



**INTERVENTION STATEMENT BY ZAMBIA AT THE INTERNATIONAL
TRADE CENTRE (ITC) 57TH JOINT ADVISORY GROUP (JAG) MEETING,
20TH JULY 2023**

Thank you, Chairperson, for giving me the floor.

My delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption as Chairperson of the Joint Advisory Group.

In the same vein, my delegation expresses its appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Usha Canabady for her leadership over the past year. Our appreciation also goes to Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the WTO Director General and Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, the Secretary General of UNCTAD for their Statements.

To Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, I would like to commend you and your team for all the good work you did in 2022, the year which also marked the first cycle of implementation of ITC's 2022 to 2025 Strategic Plan. Year one is always about setting the right foundations and from our preliminary reading of the 2022 Annual Report, it is very clear that this has been done within all the five impact areas of ITC's work which is already yielding positive results in many countries that receive ITC support.

For example, the "Switch ON" project being piloted in Zambia is timely and will go a long way in boosting the digital competitiveness of our SMEs. During the pandemic, there was a rapid acceleration of the use of digital platforms in Zambia to conduct business, as was the case everywhere else in the world. This has continued post the pandemic with the scale and level of our dependence on the internet ever increasing. However, the downside is that this increase is not evenly spread across the country among the different user groups.

It is for this reason that we feel the project is timely and already, it is showing promising signs with entrepreneurs receiving investments totalling \$572,000 so far. More importantly, the project's key intervention areas which cover gender, green economy and the youth, align with the Zambian Government's priority intervention areas in the 8th National Development Plan.

Other projects such as, the SheTrades continue to complement Government efforts towards building inclusive and sustainable recovery pathways for women

entrepreneurs. We see programmes under the SheTrades also working in other countries and hopefully these will serve as building blocks towards strengthening regional value chains particularly within the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Chairperson, one area that we hope to also re-scale up collaboration with ITC, is area of institutional capacity building in the use of its flagship market Analysis Toolkit. At the national level, we still have a capacity gap among the different stakeholders that ordinarily should be actively using this toolkit to gather trade information. We note from the Annual Report that as at the end of 2022, there was over 1.4 million active users of the toolkit from 190 countries. Our hope is to scale up the numbers at the national level not only among policymakers but also other key stakeholders.

Chairperson, I will end my intervention here but we will, of course share this Annual Report with our Capital for a more in-depth reading after which we will be able to engage directly with ITC and other development partners on the various programmes under implementation.

I thank you.