

Statement
Delegation of Mauritius
51st Joint Advisory Group Meeting

Thank you Madam Chair,

First of all allow us to commend Mrs Gonzalez for the brilliant leadership of the ITC. We welcome the ITC's new strategic vision on making an impact and making trade matter.

Mauritius has developed a strong partnership with the ITC over the years. We have collaborated in several areas such elimination of NTBs, Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism and development with involvement of national stakeholders, of a National Implementation plan for the Trade Facilitation Agreement

Our latest collaborative effort has been the launch of the Mauritius National Export Strategy (NES) by the Hon. Prime Minister in March this year and your presence at the launch, Madam Executive Director, is vivid testimony of the Mauritius-ITC relationship. The NES is the product of extensive efforts of more than two years by both the ITC and Government of Mauritius Teams.

As you would recall, Madam Executive Director, at the launch of the NES, the Honourable Prime Minister declared that *“The NES comes at an opportune time and will force us to sharpen our efforts to revamp the manufacturing base and to drive exports through seven priority sectors (agro-processed foods; fisheries and aquaculture; medical devices; jewellery; financial services; software development and cultural tourism).”*

The Government did not fail to incorporate some of the recommendations of the National Export Strategy in the budget presented last month by the Hon Prime Minister equally Minister of Finance. The creation of the Economic Development Board rallies one important recommendation of the NES regarding institutional alignment. Several initiatives to promote growth in targeted sectors as well as enhanced support to MSMEs have also been proposed.

An Inter-Ministerial committee is looking into defining the implementation priorities and projects. Some of the priorities thus far identified are as follows

- Designing a model for SME Industrial Park
- Promoting the creation of private venture funds and the intervention of “business angels”
- Identification of new high-value products that can be developed in the agribusiness sector, Financial services or for Rodrigues Island.
- Skills gap analysis for the ICT sector
- Promoting the creation of joint ventures and intervention of business angels

The NES will be highly crucial in leapfrogging our level of development which are fraught with challenges and are shaped by factors beyond our control. Our challenge remains at building resilience and embark on a high growth path.

We solicit the attention and assistance of our development partners and the donor community as regards technical support and financing of the projects under the NES and accompany us in this journey. We would be glad to share a list of the projects and programmes identified thus far since the launch of the NES.

Our relation with ITC complements our ongoing collaboration with WIPO, UNCTAD, UNIDO, TradeCom, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Agence Française de Développement, World Bank, AFDB and the relevant departments of the WTO in various areas such as TBT, SPS, Intellectual Property, Branding, MSMEs Competitiveness. We strongly believe in policy coherence, coordination and above all the need to avoid duplication of efforts.

Finally, from a SIDS perspective, we look forward to continued advocacy and ITC intervention in the promotion of innovation, inclusive growth, integration of MSMEs in the Global Value Chains (GVCs) and promotion of Women and Youth Entrepreneurship, development of tools for sharpening business intelligence including sectoral growth strategies as well as strengthening of TSIs.

I thank you.