

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY UGANDA ON BEHALF OF THE LDCS GROUP DURING THE INFORMAL JOINT ADVISORY GROUP (JAG) MEETING SCHEDULE TO TAKE PLACE ON 26 JANUARY 2015

Madam Chair,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the LDCs group.

Since this is our first meeting in this setting, may I take this opportunity to wish you and the members a happy New Year. We thank you for your report, and that of the Executive Director on the Independent Evaluation.

From our perspective as LDCs, the ITC has been and continues to be very instrumental in the Aid for Trade Agenda. As you all know, the situation of LDCs has not been rosy over the past couple of years. Last year the WTO released a back ground note on market access for LDCs Ref: **WT/COMTD/LDC/W/59**. The paper gave a very clinical account of what is and what is not well. Generally 1% is all we have got as our contribution to world trade in goods, and less for commercial services; a high and increasing trade deficit; with a limited range of export products. This is not, by any means, an enviable situation

Which is why we come to this meeting with confidence because of the work that ITC is doing under the able and determined leadership of Ms. Arancha Gonzalez to try within their mandate, to ameliorate this deplorable situation. Indeed we have seen case studies of reputable success ranging from, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Cambodia, LAO PDR and my own Uganda. All speaking to one issue: building capacity and trade related infrastructure to expand trade opportunities; and one where there is emphasis on Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs). Perhaps this is due to the important recognition of the critical role that SMEs play in employment, poverty reduction, income distribution and empowerment of otherwise disadvantaged groups, including women.

Madam Chair,

Indeed to illustrate my point, allow me recall the three specific interventions in our own backyard: In Bangladesh, it has enabled the IT and IT enabled services sector to strengthen its international brand backed up by reliable companies and institutions that have entered into sustainable business. More than half of the 40 companies assisted reported an increase in exports of services of between 10-20% resulting directly from the program.

In Tanzania, the cotton farmers and the private couldn't be happier. As a result of the ITC support, they are paying more attention to quality control, expanding markets, increasing sales and establishing long term relationships with buyers in Asia. Cotton is a major source of income in many African countries. It provides an income for 40% of the Tanzanian population.

Madam Chair without seeming to belabor the point I will close in on Cambodia, where again we see ITC's role in poverty eradication through linkages to international markets. For several

years, ITC has worked with communities in Cambodia to improve, expand and market silk products. Since 2012, ITC has been implementing the high value silk project as part of the Cambodia export diversification and expansion program. As a result of the support, in 2013, companies received orders from 23 buyers and concluded direct sales of silk jewels, fashion accessories and scarves.

Madam Chair,

On the evaluation of ITC: Unlike others that we have seen before, this is like a stamp of approval. We turned the pages to find fault. All we saw, was an encouragement to do more and do better, much within the vision of the Executive Director and as enunciated within their Strategic Plan of 2015-2017. Unlike in others where there would have been a recommendation to down size, they have been urged to increase presence, and we take note of the plan to open a liaison office in Addis Ababa; instead of budget cuts, there is a call for more resources. We therefore take note of, and welcome the management response that has been formally shared with us today to try and respond to all the issues that were raised by the evaluation. We find them useful and we endorse them. What we also take from this process, is that most of the issues raised were those that had earlier on been identified by management as requiring further work. What is critical in all of this however, is what we would refer to as the means of implementation. While we note the almost challenging discussions we have always had around this issue in other multilateral for a, our sense is that it should not be the case in this instance.

We are in full agreement, with both the evaluation and the management report that in order to implement all the recommendations in letter and spirit, and deliver on the mandate that has been entrusted to the ITC, there will be need for more longer term, stable and predictable funding for increased impact and durable results. In this regard, in welcoming the donors' statement on the issue of funding, could we take it from this meeting that as the ITC Management continues to provide periodic progress reports on the implementation of the recommendations, the donors may also consider reporting on the state of resource mobilization at such intervals.

At this juncture, we would like to register our profound gratitude to all our development partners for the generous support that has been extended to the ITC to date that has made it an important vehicle for Aid for Trade. Without which we would not be celebrating the various milestones achieved in our respective countries. In the same vein, we urge the donors to provide the requisite funding that would enable the ITC to deliver on its mandate with the view to impacting for good.

I thank you
