

STATEMENT MADE BY ZIMBABWE AT THE JOINT ADVISORY GROUP (JAG) ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE (ITC): 11 JUNE 2014

Thank you Madam Chair

Let me at the outset congratulate you on your election to preside over our work. I would also like to commend your predecessor for the capable manner in which she handled the affairs of the Joint Advisory Group (JAG) in the past year.

My delegation wishes to extend our congratulations to the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, Arancha Gonzalez and ITC staff on the institution's 50th Anniversary.

This Anniversary marks a major milestone in the history of ITC. Over the five decades that ITC has been in operation, the institution's technical assistance and export promotion programmes have forever changed the trade landscape in developing countries, mostly for the benefit of SMEs.

Let me commend ITC for the invaluable contribution in providing entrepreneurship opportunities to women and youth and in strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs exporters in developing countries. This has facilitated integration of SMEs into the multilateral trading system and global value chains.

ITC has won recognition from developing countries for being a demand driven, result oriented and development focused organisation which has successfully empowered communities, trade promotion officials, private

sector players and policy makers through capacity building and institutional support, access to market analysis tools and creation of a conducive policy and business environment. We are proud of the noteworthy accomplishments made over the past 50 years.

It is pleasing to note that ITC's annual expenditure for 2014 is planned at US\$91.7 million, with 146 active projects. This is a very significant improvement from the US\$1 million mark which ITC hit for the first time in 1970. Allow me, therefore, Madam Chair to pay tribute to the Development Partners who continue to support ITC financially, thereby contributing to high quality performance and effective delivery of the institution's mandate.

It gives me great pleasure to associate ourselves with ITC, as one of the beneficiaries of ITC's technical assistance and capacity building programmes. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the invaluable support that the ITC has been and is rendering to Zimbabwe in an effort to promote trade and revive the country's economy.

Let me highlight two recent projects that ITC is implementing in Zimbabwe namely; the Leather Sector Strategy (2012-2017) and the Trade and Private Sector Development Project (TPSDP).

The Leather Sector Strategy which is aimed at reviving the country's leather sector was successfully launched in June 2013, with the support of COMESA and the ITC. The Strategy is built upon a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) basis, supported by ITC, the COMESA Leather and Leather Product Institute and the Government of Zimbabwe. It was

crafted by stakeholders using a private sector-led participatory approach with Government, industry, civil society and rural actors contributing to define sector priorities at national level by undertaking a market driven value chain and sector analysis.

Implementation of the Strategy is in line with Government's vision to transform Zimbabwe from a producer of primary goods into a producer of processed, value-added goods for domestic and export markets. This is expected to create jobs and generate income through support to SMEs.

Turning to the Trade and Private Sector Development Project, this project was also successfully launched in Zimbabwe in February this year. The project is funded by the EU and is aimed at capacitating the private sector in order to promote trade and development, thereby meaningfully complement current Government efforts. The project will also strengthen the capacity of all economic players in the implementation of the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU.

Madam Chair, allow me to take this opportunity to extend our Government's appreciation to the EU for providing funding to the tune of €3 million for this Project. The project is expected to run for a period of two and a half years beginning February 2014 under the supervision of the International Trade Centre (ITC).

Some of the major objectives and expected results of the project are:

- Facilitating SMEs to have access to markets and opportunities including those arising from the Interim EPA implementation;
- Empowering and building the capacity of business associations and umbrella organisations working in trade, private sector development and SMEs issues;
- Strengthening Public-Private Sector dialogue and participation of the private sector in policy making; and
- Building the capacity of the Competition and Tariff Commission staff in order to improve competition law enforcement. This is based on the Competition Policy and Law Peer review done under the auspices of UNCTAD in 2011. We would like to extend our appreciation to UNCTAD for the assistance.

My delegation is confident that with the implementation of the Trade and Private Sector Development Project, Zimbabwe will be able to address some of the limitations that hinder market access such as lack of adequate national quality testing infrastructure facilities and supply-side capacity and policy related constraints, among others.

Last but not least Mr. Chairman, I wish to call on the Development Partners to extend more funding to the country's Trade Promotion Body, ZimTrade under ITC's new AIM For Results programme. The Institution requires about US\$350 000 to implement the initiative which is aimed at enabling it to Assess, Improve and Measure its managerial, operational and service delivery performance for the benefit of its clients.

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge with gratitude, ITC's growing passion to continuously build the export capacity of SMEs in developing countries, and pledge our commitment to offer the necessary support to enable ITC meet its mandate.

I Thank You