

Statement by Nepal at the 55th joint advisory group meeting of the ITC

2 November 2021

- Thank you Chair for convening this meeting and giving me the floor.
- I wish to thank Ms Iris for presenting the ITC's Strategic Plan 2022-2025.
- The strategic plan has reflected major needs of LDCs and LLDCs in current context focusing on MSMEs, women entrepreneurs, youths and also digital economy which is much appreciated.
- My delegation takes a good note of ITC's continuous support in enhancing trade capacity of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries including Nepal, through various means in different six focused areas.
- ITC has become an excellent institution to partner with mainly in the areas of trade capacity building and enhancing export competency.
- For instance, wide range of activities the institution is operating as highlighted by Ms Hamilton and as mentioned in the annual report and strategic plan give clear picture of its delivery and a positive message of hope and good prospects with inspiration to us even in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ITC's prompt responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and some good initiatives to help women entrepreneurs and small businesses survive the pandemic remained highly commendable.
- ITC's continued engagement with Nepal's trade sector development and its valuable contribution have become highly popular among the beneficiaries in the country.
- Such engagement has become instrumental not only to deliver the targeted result but also for transferring skills and knowledge through partnership.
- Digital economy has emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and going digital has become compulsion to benefit and survive. However, the LDCs and LLDCs have not been able to participate in and benefit from the digital economy and e-commerce due to huge digital divide.

- In this context, additional support and interventions are expected from all our development partners to bridge such digital gap especially in digital infrastructure, and human and institutional capacity building.
- Finally, I appreciate ITC's deeper country engagement and partnership and my delegation wishes to encourage ITC for further deepening its engagement with the domestic institutions, in particular government agencies responsible, by making them more accountable and responsible while implementing the ITC's strategic plan 2022-2025.
- It would further contribute to building trust between people and government of the country, enhancing ownership, and ensuring sustainability of all the interventions made.
- I thank you Chair.