

Joint Advisory Group Meeting (JAG), 14 – 15 December 2009

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS OF PATRICIA R. FRANCIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ITC

Mr. Chairman, Ambassador Francis,
Mr. Lamy, Mr. Draganov,
Ministers, Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to the 43rd Joint Advisory Group meeting. Over the next two days we will review ITC's work during 2009 and set out priorities for 2010.

Recovery

At the 2008 JAG, we were at the beginning of a crisis, and the World Bank was predicting a contraction in trade of 2.1% in 2009. Unfortunately, we did not know that this was optimistic. Some of us have not faced such financial insecurity in our working lives. Many governments are in crisis, with export revenues down by up to 50%, rising debt levels, the loss of jobs and limited or no reserves to cushion their economies.

And with the potential crises in climate, the environment, energy and food – what we have now is the perfect storm, and the goal of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), is further from sight.

Recovery will not be quick, nor will it happen at a steady pace, as was explained earlier by both Mr. Lamy and Mr. Draganov, and any signs of optimism are far from evident for those who need the 'green shoots' the most.

There is still potential

However times of challenge can of course be times of opportunity, with the right policy mix and the courage and rigour to implement – it's not only about "doing the right thing" but about "doing the thing right."

Globalization has the potential to deliver sustainable development, and, as we heard in Ban Ki Moon's statement at the WTO Ministerial Conference, "Expanding international trade remains a key component of the development agenda of the United Nations".

In this context, to achieve sustainable development, we will need to act differently. Today, return on investment needs to be measured by the triple bottom line of social, environmental and economic gains – yielding development that pays equal due to people, planet and prosperity. We must review existing practices – and really think and act differently. For even practices that work well for us as individuals, may have the potential to impact negatively on the future. We must acknowledge the need for compromise to reach consensus. The views of all stakeholders must be considered when scarce resources are being spent.

Our contribution to the recovery must be to achieve greater levels of equity.

Network thinking

We must learn to think as a community and operate as a network. More than at any other time in history, we are not limited by geography. We have the potential to forge communities with those who are like minded regardless of where they live, and we will be forming more numerous and more diverse networks.

We can use these networks to learn more about and from each other – and will therefore be well placed to review existing systems in a mutually beneficial manner. The leading countries and companies of the future will be those that have looked at how they operate as part of a wider system. But being network and community minded is still not enough to succeed, we also have to be competitive and understand markets.

What, therefore, are the critical building blocks of market success?

Long term strategy – while exit strategies for the crisis are important, they must be linked to broader strategies to be effective.

Agility – the flexibility to respond to changes and the ability to innovate with relevant diversification, new markets and product adaptation. And as this meeting coincides with important deliberations at the Copenhagen Climate Conference – we are highly aware that agility, grounded in long term goals is essential.

Partnerships – regional, intra-regional, and public-private alliances will ensure mutual agreement on the long term goals and objectives and multi stakeholder buy-in.

These are the essential components of maintaining competitiveness – planning, flexibility and collaboration – which when implemented will lead to inclusive sustainable development.

This is 'doing the right thing right'

ITC's progress in 2009

Strategy

We are now into the second year of our Strategic Planning cycle. Having completed the change management process, our focus is on quality, delivery, results and impact.

Last year we spoke of the challenges of scaling up large programmes. Not only have we done that but we have set up a dedicated unit to manage and build best practice across the organization with these projects.

One of our objectives is to have a well defined results based management culture in the organization. This takes time, effort and resources. To make our project planning more consistent, we have begun to implement the recommendations from our study on Project Cycle Management. We now have templates for different steps of the project approval and monitoring process. A Project Quality Assurance Committee is also in place to peer assess project plans while the Senior Management Committee (SMC) is monitoring progress.

The MDG's related to poverty reduction, gender and environmental goals are now consistently mainstreamed within our projects where appropriate. While stand alone programmes will continue in these areas, mainstreaming and measuring are things we are committed to. Following the success of our poverty reduction programmes EPRP (Export-led Poverty Reduction Programme) and Ethical Fashion, we will be launching our new Women and Trade and Environment and Climate Change Programmes in 2010. These, we believe, will establish best practice for TRTA (trade-related technical assistance) in gender and the environment as we have done in our poverty reduction programmes.

Agility

The protracted change management process is over, and we are now better able to design and deliver to achieve more lasting impact, and to monitor and report our results.

Dedicated resources in our regional offices have been put in place to build knowledge and understanding of the needs in our client countries. The aim is to reflect this in our design of TRTA programmes. This oversight of our technical programmes by the regional offices ensures that opportunities and linkages are maximized, duplications reduced and client relationships better managed.

Timely provision of global public goods, such as monthly trade data, allows our clients to be more relevant.

Partnerships

The implementation and publishing of our Client Survey for the third year is a key means of ensuring transparency in our performance, and better responsiveness in our service offer. The draft findings were uploaded to our JAG website this morning. Preliminary findings show that your satisfaction with our overall performance is improving steadily from 38% in 2007, 43% in 2008, to 56% this year. We are improving but clearly there is still work to be done

Members of SMC have been assigned to be managers of specific relationships with partner organizations to ensure maximum coherence

In this year alone we have worked with WTO, UNCTAD, World Bank, UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Organization), EIF (European Investment Fund), FLO (Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International), FAO (UN Food and Agriculture Organization), as well as the CEB Cluster which has already been referred to by Mr. Lamy and Mr. Draganov. By working with organizational and regional partners we create a multiplier effect, leading to greater efficiencies and effectiveness.

ITC is growing - in line with our strategy, and our partners – we deliver to your needs.

The JAG 2009

The primary responsibility of this JAG is to review the 2008 Annual Report, the Preliminary Report on 2009 activities, our Consolidated Programme Document for 2010 and our Strategic Plan for 2010-2013.

As I am sure some of you will have read these documents ahead of time, the official documents have been given to you today on a USB key – part of our efforts towards a greener JAG, in keeping with the WTO Ministerial Conference.

Let me take this opportunity to apologize for the late French translation of our documents. I want to assure our francophone friends that this lack of performance will be reflected in our procurement of translation and editorial services for 2010.

We have also supplied each delegation with one copy of the printed documents, and ask that if you do not need them, please leave them with us and we will use them at other meetings.

You will have also received a bag from our Ethical Fashion poverty reduction project with Coop in Uganda and Kenya. One bag, nine styles and 2,500 women in Uganda and Kenya now have a job through this link between 9 communities and the private sector.

As you go out to lunch you will notice a banner display by the café showing part of the story of our integrated work in Uganda. By creating a strong overarching National Export Strategy, taking big goals into account (gender and environment), a sector can be revitalized with new possibilities.

In addition to this – after the close of the JAG sessions covering our official documentation – we will have a two hour round table discussion about export strategy and its relevance to Aid For Trade, trade development and economic growth. Representatives from the public and private sector from three countries where we have worked on export strategies, Jamaica, Uganda and Romania, will be taking part. This workshop will show how a strategy, that has key stakeholder buy in, can open up new opportunities at both country and sector levels.

Thank you

Before I introduce the 2008 Annual Report and the Preliminary Report on 2009 activities, I would like to thank you, our partners, for your support this year which is vital to achieving the goal of Export Impact for Good.

The WTO initiative on Aid for Trade has provided an invaluable framework for our TRTA programmes over the last two years. It has also shepherded in a more strategic and structured working relationship with the WTO, which is reflected in:

- our unprecedented participation in the WTO Ministerial,
- the new WTO/ITC/EIF least developed country (LDC) Accession programme
- the new coordinated training with ITC and others divisions in WTO
- the budget recommended for the 2010-2011 biennium.

I wish to thank the Director General, his secretariat, Deputy Directors and staff for their support and cooperation.

Coherence is vital for member states, and under the leadership of Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, important work has been done with the CEB cluster of trade related organizations, resulting in greater alignment of our work with UNCTAD and other UN organizations. During the year we have also been working together on:

- the Empretec programme where ITC provides enterprise competitiveness training
- the development of a comprehensive trade facilitation programme under the Aid for Trade initiative with WTO, UNCTAD and the World Bank
- the identification and reporting of Non Tariff Measures in six pilot countries which we intend to expand in 2010
- Creative Industries, which is the subject of our latest issue (3/2009) of the Trade Forum magazine
- in many other areas as reported in our Annual Report and mentioned in Deputy Secretary General Draganov's speech.

I also wish to thank Mr. Supachai, his Deputy and secretariat, Directors and staff for their continued support and cooperation.

LDC's are the primary focus of ITC's work. We were therefore very pleased to welcome the Executive Director of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), Dorothy Tembo. This year we have worked with the board and Ms. Tembo's team and are happy we have now moved to implementation. We thank Ms. Tembo and the team for their cooperation and look forward to our continued close relationship in 2010.

ITC has also seen greater levels of collaboration with international partners. Through programmes such as the All ACP/EU (Africa Caribbean Pacific – European Union) Commodities programme which

has demonstrated how each of us can play to our strengths. I wish to thank all of these agencies and despite start up challenges we are today working very well together.

Our new regional programmes in Africa have brought new meaning to partnership with organizations like the African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and several Regional Economic Commissions. We thank them for their active partnership.

Our TPO (trade promotion organization) partners have worked with us on the development of a comprehensive benchmarking scheme and we thank them for their time and effort in developing this tool.

The G77 and China, the LDC, LLDC (landlocked developing countries) and SIDS (small island developing states), who are the main target client group of ITC, have supported us along with other regional groups like GRULAC (Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries) in our bid for additional Regular Budget resources for the new biennium. We hope we will be successful and wish to acknowledge and thank you for your support.

Our traditional donors and strategic partners who we thank for making our work possible.

And from our new donors Australia and Romania thank you for your confidence.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, the real meaning of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is country ownership. While we have seen this expressed by increased contribution from China and Mexico to execute work in their countries and with other countries in the South, we have also seen a growing number of countries that are contributing significantly to the work programmes in their countries. These include Cambodia, Mali, Jamaica, Brazil and Egypt. We believe that this is an indication of the countries commitment and to increasing the potential of real capacity building.

Finally I want to thank the Acting Deputy Executive Director, the Directors, Chiefs and staff of ITC for their hard work and dedication. We would not be sitting here today to report on the positive performance of the organization without you. Thank you team.

[ITC's delivery in 2010](#)

Aid for Trade is the framework of our work – work that is even more relevant in light of the crisis. While LDC's, LLDC's and SIDS will remain the focus of our work - there is still much work to be done to begin to address the needs of member states in transition economies, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Our aim remains, therefore, to achieve export success for the private sector in developing and transition economies. We welcome you to the 43rd JAG, and look forward to hearing your views as to how we can best work with you in the future.

By working in partnership to 'do the right thing right' - we can build inclusive sustainable development.

I would like to thank Mr. Lamy and Mr. Draganov for their attendance here this morning.