

## **United Kingdom Statement for the ITC Joint Advisory Group 2 November 2021**

The United Kingdom fully supports the donor statement delivered by our friend from the Netherlands and would like to join other delegations in congratulating the ITC for the results that were achieved in 2020, especially given the difficult context of a global pandemic.

In particular, the UK commends the leadership shown by the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director, which has facilitated a smooth transition between offices. The world was thrown into disarray and, under the sage stewardship of Dorothy Tembo as acting ED, ITC rose to the challenge. Our congratulations also to Pamela Coke-Hamilton on her first year as ED.

We welcome the 2020 Annual Report, and, are pleased to note the numerous examples of how the ITC's approach has - enabled resilience in MSMEs around the world. The importance of which was set out by the outgoing JAG Chair, Ambassador Molokomme.

In particular, ITC efforts towards enhanced transparency and digital connectivity have brought stability to those left worse off by the increase in temporary trade barriers due to the pandemic.

The UK has been a long-standing supporter of the ITC, and remains one of ITC's largest donors, contributing almost 13 million USD in 2020. We are proud to implement the UK Trade Partnerships Programme through our partners at ITC, and welcome the inclusion of 40 countries (and counting, I may add!) on the SheTrades Outlook. We are delighted that a letter of intent for the opening of a SheTrades Hub in Mauritius was signed this week.

As the host of COP26, which is currently underway in Glasgow, we extend warm congratulations to the ITC for achieving its goal of carbon neutrality by mid-2020. This is a landmark achievement, of which you should be very proud. It is a good to hear that you are committed to keeping the target of 1.5 degrees alive when you head to Glasgow. We need more organisations to follow this example.

We thank the evaluators for their review of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and for the opportunity to provide input through the consultative document for the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. We encourage ITC to fully implement the recommendations provided by the evaluators as we plan for the upcoming three years.

Regarding the 2022-2025 Plan, we are impressed by the level of ambition outlined, and look forward to seeing the concrete targets that will be published in November.

We are interested to see how the themes laid out in the Strategic Plan will be directed geographically, and importantly how competing aims will be prioritised to ensure ITC focusses on its areas of comparative advantage.

We are interested to know how ITC envisages mainstreaming the green agenda. These issues, along with digitalisation, are common to other international organisations, and it would be beneficial to draw out cooperation in these areas, as well as ITC's added value.

We all know that gender is ITC's 'bread and butter', as we would say in the UK. The UK would like to see the ITC's work on mainstreaming gender into its work incorporated more clearly throughout the Plan; we know the good work that is happening but would welcome more detail.

Chair, to conclude, allow me to reiterate the UK's full support for the ITC's ongoing programme of work, and its future ambitions. This is invaluable for supporting MSMEs in developing countries to increase their resilience and prosperity.

Thank you.