

Statement by the Group of Friends of MSMEs at the WTO.

51° JAG, Monday, July 10, S1-WTO

Executive Director Arancha González,

Ambassador Lisson,

Ambassadors, colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I make this statement in my capacity as coordinator of the Group of Friends of MSMEs at the WTO. We thank the ITC for the information provided and the preparation of the Annual Report 2016.

This Group was formed with the aim of working together to emphasize the importance of the role and issue of MSMEs in promoting inclusive and sustainable growth in trade.

This is an open and informal group consisting of 24 Members at this moment, including developing and developed Economies, with a diverse regional representation. The discussions organized by our group have been of an open-ended and many WTO Members have participated.

We believe that efforts at the multilateral level in support of domestic policies and development strategies to increase MSMEs' participation in international trade are necessary.

In fact, the WTO has an important role to play in making international trade more inclusive and supporting the participation of all possible enterprises in global trade flows, including MSMEs.

We also take note of the focus placed by the ITC in empowering small- and medium-sized enterprises. The group recognizes the ITC's efforts to connect these enterprises to the international value chains with the purpose of increasing the income and opportunities for all, especially women, young people and poor communities around the world.

In a world where MSMEs constitute more than 90% of enterprises, employ nearly 70% of the global workforce, and contribute to more than 50% of the world's GDP, they can in fact become the engines that sustain growth for long-term prosperity in developing countries.

The ITC supports the work of our Group, and as the only international agency fully dedicated to strengthen the competitiveness and development of small- and medium-sized enterprise exporters, we need its know-how.

It is our hope that in the future the ITC can expand its work to micro-sized enterprise exporters as well, and integrate them to a work program that has already proven to be outstanding and life changing.

Thank you for your attention.