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## 52<sup>ND</sup> JOINT ADVISORY GROUP (JAG) MEETING

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10 JULY 2018, GENEVA – WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION, ROOM S1

Statement by the Chair of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session:  
H. E. Mr. Alvaro Cedeño Molinari, Ambassador and Permanent  
Representative of Costa Rica to the World Trade Organization

H. E. Ms. Frances Lisson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the World Trade Organization, the Outgoing Chair,  
Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,  
Mr. Yonov Frederick Agah, Deputy Director-General of WTO,  
Ms. Arancha González, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre (ITC),

Excellencies, distinguished participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Again I welcome you all to the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of ITC's Joint Advisory Group. I am honoured to chair the JAG this year, and I thank Ambassador Lisson for her warm welcome.

Within the Geneva trade community, ITC's role is to make trade happen. Transforming the rules that we discuss in this house into tangible benefits and opportunities for women and men. By building MSME competitiveness, ITC enables trade, innovation, and business to flourish. At a time when the benefits of multilateralism and trade are being increasingly questioned, ITC does not just tell us of the benefits, it shows us the impact. When MSMEs are able to take fuller advantage of open international markets and domestic policy reforms, the resulting growth is more equitable and inclusive.

Through its projects on the ground, its trade and market intelligence tools, and its thought leadership, ITC contributes to our joint goal of making trade work for all. For example, when ITC makes it possible for coffee producers from Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia to get higher prices through online auctions, or supports Colombian cocoa farmers to earn price premiums for sustainable production practices, it underscores the symbiotic relationship between good trade and sustainable development.



To do this, ITC works with a wide range of partners, many of in this room today. In my own country, Costa Rica, ITC has worked with the trade and investment promotion agencies to help them measure and improve their own performance. And because they're pretty good at what they do, ITC brokered triangular cooperation through which our investment promotion agency was able to share best practices with its counterparts in four African countries.

ITC's Annual Report gives you a snapshot of what ITC delivered in 2017. The results, in my view, are quite exceptional. But I shall leave this for Executive Director Arancha González to tell you why.

Before closing, allow me to run through how today's meeting will proceed. First, we will take stock of ITC's work in 2017 and hear how ITC is already delivering good things in 2018.

First, we will hear from Secretary-General Kituyi and Deputy Director-General Agah, who are not only ITC's parents, but ITC's partners in the Geneva trade community. After, we shall hear from Arancha González, who needs no introduction.

And then we shall witness the signing of an MOU with the three agencies of a new tool that was launched at the WTO Ministerial Conference in 2017 – the Global Trade Helpdesk or “helpmetrade” as it is commonly known.

Next, we will have the opportunity to focus on youth entrepreneurship, a key priority in many of our countries to reduce high levels of unemployment among young people. We have two guest speakers with us – Mrs. Hala Zarrok, Founder of “Mariage”, an event management company in Tripoli, Libya, and Mr. Michael Ocansey – who will draw on their own experiences to tell us what it takes for young entrepreneurs to succeed.

Fourth, we will have an opportunity to discuss the Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report that will be presented by ITC's Independent Evaluation Unit.

And finally, we will be launching the Market Price Information platform, a new web application developed by ITC.

This meeting today is the platform for you, the trade and development community, to examine ITC's work, commend the good, and highlight areas for improvement. I thank you for your attention.