading this organization. Meanwhile, we acknowledge Ms. Dorothy Tembo, Deputy Executive Director for her excellent leadership during the transition.

Madam Chair,

Afghanistan commends ITC for the excellent work it has done throughout these years. We are pleased to note that most of ITC projects and services have been devoted to LDCs, small and vulnerable economies, and benefiting the most vulnerable groups such as SMEs, young and women businesses, and we hope that this trend will continue in years to come.

Chair,

ITC has been an important partner of my country and in past years has assisted Afghanistan through a project called Advancing Afghan Trade, the project funded by the European Union that ended in March 2020.

The project aimed to lay the foundation for strengthening Afghanistan's trade capacities and building a business-friendly environment.

The project which was implemented with the close cooperation of the Afghan Ministry of Industry and trade, used trade as a lever for economic growth by facilitating job creation, poverty reduction, and enhanced regional cooperation, intended to further increase Afghanistan's ties to the regional and global economies, following its accession to the WTO in 2016.

The focus of the project was to enhance the competitiveness of the Afghan private sector through a number of initiatives including the development of Afghanistan first National Export Strategy and National Trade Policy, improving the market access of the Afghan exports in the region and beyond, supporting the better implementation of the TFA, streamlining and strengthening of the quality and SPS related infrastructure, and enhancing Afghanistan quality management capacity.

While we thank the EU and the ITC for their invaluable supports, we are happy to note that the second phase of the mentioned project will start by next year and last for 4 years. We are very much certain that this project will further contribute to the Afghanistan trade development, particularly, it will support the implementation of key recommendations of the National Export Strategy.

Afghanistan will continue to work closely with ITC and I take this opportunity to thank all development partners for their financial support provided to ITC to carry its mandates.

In closing, my delegation expresses our deep thanks and gratitude to ITC Executive Director, to all ITC capable Geneva-based team and as well as ITC's regional coordinators. I wish ITC all the best for its future endeavors.

Thank You!