

## Talking Points for 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the Joint Advisory Group of the International Trade Centre

Mauritius is pleased to participate in this 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the Joint Advisory Group Session and I commend the ITC for the organising of this Session during these trying moments under the pandemic.

I congratulate and welcome Ms Pamela Coke-Hamilton, on her appointment and assumption of office as the new Executive Director of ITC as from 01 October 2020.

It is befitting and very assuring to see someone, particularly a woman, with outstanding competence and experience with to steer the future of the ITC, albeit this unprecedented and difficult time.

I sincerely hope that the WTO Director General-Designate, a woman from Africa, will also take up her assignment soon and be allowed to deliver on her important responsibilities soon to preserve stability at the organisation and within the multilateral trading system, at this very disruptive juncture.

Mauritius remains a longstanding partner of ITC, and is very appreciative of the operations and the collaborative assistance the ITC provides to developing and least developed countries. Indeed the ITC remains an prime partner providing extensive continuous support to developing countries for the promotion and the harnessing of their trade potential in their economic development.

Mauritius authorities have recently benefitted from the National Export Strategy ( in 2015) and the Trade Obstacle Alert Mechanism, both from the ITC. The Innovation Cross Sector, again from the ITC, for period 2017-2021, for Mauritius was followed passing by the government of the Industrial Property Act and the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council Act last year.

Mauritius, being a selected country, looks forward for the implementation of the United Kingdom Trade partnerships programme which is being managed by the ITC. We look ahead to a more transparent business environment across ACP countries, through comprehensive and

updated trade and market information available and supporting SMEs to access it and by establishing mechanisms to monitor trade obstacles.

With regards to our future engagement and programme of work we look forward for the ITC to :

- Intensify its actions under its new leadership in the much awaited continental integration endeavours, such as the promotion of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.
- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises are the backbone of the economies of many developing countries including Africa. There are more than 48 million MSMEs registered in Africa contributing to 70 % of employment. We look forward for the ITC to contribute more in the setting up of a MSME Web platform, for information maintenance and access and the promotion of an integrated database and trade facilitation for MSMEs.
- We know that small industries are intrinsically linked with ITC's women and youth economic empowerment and gender mainstreaming
- In addition to the MSMEs, we welcome the ITC for more assistance to states in their understanding and harnessing of issues in their development of the other WTO Joint Statement Initiatives on Investment Facilitation, e-commerce and also under the Joint statement in Services Development Regulations.
- We are also looking eagerly for the ITC to advise developing countries when trade discussions are including novel wider frame elements like Trade and Environment , and also trade and Climate Change and Plastic Pollution
- All of us present here are fully aware of the disastrous effects of the massive contagion of the COVID Pandemic. Our respective countries while still reeling from the extensive consequences and damages of the pandemic on the economic and socio fabric from

the first phase of infections, will now be facing the second or forthcoming multiple rounds of contagion. The export competitiveness of developing countries, particularly SIDS, are seriously affected and their inherent difficulties make recovery much more complicated. We welcome the ITC for upgrading its actions in assisting states to manage the pandemic situation and to better embark on early recovery post Covid mechanisms.

- Global efforts are solicited to combat the spread of the virus – and global efforts must include access and distribution of anti-Covid vaccines and medicines. We would welcome the ITC for work on support for how developing states could have better, if not universal access to anti Covid vaccines through waiver of some sections under the TRIPS Agreement.

Thank you