Thank you Mr. Chairman, and congratulations for your selection as the Chair of the Joint Advisory Group.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Finland would wish to start by thanking the ITC senior management and staff for the work well done over the past year. We are particularly pleased by the development results showcased by ITC’s work on the organization’s focus areas and by ITC’s ability to provide a response, in line with the organization’s mandate and core competencies, to some of the emerging global challenges and opportunities. Here, we would wish to extend our thanks to ITC’s partners – the private sector, the governments and the agencies and other – without whom the results yielded could not have materialized.

We are also pleased with the progress made by ITC in strategic planning, Results-Based Management and reporting. The Corporate Logframe, if appropriately implemented, can well be expected to become an important tool not only for ITC but also for the partners and beneficiaries as well the donors in our respective planning and monitoring processes, and when strategizing for work to be done in partnership with and complementing to ITC’s work.

Finland’s new Development Policy Program is human rights-based and seeks to promote gender-equality, reduction of income disparities and climate sustainability. Finland’s development policy will under the program focus on four areas, namely: (i) Supporting development towards human rights-based, democratic and responsible societies; (ii) Developing inclusive green economies – and there is a strong focus on the creation of decent jobs here; (iii) Sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection; and (iv) Human development.

The 2011 evaluation of Finland’s Aid for Trade gave us a number of recommendations, including and perhaps most notably that we should focus on reducing fragmentation.

ITC is a – if not the – key multilateral partner to Finland in Aid for Trade. Thus, we pay particular attention to ensuring convergence with the Development Policy Program and adherence to the recommendations of the Aid for Trade evaluation in the planning of our future support to the organization.

In addition to wishing to support ITC in focusing on its mandate and core competencies – in particular in the LDCs and other most vulnerable countries -, we would, thus, wish to see a continuous and further strengthened focus on supporting women entrepreneurs and gender issues on whole; bringing the issue of reduction of income disparities – as a part of the poverty reduction agenda – forward; as well as increased attention paid in the issue of climate sustainability in general and green economies in particular.

For Finland, one way to tackle fragmentation and to enhance results is to support agencies in playing together and to guide them to direct some of the resources coming from us for initiatives that complement the work Finland is doing in the bilateral front. We have worked with ITC on these issues during the spring months and would wish to thank them for their initiative and efforts as well as to encourage them, in particular when it comes to working
together with the UN family, the WTO and the EIF, the World Bank and other agencies and initiatives, to even further strengthen their participatory approaches, and in the areas specific to ITC, their leadership.

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Announcement of trust fund contributions to ITC for 2010-2011**

- Mr. Chairman, as we stated yesterday, ITC is one of the most important multilateral partners to Finland in Aid for Trade. Finland has over the years steadily increased its voluntary contribution to ITC as part of its overall Aid for Trade support. In 2010 and 2011 we both increased our support to ITC and moved from annual commitments to bi-annual commitments.

- In spite of the current financial situation and while Finland’s overall ODA is not increasing, we are planning to retain the upward trend in our support to ITC. While I am not in a position to announce the exact figures for 2012-13 yet – we are hoping to get there before the summer break – we are aiming at a figure a bit higher than the 1.8 million for 2011, dividing this between unearmarked and earmarked is also subject to the on-going talks with the ITC. We are also providing ITC with two additional JPOs in 2012.

- Thank you, Mr Chairman.