Germany commends ITC on the significant achievements made during the past years, especially progress made within the framework of the Strategic Plan 2010-2013 towards a more strategic and integrated way of working with clients.

We also appreciate that ITC has made significant progress towards embedding results-based management (RBM) and a stronger focus on outputs and impact. We are optimistic that the current ITC evaluation process will confirm our overall positive assessment and will lead to recommendations for further improving the work of ITC.

For Germany, one of the main comparative advantages of ITC is its focus on the private sector, on small and medium enterprises. Strengthening the productivity of local companies, private-sector-investment and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are key to higher economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries. Germany places these issues at the forefront of its bilateral development cooperation as well.

In our Aid-for-trade Strategy, published in 2011, support to business-oriented trade promotion organizations, public institutions and private sector organizations (e.g. associations, export and investment promotion agencies, fair and organic trade organizations) is mentioned as one of the priorities of German Trade-Related Assistance at meso level. At micro level German Aid-for-Trade aims at helping SMEs and small-scale farms to improve their export and marketing capabilities and to use value chains in order to achieve higher levels of value added.

ITC Aft and German Aft can be regarded as complementary. In this context we also would like to thank Director Friedrich von Kirchbach for being available to come to Berlin in March of this year to inform the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development of our Parliament, the German Bundestag, about the work of ITC. We think that this direct communication of ITC to national parliamentarians and politicians is extremely helpful to create a better understanding for the added value of multilateral organizations in general and ITC in particular.

Germany is interested in strengthening our cooperation with ITC in partner countries, thus linking multilateral and bilateral cooperation closer together. In September of 2012, we commissioned our main bilateral implementing agency for technical cooperation, the
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), to support ITC’s work for the development of National Export Strategies (NES) in Kyrgyzstan and Myanmar

- Cooperation between ITC and GIZ in promoting National Export Strategies can build on other positive experiences, gained in the “Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD)” project and the “Standards Map”, a database helping to create transparency regarding private voluntary standards applied across the world with the objective to increase the participation of developing country exporters in sustainable trade. Standards Map enables users to analyze and compare information on nearly 100 voluntary sustainability standards operating in about 200 countries. Our vision is that it will in the near future be the main instrument for information and exchange on private voluntary standards worldwide.

- Another priority from a German point of view is the work of ITC’s “Poor communities and trade programme” and the ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative, which has been evaluated in 2012. We have now invited ITC to present results on the impact of this programme and further insights to a German and international audience at an Aft dialogue event on 3 and 4 June in Hamburg. This event leading up to the Global Review Aft in July in Geneva, will focus on the impact of German and international Aft on poverty reduction and sustainable development and will present best practices in the area of trade-based development cooperation for poverty reduction. I am sure that the experiences of ITC will be very valuable for our bilateral cooperation agencies as well and we look forward to further aligning our work – in the spirit of the Paris Declaration and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation.

- We are aware that one of the main driving forces behind the impressive achievements of ITC has been the Executive Director.

Patricia, I know you don’t like this kind of public praise, and there is not much I can add to my Dutch colleague’s statement anyway. I just simply would like to say “thank you” – for your professionalism, vision, stamina, sense of humour and openness. It has been an immense pleasure to work with you and I wish you all the best for whatever life holds in stock for you after ITC.