



SIERRA LEONE

Statement by Ambassador Yvette Stevens

Informal Joint Advisory Group Meeting

International Trade Centre

26 January 2015

Madame Chairperson,
Madame Executive Director,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by congratulating you Madame Chairperson for assuming the role of Chair for this informal meeting of the Joint Advisory Group of the ITC.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement by Uganda on behalf of the Least Developed Countries. As ably demonstrated by the LDC Coordinator, the LDCs are in dire need of aid for trade and ITC has proven itself to be most relevant and is “value for money” - a fact which is endorsed in the evaluation report. As a country that has benefited from ITC assistance, Sierra Leone would like to endorse the conclusion that ITC is doing an excellent job. But a lot still needs to be done to promote trade in developing countries, in general, and in LDCs in particular.

Like many Least Developed Countries, the Sierra Leone blueprint for development – the *Agenda for Prosperity* places great emphasis on trade, employment creation and SMEs. ITC is thus an important partner to us, as we strive to achieve our goals, and we are counting on their support, particularly in our recovery following the Ebola outbreak.

In response to the evaluation report, ITC has prepared a Management Response, which illustrates the willingness to put into action the implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation, and steps are already being taken in this regard.

My delegation would like to note, in particular, with satisfaction, the decision to work with United Nations Country Teams on the ground, as that would ensure that the needs for ITC assistance and the monitoring of such assistance are aligned with the UN entities on the ground.

Following the evaluation, ITC responded to the need for strategic planning and has finalised its 2015 – 2017 Strategic Plan, focussing on the six baskets; as well as the preparation of the 2015 Operational Plan. However to have an effective response to the needs of beneficiary countries, it is important that the implementation of the plan is ensured through predictable and much longer term resources, that would allow for better planning and delivery of results. Sierra Leone is encouraged by the announcement by the United Kingdom of a pledge today, and would like to urge all donors to give consideration to committing funds over the longer-term.

Madame Chairperson,

I thank you.