

## **Statement by the UNCTAD Secretary-General, Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi**

Over the last year, ITC and UNCTAD have continued their collaboration in a number of important areas. At the outset let me say notably that ITC is working closely with UNCTAD to support the socio-economic response to the pandemic under the “building back better” priorities of the UN secretariat.

On e-trade, we are pleased that ITC has been an active supporter of UNCTAD’s eTrade for All initiative and participating in e-Commerce week. We were pleased to collaborate, for example, on the eTrade Readiness Review for Côte d’Ivoire, where ITC took responsibility for the evaluation and recommendations in capacity building. ITC has also been a partner in UNCTAD’s eTrade for Women initiative, a network for women leaders in e-commerce.

On gender issues, jointly WTO, ITC and UNCTAD have continued to cooperate, for example toward the implementation of the Buenos Aires Declaration on Women and Trade.

On statistical issues, WTO, ITC and UNCTAD continue to leverage their capacities to collect, process and analyze trade-related information jointly publishing the World Tariff Profiles.

ITC and UNCTAD, together with the WTO, have renewed their effort to promote and monitor the progress of the 2030 agenda’s trade-related targets. A joint SDG Trade Monitor portal was recently launched to help monitor progress in attaining the trade-related Sustainable Development Goals.

UNCTAD and ITC have also continued their long-standing collaboration on non-tariff measures (NTM) information.

In terms of providing trade-related information to SMEs, UNCTAD is pleased to be part of the Global Trade Helpdesk Management Board with ITC and WTO. The three agencies meet regularly to monitor and refine this multi-agency project, which also involves other international organizations such as UNIDO, FAO and the World Bank Group.

On sustainability issues, UNCTAD and ITC also continue to work together. We have recently jointly co-authored, along with other partners, the report “Linking Voluntary Standards to Sustainable Development Goals,” published in October 2020. And we continue to work together promoting sustainable supply chains, collaborating on BioTrade standards for ITC’s Standards Map and jointly developing a BioTrade self-assessment tool on the Sustainability Map used by SMEs globally. We also welcome the news that ITC is going deeper into ‘green to compete’ on helping businesses go green and this is an area for future cooperation.

ITC, UNCTAD and WTO have also advanced a joint technical approach to developing the cotton by-products industry. With EIF and support from UNCTAD and the ITC, feasibility studies were conducted in eight African LDCs on the potential for developing cotton by-products, and we look forward to a second phase of the project over a four-year timeframe of capacity building across eight African countries.

Lastly, ITC and UNCTAD have continued their collaboration in trade facilitation, together with the WTO, throughout 2019 and 2020. This includes ongoing partnership to implement transparency-related trade facilitation reforms in 16 countries, and collaboration toward simplification of trade procedures with private sector perspective in select countries.

Going forward we look forward to this close collaboration to continue – in particular we welcome ITC participation in UNCTAD 15 – and we are confident this will be the case under the able leadership of the new ITC Executive Director Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, who has our full confidence and support.

Thank you.