Statement of Canada to ITC Joint Advisory Group, 6 May 2013

Thank you Madam Chair, 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 48e session du groupe consultatif commun. Nous apprécions les présentations de ce matin sur le rapport annuel et le budget 2013. Merci and thank you to our chairs past Sr. Franzisco Gordilla (Uruguay) and present Mrs. Karen Pierce (UK).

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, helping developing countries practically towards more sustainable development.

We join all of the members in thanking outgoing executive director Patricia Francis for her energy, dynamism, and dedication. You have achieved a lot by leading the ITC team. Since your arrival in 2006, as a result of your team’s efforts, the ITC is a catalyst for private sector development, measures its results in terms of real impacts, supports women and youth who want to trade, and respects the environment, which produces natural resources which people trade.

En route, the ITC went through many management and institutional reforms. Overall, we are very satisfied with the efforts of ITC in 2012 in delivering its programming towards specific targets, as captured on page 16 of the Annual Report. The programming remains 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 2012 records a wide range of progress in its overview of ITC operations, activities and budget. ITC publications evidence the institution’s effective communication. 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. Useful tools include ITC’s standards map, and work on harnessing innovation for e-commerce. We urge ITC to continue these efforts and assure them of our full support in this.

We welcome the Annual Report’s focus on showcasing development results from ITC’s work by rolling out results-based management. Efforts on training, project quality assurance and evaluation are paying dividends, and ITC is a model of good practice in RBM in the field of trade capacity building.
Further, we encourage ITC to continue its efforts for more larger programmes that can bring a more measurable and lasting impact. Multi-year programmes bring more sustained technical aid and promise sustainable impacts for beneficiaries. Canada has promoted and funded major multi-year programs, including the Programme for Building African Capacity to Trade (PACT) and Enhancing Arab Capacity to Trade (EnACT). Multi-donor programmes could be a useful next step.

On PACT, we take note of the progress in implementation. The programme has helped keep trade a central focus of the work of the three partner Regional Economic Communities in Africa. National efforts, for example in trade facilitation, require regional trade cooperation. ITC’s ongoing involvement can help ensure the interests of exporting SMEs are taken into consideration.

We are also pleased, as noted by Egypt, that EnACT, for Arab countries, has delivered 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.

The government of Canada remains committed. CIDA has disbursed for fiscal year 2012/13, a total of $2.85 million Canadian dollars, comprised of: $1.5 M for the Morocco Export Development program, a follow-up to EnACT; $300,000 for PACT II in Africa; $950,000 for Long term institutional support; and $100,000 earmarked for the upcoming evaluation of ITC.

On monitoring and evaluation, it is important to learn lessons and apply them to fit and update the activities of the organization to reality and needs. Canada supports the upcoming evaluation of ITC, which will assess progress since 2006 and help the next Executive Director chart new programmes. Along with other donors, we look forward to an objective, high quality evaluation, helpful to ITC in meeting new challenges.

As ITC is part of the UN system, more budget cuts are coming. We hope that, as the United Kingdom expressed, that on the basis of its good results, technical and tangible, and measurable by its RBM system – ITC will be able and enabled to make decisions on where to allocate more or less of the funds entrusted to ITC.

Another challenge is the transition to new leadership, here at ITC as well as within the context of WTO and UNCTAD’s next heads. As members, we have an interest in the merit-based process and outcome of selection.

Finally, 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.

Thank you.