Intervention by
H.E. Ambassador Wafaa Bassim
Permanent Representative of Egypt

ITC Joint Advisory Group (JAG)
47th Session (6 – 7 May 2013)
Palais des Nations
Room XVIII
(Door 40)
Mr. Chairman,

Let me first express our thanks to the ITC and the WTO as well as UNCTAD for their longstanding support to Egypt through providing technical assistance and enhancing cooperation with a special focus on trade promotion and export-led institutional support.

The 25th of January revolution, two years ago, has certainly paved the way for new opportunities, and has equally triggered many challenges, namely on the economic front.

Egypt has been affected by deepening stagflation: economic growth in the last three months of 2012 was a mere 2.2 percent, while inflation rose in March 2013 to an annual rate of 7.59 percent. This combination has placed increasing pressure on ordinary Egyptians, who face rising prices for basic goods such as food and medicine, in addition to increasing unemployment, which rose to 13 percent in the last quarter of 2012; and translates to an additional 850,000 jobless people.

There is a need to create a new mainstream for society, a mainstream conscious of the need to encourage investments, prioritize productivity, and raise the welfare standards of the people, ensuring that all Egyptians benefit the rewards of growth and prosperity.

We believe that we will overcome our challenges by generating more job opportunities, and encouraging increased investments in education and capacity building, while addressing horizontal issues including the poverty alleviation among youth and women, as well as the gender inequalities.
Similarly, it is noteworthy to recall the outcome document of the UN General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals of 2010, that emphasized the high priority of the empowerment of women, and called for the acceleration of progress towards women’s participation as critical agents for enhancing agricultural and rural development, that will inevitably lead to the eradication of poverty and hunger, and contribute to the achievement of sustainable developments.

Having said that, I would like to make reference to a Programme that came to an end this year: ‘Enhancing Arab Capacity for Trade - EnACT’; this Programme aimed at reinforcing trade policy, trade promotion and competitiveness in five Arab countries including Egypt.

EnACT had a particular area of focus to streamline the role of women and the youth in export related activities through strengthening capacity building, allowing for export related employment creation, in particular enabling women and youth to be more equipped to secure and sustain their jobs in the export sector.

In addition to that, let me share with you some specific beneficial outcomes, among others, achieved under the EnACT:

- **First**, during 2011, Egyptian companies have indeed benefited from EnACT Programme through creating business connections with their Moroccan and Jordanian counterparts. This process raised the awareness of ways and means to enhance exports through Free Trade Agreements, with a special focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and the COMESA bilateral agreements;
Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations
And other International Organizations in Geneva

- **Second**, market studies were done for the Egyptian engineering sector for two important markets in Africa; Kenya and Uganda. Our Engineering Export Council benefited from these studies and is organising trade missions to these two countries for its member companies;

- **Third**, Work has been pursued with the Food Export Council of Egypt and the Egyptian Organization for Standardization on the Halal sector, where two fronts has been tackled: (i) Improving the Halal certification system and (ii) Finding new markets in Asia for the Egyptian processed foods.

Therefore, **given** the importance and the outcome such programmes bring to Egypt, I would like to seize this opportunity to express our strong willingness in pursuing other ones similar to EnAct which as mentioned, has come to an end, and taking into consideration the historical phase the Arab World is currently witnessing, and the challenges the “Arab Spring countries” are facing with the increased necessity to stimulate their economies and create jobs for millions of unemployed and new entrants in the job market.

Finally, I would like **express** our appreciation to the Canadian government for its generous financial support to the EnACT Programme, and we would be further encouraging them to continue their support for technical assistance in Egypt, and last but not least, special thanks and appreciation go to the outstanding ITC-EnACT team for their efforts.

**Thank you.**