

## Informal ITC JAG 26.1.2015 - Statement by Finland

- Thank you chair. Finland aligns itself with the statement made by Canada.
- Finland participated to the Steering Committee of the evaluation and partly funded it. It was our wish to have a strategic evaluation of the ITC and we are satisfied with the outcome. We thank ITC for its collaboration with the steering committee during the evaluation and look forward to getting updates and exchange of views with ITC regarding the implementation of the management response
- We are particularly happy that the Management Response follows the strategic path of the evaluation. We are confident that reflecting the spirit of RBM and transparency, the actions outlined in Management Response will deliver good outcomes to the evaluation recommendations.
- Finland is a long-standing supporter of the ITC. We see ITC as a key partner in the area of Aid for Trade. We value:
  - ITC's strong focus on private sector development, particularly the SME sector in poorest developing countries;
  - its capacity building work, which enables developing countries to benefit from regional and global trade opportunities and fight poverty;
  - and the strong commitment in promoting gender equality and environmental sustainability in the context of international trade.
- We agree with the priorities outlined in the ITC Strategic Plan 2015-17, including the six focus areas and a more impact-oriented, effective and efficient ITC. We look forward to working closely with ITC to achieve all the strategic goals.
- Our current funding to ITC is softly earmarked and focused on strengthening regional trade in Eastern Africa, particularly in Kenia, Zambia and Tanzania and

connectivity to value chains. Our financial support to this project is about 5 million euros.

- We have been following this project closely. My colleagues from Finland have visited project sites in Tanzania recently to gain a better understanding of the challenges and the work at the country level. This week the project steering committee will be meeting in Helsinki to take stock of the implementation so far. In this context, we very much value good and open discussions with ITC.
- Finally, we are very pleased that Executive Director, Madam González will be visiting Finland in about two weeks' time. The mission is a good opportunity to strengthen our cooperation in various areas, such as promoting trade and private sector development in post 2015 context and highlighting the importance of empowering women in business as a key to achieve sustainable development results.
- Thank you!