

Donor's Statement JAG on 2 November 2021

Executive Director Coke-Hamilton, Deputy Secretary-General Durant, Deputy Director-General Zhang, Excellencies, Distinguished participants,

It is a great pleasure for me to deliver the statement on behalf of the donor group. Let me start by congratulating ITC with the great work you are doing. This is the 55th Joint Advisory Group meeting. This number signifies the many years ITC has been working on enhancing the international competitiveness of MSMEs and the great expertise it has been building up.

[Annual Report 2020]

This expertise is clearly reflected in the results achieved for 2020. The donors thank ITC for the comprehensive annual report on activities in a very challenging and difficult year. We congratulate ITC on its achievement in being carbon neutral since mid2020. We are pleased with the results reported for 2020 and support the practical examples in the report which make the work that you do especially vivid. To encourage consistency in reporting we see a future opportunity for adding a list of indicators against which ITC could report systematically.

We welcome the inclusion of the figure on LDCs and encourage ITC to keep the focus on reaching the furthest behind first. We furthermore commend the balance of the annual report in highlighting both the work on the SDGs and trade support. We do see an opportunity for more information on ITC's close collaboration with the WTO and UNCTAD.

To zoom in on the pandemic in 2020, we would like to specifically thank Dorothy for your management as acting ED in a very difficult period. It was not an easy time to hold the fort, but you managed to act swiftly to the circumstances. The annual report highlights the many actions taken by ITC to respond to the pandemic. We acknowledge the steps taken to enhance transparency in times of increasing temporary trade barriers. And we praise the quick fixes to the pandemic like the SMECO, digital training and connectivity efforts and the She Trades Outlook.

The donors would also like to congratulate Pamela with your great start as ED and the impressive result of 2020. We highly appreciate the efforts you have taken to have a continuous dialogue with us donors, especially on governance and oversight. And we support your passion to close the digital divide which you addressed in your opening speech last year. We have seen you strengthen many partnerships and participate in many Geneva Trade events this year, and we already look forward to the progress report of 2021.

[Evaluation Strategic Plan 2018-2021]

Before I move to the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, let me first briefly commend ITC on the Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The donors agree on the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan and we support the recommendations. We encourage ITC to fully implement them in the new Strategy. Although reasons for process-based assessment is clear, the donors would note that we would also be very interested in an outcome-based summary of the Strategic Plan of 2018-2021.

[Strategic Plan 2022-2025]

Let me now turn to the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and thank ITC for its presentation.

The donors support ITC's focus on gender, green, digital and the pandemic and we appreciate ITC's continued focused way of working. We are all already very familiar with ITC's work on gender, and look forward to ITC's mainstreaming activities on green. Developing countries are exposed to economic and environmental risks. By focusing even more on environmental considerations, mainstreaming green in ITC's work can help countries build resilience and support efforts to achieve the SDGs. Understanding better how ITC is mainstreaming gender and green is therefore a continuous interest to donors, and we encourage ITC update us on a structural basis. With respect to digital, we can all agree its importance has even further accelerated due to the pandemic. We furthermore appreciate ITC's targeted approach towards LDCs and vulnerable groups and reiterate we encourage ITC to keep the focus on reaching the furthest behind.

We see great value in cooperation with other (international/ continental/ regional/ national) governments/ institutions/ organizations and we encourage ITC to continuously reflect its added value in areas where multiple organizations are active and how ITC will avoid duplication. We also see donor diversification as a continuous opportunity.

We share the current trends and global challenges raised by the ITC [Depending on the choices in the actual draft and the extend of inclusion of our input, we can choose if we want the missing topics to still be considered by ITC, being: urbanization, growing youth population, migration, benefits of increase in trade liberalization, e.g. by means of international trade agreements, regional integration, especially African Continental Free Trade Area, and the role of the circular economy in international value chains].

We support ITC's core expertise in data collection and management for an evidence-based approach to programming and future funding.

Lastly the donors commend ITC for the high quality consultative document that contributed to the draft strategic plan and the opportunity to give input in a very structured way. We appreciate taking into account our input. We will study the draft in more detail and look forward to a continued discussion towards the finalization of the Strategic Plan.

Thank you