

Talking Points

Meeting of the Joint Advisory Group of the International Trade Centre (50th Session) 4 July, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in room S1, WTO

Thank You

I want to thank Executive Director Arancha González and the ITC team for the work done this year to continue honing ITC's focus on results, improve data collection for decision making, strengthen ITC's strategic planning and programmatic approach, promote gender equality and female empowerment, and deliver record levels of technical assistance, capacity support, and market intelligence in support of ITC's mandate to enhance small and medium-sized firms' competitiveness and productivity.

We urge ITC to continue strengthening this promising work.

The U.S. aligns itself with the donor statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany.

Annual Report

The quality of the Annual Report and the recent CCITF report continue to improve with each iteration, communicating more effectively ITC's results across its technical assistance and trade intelligence work.

Given the commendable work that ITC is putting in to evaluations, however, it would be helpful to see more discussion of past and projected evaluations either in an Appendix or the text of the Annual Report.

Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Learning:

We appreciate the emphasis ITC is placing on strategic planning, evaluation and learning. Development is not just an aspiration; it's also a discipline. Since the new evaluation policy was adopted in 2015, ITC has begun to train staff to better use evaluation results to adjust its work

and inform future design. ITC has begun to create the feedback loop needed to ensure that what it learns is built into everything it does.

The challenge will be to institutionalize this policy to ensure that ITC uses the best available evidence to steer its work, remains flexible enough to make mid-course corrections, identify and scale up what works, and, most critically, be fully transparent and accountable.

The U.S. commends ITC for engaging the UNEG/DAC Professional Peer Review mechanism to review and endorse ITC's evaluation function. We look forward to learning more about what best practices were identified and what lessons were learned, both the successes and challenges, and how this information will be incorporated into ITC's activities.

ITC has set, and in most cases met, more ambitious and realistic targets, started important work to ensure every project is counting the same things in the same way, and using new and innovative approaches to measure outcomes and impact. We urge you to continue this work to improve the quality of the data.

An evaluation more than a year ago of the Trade, Climate Change and Environment Program found "the synergy among individual projects and the coherence between operations in countries are not evident". Finalizing the program-specific "theories of change" for the remaining program areas will support important work you have already begun to address this gap.

Over the past year, we have very much appreciated that ITC sought stakeholder feedback on the 2016 Operational Plan and engaged stakeholders in discussions on implementation of the SDGs, ITC's theory of change at various levels, and its work on evaluation. We look forward to further discussion on the linkages between the corporate scorecard, program logframe, and the finalized program specific theories of change.

We also hope that we can be involved early on in the work on the next Strategy and the 2017 Operational Plan.

Partnership

Effective Trade Capacity Building works. A large body of empirical evidence demonstrates that TCB assistance increases exports, stimulates investment, increases productivity, and generates significantly higher revenues and incomes for enterprises and workers connected to international value chains.

Since 2002, USAID has partnered with ITC to design and implement developing country training activities to improve trade capacity building and trade promotion capabilities.

ITC is an increasingly important partner of the US in our Aid for Trade work. In 2015 and again in 2016, we expanded this partnership to include work on Non-Tariff Measures in the Middle East and North Africa, Ethical Fashion in Haiti, and Trade Facilitation.

I also want to thank ITC and ED Gonzalez personally for your leadership on gender equality and the empowerment of women, your early and strong engagement in the Geneva Gender Champions initiative co-led by U.S. Ambassador Hamamoto and DG Michael Moller, your partnership on International Women's Day events, and the launch of the SheTrades initiative in support of the Call to Action to bring one million women entrepreneurs to market by 2020.

We look forward to working with ITC in the year ahead to ensure the organization continues to sharpen its focus and deliver ever more impressive results in support of the SMEs who need it most.

Thank you.