

Thank you Chair,

At the outset, we would like to congratulate you on the chairmanship of the Joint Advisory Group and thank the outgoing Chairman, H.E Ms. Patricia O'Brien for her efforts overseeing the 49th session. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the opportunity to discuss the work of the ITC and to contribute to its strategic direction in going forward. We are further pleased to be joined today with our colleagues from the Qatar Development Bank to take part in the proceedings of the Joint Advisory Group. The ITC has played a critical role in supporting the work of the Geneva Trade Community and we commend the multi-stakeholder approach it has adopted and for the concerted priority that has been allocated to issues concerning developing countries, LDCs, and small and vulnerable economies. To this end, allow me to congratulate the ITC for the substantial progress achieved in 2015 and the first half of 2016.. we found that the annual report showcased ITC's efforts in a clear and consistent manner, confirming that the ITC is on track to bring its Strategic Plan to full fruition. Furthermore, we recognize the ITC for utilizing objective impact assessments in realizing its projects and the significant progress made in the six focus areas of the Strategic Plan.

Chair, I would like to applaud the level of competence and professionalism displayed by the ITC's staff in our joint endeavors and on the able leadership of the executive director, Ms. Arancha Gonzalez. We find the dedication and conviction of the ITC's staff and senior management as truly exemplary. The ITC holds great importance to the members of the Geneva trade community, and we would consider the relationship built between Qatar and the ITC is of a truly special nature.

Over the last five years, ITC's expanding relationship with Qatar was built on a broad range of initiatives and technical assistance programs including programs covering capacity building in Market Analysis, training on enterprise competitiveness and has provided value added services to SME's. We expect our relationship to further strengthen with the signing of a MOU between the ITC and the Qatar Development Bank... in this regard we extend our sincere gratitude to the ITC for the indispensable support provided.

In late 2015 Qatar hosted the ITC's 'World Export Development Forum' under the theme 'sustainable trade: innovate, invest, internationalize'. Speakers addressed the unique challenges faced by SME's in developing countries and economies in transition and the event managed to raise 80 million\$ in Business to Business deals with most being south south trade and investment. This event showcased the admirable efforts of the ITC in facilitating these deals and we thank them for the integral role in making this event a success.

Looking to the future, we encourage further work in helping SMEs benefit from the multilateral trading system, including in areas such as non-tariff barriers, standardization regulations and access to finance. Initiatives similar to the 'Trade Dialogs' held by the WTO earlier this year could benefit SME's in conducting their trade operations and to discuss how to better their engagement with the multilateral trading system. Thus we would recommend a broader multi-stakeholder approach with Small to Medium enterprises in developing countries, particularly those from LDC's and SVE's. The relationship between trade and development is part of a heritage we all share, we encourage the ITC to further develop the understanding of this relationship particularly through examining the application and adherence to the Sustainable development goals in the negotiating function of the WTO, this would help in bringing alignment to discussions in the different multilateral fora.

As noted by our prime minister in the opening session of the World Export Development Forum, the sustainability of international trade flows must go hand-in-hand with innovative policies and appropriate institutional arrangements. We find that the ITC is well situated play a crucial role in making this a reality.

To conclude, we look forward in continuing to support the ITC's work both in Geneva and elsewhere and we wish the ITC a fruitful and productive JAG.

Thank you,