

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES
ON THE OCCASSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE'S 53RD JOINT
ADVISORY GROUP (JAG) MEETING
2 JULY 2019**

Thank you, Chair
Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives,

I make this statement on behalf of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. We are pleased to participate in this the 53rd Joint Advisory Group Meeting and we join others in thanking the International Trade Centre (ITC) for its stellar work over the past year. In particular, we express our appreciation to the ITC's Executive Director, Ms. Arancha González, for her visionary leadership of the ITC and especially for her work in promoting the economic inclusion of women which we know will eventually lead to fairer and more equitable societies. By extension, we also express our appreciation to the staff of the ITC for their commitment to the work of the organisation, including Mr. Matthew Wilson whose work we commend.

The OECS has benefitted tremendously from the ITC not only in the past year, but also for many years before. During the period under review, the ITC has provided technical assistance to St. Lucia, a Member State of the OECS, in trade strategy design and the development of a national export strategy, which we anticipate will assist this Member State to bolster its international competitiveness.

Furthermore, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, benefited from a collaborative effort between the ITC and other donors such as the European Union to support the expansion of coconut production and commercialisation in these countries. Farmers in these territories are also being supported in the development of stable and diversified income streams as the ITC supports them in growing locally appropriate alternative crops such as cocoa, bananas and peppers, and to step up value-added production of coconut water, oil and milk. According to the ITC's report, four years into implementation, the project's impacts are visible at three levels: investment, network creation, and technical capacity and training. Meanwhile, in Grenada, the ITC has provided support to the fresh fruit and vegetables food safety management systems. Projects such as these support rural livelihoods, including for women; promote economic diversification; and build economic and social resilience.

In closing, we extol the ITC for its work not only among our Member States, but across the developing world. If the ITC did not exist, it would have needed to be created because of its unique work in providing capacity building support in assisting countries like ours to boost economic and social inclusion, and in benefitting from the multilateral trading system in tangible ways. We assure the ITC of our continued support and our shared commitment to improving the lives of our people. We also call on all donors to continue their funding for the work of the ITC.

I thank you, Chair.