Statement of Canada to ITC Joint Advisory Group, 30 June 2011

Merci M. le Président

C’est avec beaucoup de plaisir que nous prenons la parole aujourd’hui. Nous partageons notre voix aux autres pays pour apprécier le travail important du CCI, et nous avons l’honneur d’assister aujourd’hui et demain pour cette 46e session du groupe consultatif commun. Nous apprécions les présentations de ce matin sur le rapport annuel et le budget 2012.

We appreciate the efforts of Patricia Francis, her management team, and the ITC staff for their ongoing work in delivering high-quality and demand-driven programming, and in preparing the inputs to the Joint Advisory Group.

Overall, we note with satisfaction the efforts of ITC in 2011 in delivering its programming against specific targets, as captured on page 14 of the Annual Report. The programming remains broadly in line with the institution’s mandate, which we continue to support. We emphasize the ongoing importance of focusing on activities oriented towards the poorest and most vulnerable countries, as well as the importance of showing tangible export results for small and medium enterprises, which should remain ITC’s ultimate beneficiaries.

The Annual Report for 2011 provides a useful overview of ITC’s operations, activities and budget. Its content and presentation continue to improve, which is testament to progress the institution has made in communicating effectively, both with regard to presentation of information and transparency achieved for corporate documents and enhanced accessibility of TRTA information. The continued support of regular budget resources for this function is encouraged.

Initiatives related to a sustainable development approach, such as women in trade, trade and environment, and a focus on poverty reduction, are helping ITC to integrate these
core principles across its programming. We urge ITC to continue these efforts and assure them of our full support in this regard.

We welcome in particular the Annual Report’s focus on showcasing development results from ITC’s work. Notably, we welcome the hard work undertaken by the organization on rolling out results-based management. Efforts on training, project quality assurance and evaluation are starting to pay dividends, and ITC is en route to becoming a model of good practice in RBM in the field of trade capacity building. We commend ITC for establishing a corporate logical framework, as articulated in its strategic plan 2012-2015. In our view this will help to set the organization on an even stronger path to demonstrating results and value for money. Nevertheless, while much has been achieved on RBM, further efforts are still needed to ensure each program and project is linked to appropriate outcomes, and measured against relevant indicators with targets and baselines. Only a coherent approach across the agency will allow it to faithfully communicate the positive change its activities are making.

Further, we encourage ITC to continue its efforts at moving from smaller project-based initiatives to larger programmes that can bring a more measurable and lasting impact. Multi-donor programmes could be a useful next step in this regard. Canada has gone some way in promoting this approach through our funding of major multi-year programs, including the Programme for Building African Capacity to Trade (PACT) and Enhancing Arab Capacity to Trade (EnACT).

On PACT, we take note of the strong progress in implementation. The programme has started to bear fruit, and has helped ensure that trade remains a central focus of the work of the three partner Regional Economic Communities. As the continent moves increasingly towards a regional-based approach, ITC’s ongoing involvement can help ensure the interests of exporting SMEs are taken into consideration.

We are also pleased to note that EnACT has started delivering tangible results, with a focus on export-led job creation, particularly for youth and women in partner countries.
ITC has been responsive and flexible in order to stay relevant as a development partner in these highly dynamic times, and we commend them for this.

Canada welcomes the initiative to grow the capacity of trade support institutions in beneficiary countries through the deployment of the benchmarking programme. We recognize the importance of continued regular budgetary support funded in the last and current biennia to make this programme sustainable, such that TSIs can over time gain greater capacity to move their countries’ exports forward.

Regarding governance, over 2011, we found the meetings of the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund to be useful opportunities for member states to receive updates on ITC’s work and to provide strategic direction and oversight, and hope to continue this practice moving forward. We recognize the essential role played by the JAG as well as by ITC’s reporting and engagement with its parent bodies in providing feedback and direction to ITC’s budget and programmes. Reporting from the JAG back to the WTO and UNCTAD should be undertaken as early as possible order to enable timely updates of ITC’s activities and results.

Finally, in our role as ITC donor coordinator, we look forward to working closely with other donor countries, with ITC client countries and with the ITC secretariat to help enable the organization to fulfill its mandate in an effective and efficient manner.

I thank you Chair.