

CHAIR SUMMARY JAG 2018

Excellencies, distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This morning, I said that the JAG was a platform for the trade and development community – for you – to examine ITC’s work, commend the good, and highlight areas for improvement.

And this is exactly what we have done today.

We first heard from UNCTAD Secretary-General Kituyi and WTO Deputy Director-General Agah about how their respective organizations have worked with ITC to enhance the impact of trade as a driver of economic growth, development, and job creation. The three organizations continue to collaborate on trade information, statistical analysis, and implementing solutions to enable micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to trade. Both SG Kituyi and DDG Agah reminded us of the importance of multilateral cooperation to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing the political challenges that many of us confront today.

From ITC Executive Director Arancha Gonzalez, we heard about how ITC was accelerating forward, with \$100 million in new extra-budgetary funding commitments agreed last year. She explained how the growing size and longer duration of projects would allow for improved delivery and contribute to enduring impact on the ground. We heard how partnerships – with governments, international agencies and the private sector - were playing a greater role in much of what ITC does. This is true for everything from developing new market intelligence tools to fostering South-South links for trade and investment as well as technical expertise. And we heard about how ITC was acting at home to foster innovation, improve risk management and evaluation systems, and work towards gender parity.

Our two special guests highlighted the importance of supporting youth entrepreneurs for private sector development, growth, and job creation – even in difficult conditions. Hala Zarrok, who runs Mariage, a Libyan events management company, and Michael Ocansey, of AgroCenta, a startup working to empower Ghanaian farmers through digital trade, inspired us with their stories and their energy.

Regarding ITC’s work in 2017, I don’t want to go through the entire discussion, but I do want to point to a few recurring themes.

Just about every delegation that took the floor expressed support and appreciation for ITC’s trade-related technical assistance. The specific areas of work singled out for praise ranged from ITC’s trade

and market intelligence tools like the Global Trade Helpdesk and Sustainability Map, to the non-tariff measure surveys and country-specific projects to boost value addition, export competitiveness, and environmental sustainability. ITC was also praised for its focus on priority countries.

Several delegations praised ITC's effective advocacy and thought leadership on women's economic empowerment, through the SheTrades initiative and the process that led to the Buenos Aires Declaration on Women and Trade. Many called for further scaling up the SheTrades initiative. One delegation urged ITC to explore the development of a SheTrades certification to both incentivize and reward good practice.

Multiple delegations said that ITC analysis, in publications such as the *SME Competitiveness Outlook*, had positioned ITC as a reference for policymakers in developed and developing countries.

While commending ITC for its evaluation work, some delegations offered suggestions for how ITC could further refine its theories of change to increase responsiveness to local circumstances. ITC was also urged to build on its momentum towards gender parity at all professional levels.

Many delegations pointed to the importance of Window 1 funding, with some announcements of future contributions to ITC.

On the Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report, ITC presented the key learnings from 2017 evaluation work, and explained how ITC was using this evidence base to inform future interventions and enhance accountability to funders and beneficiaries alike.

Today we heard about how ITC is leveraging technology to help MSMEs trade. Many of you mentioned the Global Trade Helpdesk. And we just learned about the Market Price information tool, which will provide free access to real-time price and market data to help MSMEs to stay updated on market movements.

In my view, today's meeting confirmed that ITC is an organization that continuously engages with its stakeholders and beneficiaries to deliver new and innovative initiatives to make trade sustainable and inclusive.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your continued trust, support and engagement with ITC.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your Chair.

Thank you.