

**Common donor statement to Joint Advisory Group (JAG) of the International Trade Centre (ITC) on
26 June 2015**

This statement is being delivered on behalf of Australia, Canada, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and my own country Germany, in our capacity of donor coordinator for ITC.

Madam Chairperson,

This year is of special importance for international efforts to foster sustainable development, with the Financing for Development-Conference taking place in Addis Ababa in mid-July and the Post-2015 Summit following at the end of September in New York. One important element of the discussions in these fora will be how to better integrate the three dimensions of sustainable economic development: namely the economic, the social and the environmental dimension.

This year will also include a number of occasions which will allow us to focus in more deeply on how trade can support inclusive and sustainable growth and economic development, starting with the 5th Global Review of Aid-for-Trade, which will take place next week here in Geneva, and ending with the 10th Ministerial Conference of the WTO to be held in Nairobi in December this year.

Moving to the Post-2015 Development Agenda brings with it the requirement of assessing - and potentially adjusting - the way ITC operates in support of the development goals. The ITC has undergone two major evaluations over the last years: The independent evaluation - which we discussed at an informal JAG meeting at the beginning of this year - and an evaluation by the UN Office of Internal Oversight. Both evaluations have produced valuable recommendations, which - if implemented properly - will help ITC to improve the way it operates internally and to position itself for supporting the implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda.

We are encouraged by the way ITC has embraced and made use of these recommendations. The new strategic plan for the period 2015 - 2017, the operational plan for the year 2015 and the management response to the independent evaluation presented to the informal JAG at the beginning of the year

attest to that. We also welcome the tools ITC has developed to track the status of the implementation of the recommendations. We look forward to discussing the steps taken or planned to implement these recommendations during today's meeting.

Furthermore, we welcome the measures ITC has taken in order to make the strategic planning processes and the work around strengthening the results frameworks and the focus on impact more consultative and inclusive. The informal CCITF meeting, which was held last week and focused on ITC's strategic planning, the operationalization of the programmatic approach and the evaluation were much appreciated in this regard.

Madam Chairperson,

After these opening remarks of a more general nature, I would now like to use this opportunity to focus on some more specific issues:

No. 1: ITC's Strategy:

ITC's new strategy is designed to make ITC's work more focused and more results oriented. It also highlights the need for a strong integration of the diverse activities and projects through the implementation of a programmatic approach. The strategy also recognizes the need to refine the way the organization measures its results and impact.

Supporting SMEs to make them more competitive and allow them to integrate into value chains remains crucial for inclusive sustainable development. We support ITC's commitment to focus on the most economically vulnerable countries and to provide entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly for women, young people and poor communities. As the development agenda becomes more integrated, donors welcome the move towards a stronger focus on multi-stakeholder partnerships.

ITC has come a long way to becoming more results- focused and impact-driven over the last years. We do, however, still see opportunities to improve this area further. The development of theories of change in the roll-out of the programmatic approach is of utmost importance in this regard. Furthermore the tools used to measure impact of capacity building initiatives need enhancement,

moving from subjective self-assessments to more objective methodologies. We look forward to opportunities to engage into these discussions.

No. 2: The Annual Report:

The annual report provides, in a very comprehensive manner, a good overview of the results of ITC's work. This is the first annual report on the work of ITC in which the organization was led entirely by Arancha González as Executive Director. Her motto after entering office in September 2013 has been "to do more and to do it better". And our assessment is that the Executive Director and the entire organization have indeed delivered on this. ITC has managed *more* funds, it has delivered *more* technical assistance and capacity building and it has attracted *more* users to its analytical and information tools.

Whereas a new strategic plan has already been adopted, the reporting period of the annual report is of course still on the old strategic plan. We therefore look forward to learning more about how projects and activities were realigned and which activities have been phased out as a result of the implementation of the new strategic plan in the next annual report.

Madam Chairperson,

For next year, we also hope to see even more clearly how the overall resources available to ITC – both from regular contributions via the UN and WTO as well as the voluntary contributions coming through the ITC Trust Fund – are being put to use and actually help the organization to achieve results.

Let me close by thanking Arancha González and her team for the hard work and the openness to learn from others - be it evaluators, SMEs in countries and the international partners. We look forward to working with ITC and other partners to further strengthen our collaborative efforts in support of sustainable development.

Thank you.