

ITC Joint Donor Statement (delivered by UK)

Dear Chair,

Ambassadors,

Director General Azevedo,

Secretary General Kituyi,

Arancha,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you all today on behalf of the main donors to the ITC Trust Fund.

The ITC has been a tireless promoter for entrepreneurship in developing countries for more than a half-century. It is a global champion for the crucial role that trade can play as a source of job creation and finance for inclusive growth.

It's worth remembering what is at stake. OECD economists have shown that developing countries' exports grow by \$8 for every dollar in aid for trade. For the poorest countries, the return on each dollar is twentyfold. These results are impressive, but we can do better.

The ITC's work shows that we can, and must always, strive for wider and deeper impact from every penny of aid: increasing the inclusiveness of growth through an expansion of trade for the benefit of the poor.

And we mustn't forget the bigger picture. The ITC not only helps connect SMEs to markets and global value chains. You also help governments make national and

regional trade policies, regulatory frameworks and market access opportunities work for small businesses. Creating more opportunities for growth empowers women, youth and vulnerable communities. Opportunity, growth and empowerment are all key parts of the Global Goals.

As the ITC's annual report makes clear, you are now operating in a very difficult funding environment. The demands for ITC assistance are growing, as are the expectations of recipients and donors alike for better impact, value for money and transparency.

Despite these challenges, the report depicts an organisation going from strength to strength. We see strong delivery despite the smallest overall budget since 2013. There is a wide client base that expresses near-unanimous approval of your activities. You have met or exceeded many of your corporate strategic targets.

Importantly, your internal coherence and results story has shown considerable improvement. You've made good efforts during this last year to tell a strong impact story, and we expect such efforts will continue going forward. We can now much more clearly see the links between your project portfolio and the ten Global Goals that are listed at the outset of your Annual Report.

The key points in the ITC calendar – including SheTrades Global and the World Export Development Forum – have been well-attended, bringing governments and businesses ever closer. ITCs profile is at its most visible in recent memory and its

voice as a champion for trade's ability to empower and improve lives is a welcome one on the world stage.

Looking to the future, the 2017 ITC Operational Plan, and biennium Strategic Plan covering 2015-2017 are robust; building on your achievements and lessons learnt from implementation in previous years. We are ready to support you to enhance these Plans, in order to smooth their review and approval through the relevant committees at the UN in New York, and here at the WTO.

The Annual Report also shows a clear willingness to work with partners: from those on the ground in developing countries, such as import promotion agencies, to other UN organisations and the private sector. This openness to partnership is a critical ingredient to ensuring that money flowing through Geneva creates more synergies, avoids overlaps, and reaches beneficiaries who actually engage in cross-border trade in a manner best attuned to their needs.

There are a few points we'd like to highlight for further work, where we believe additional improvement can lead to even greater results.

First, we encourage ITC to continue the process of internal reform. In 2015, as you took an active lead in shaping the Global Goals, the ITC also re-shaped its portfolio into defined programme baskets. In 2016, you gave these programmes theories of change, and re-organised your internal structure. Now, in 2017, we hope to see all of this work come back as even stronger evidence of your impact, clearer theories of change, more coherence across projects, and a more secure funding base.

Second, we also encourage you to improve the link between, on the one hand, your daily support to SMEs and their supporting institutions, with on the other hand, developing countries making better use of trade preferences. ITC has the data, the connections and the expertise to assist developing country SMEs to tap into the benefits offered them by preferential access to some of the world's most lucrative markets.

Third, encourage a continued commitment to innovation: not just in your operations, but as a way to harness the creative energies of entrepreneurs. The ITC should continue refining its deliverables and programs, tailoring them to the unique conditions in each beneficiary and localizing strategies for maximum impact.

And fourth, coming back to fundraising and overall delivery, we note with concern the further decline of contributions to Windows 1 of the ITC Trust Fund. We encourage you to keep leveraging as many sources of funding as possible, including in the private sector, while maintaining ambitious but realistic targets for your key indicators.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate our confidence in Arancha, her management team and ITC's trade experts who are working tirelessly day in and day out to help businesses in developing countries trade more and prosper. We commend the work so far, but do so with the highest expectations of even greater results moving forward.

Thank you.