

## **JAG - Draft donor statement**

Director General Azevedo, Secretary General Kituyi, Executive Director Gonzalez,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Friends and Colleagues.

I will be speaking on behalf of donors this morning. First I would like to thank Ambassador Lisson for her engagement in the past year and welcome Ambassador Molinari in his new role as Chair of the 52th Joint Advisory Group. I would also like to thank DG Azevedo, SG Kituyi, and ED Gonzalez, for their interventions. This sets the stage for the very interesting agenda ahead of us. You already know how we appreciate the frank and open dialogue we have with the ITC and JAG participants, and we look forward to engage in a less scripted fashion over the course of the day.

It has been a big year for ITC. They all seem to be big but there are a number of very visible achievements that I would like to highlight here. Events like the WEDF in Hungary, SheTrades global which took place just a few weeks ago in Liverpool, and the annual MSME day not so long ago, showed ITC's convening capacity at all levels. ITC's presence in major events like MC11 in Buenos Aires and we've all seen the family photo around the Ministers Declaration on Women's Economic Empowerment and Trade, Commission on the Status of Women in New York, Commonwealth summit in the spring, and I know I am missing many more, shows ITC's capacity to strategically be there feeding into global discussions, and even negotiations. The launch of some important publications such as the now established SME Competitiveness Outlook is also positioning the ITC as a reference for policy-makers from both developing and developed countries. Tools like the recently launched Rules of Origins Facilitator or the Global Trade Helpdesk also have the potential to help SMEs navigate and benefit from free-trade agreements.

As I was preparing this intervention, I revisited some founding documents from half a century ago when the GATT and UNCTAD established the working arrangements for the newly established ITC. Back then, the JAG was a forum for experts in the field of export promotion to advise on the annual programme of the organization. Things have changed over time, and I doubt that many of us have the sort of expertise to advise on the specifics of trade promotion. But thanks to documents like the Annual Report and Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report, we still have a chance to hold a wider reflection on where the ITC is going, draw some lessons learned, and understand what's coming next.

Looking at the annual report, I have to say my favorite page is the one with the iceberg on the other side of the cover page. All the high-profile elements that I just mentioned are the tip of the iceberg, but as we can see a lot more work, deeper work, very meaningful and transformative work is being done, which we don't always see that prominently but matters just as much. From a donor perspective what is under the sea is what we are looking for, as we strive for long-term sustainable results. What we see in the report for all 6 focus areas shows effective delivery of programming, with clear outcomes achieved as a result of the activities conducted by ITC and its partners.

The Annual Evaluation Summary Report shows relevance and effectiveness of the work done, but fleshes out many challenges, including the sustainability of very well-delivered interventions, calling for adaptation to local conditions, securing local ownership, securing the right partner and allowing sufficient time for support. These are all key for genuine change and ultimately for the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In a context where resources are scarce and choices have to be made in terms of projects and programs, evaluators and donors are very much aligned when

recommending that additional efforts on methodology for measuring and reporting on cost-effectiveness be made, not just globally but also for its beneficiaries and clients on the ground, at the country level. We will be happy to provide constructive feedback to the ITC as it continues to develop and refine its methodology and tools to achieve.

Local ownership is often not in ITC's control once it started project and program implementation, but definitely a factor to have in mind when making the decision to invest its limited resources. One of the things that caught our eye, as a tool possibly allowing to manage the risk related to lack of local ownership, would be the use of a short « state of readiness assessments or reports », as listed on page 17 of the AESR.

It is good to see that ITC has put new mechanisms in place to address the AESR recommendation, and we encourage you to keep close attention to the issues raised going forward. More specifically, we would like to encourage ITC to mainstream approaches and lessons learned from SheTrades and Trade for Sustainable Development in ITC's overall work, which we think is necessary to reach impact at the scale we are all hoping for.

As we look forward to the year to come, we hope that ITC and the team will continue in that direction, we look forward to support you as a partner in delivering on this work.

I thank you.