

The Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Center (ITC)

Fifty-sixth Session (13 September 2022)

Statement by Japan

Director General Okonjo-Iweala, Secretary General Grynspan, Executive Director Coke-Hamilton, distinguished Ambassadors and delegates,

At the outset, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating Ambassador Usha Chandee Dwarka-Canabady on your appointment as the Chair of the 56th Joint Advisory Group. I would also like to extend our appreciation to Executive Director Coke-Hamilton and the ITC Secretariat for their hard work, including the publication of the Annual Report 2022 and the Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report.

Japan aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador LEE of South Korea on behalf of the donor countries.

As the disruption to global trade caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is worsened by other crises, among them the war in Ukraine and the subsequent food security issues, the importance of the role that the ITC plays in promoting trade for inclusive and sustainable growth is increasing, as it is MSMEs, women, youth and refugees that are impacted most by such crises. Japan fully supports the continuous work of the ITC, which is well in line with the priorities of Japan.

Japan has attached great importance to trade-related technical assistance, particularly in the area of e-commerce and digital trade. For the past few years, Japan has been collaborating with the ITC on projects to provide digital skills to people, including youth and female entrepreneurs to help them better benefit from their access to the global digital market. The 'Go Digital' project in Gaza, as described in the Annual Report, is an example of this collaboration. At the WTO's 2022 Aid for Trade, the ITC and Japan held a joint session in which we presented on a recently successfully concluded project in Somalia as a best practice in empowering youth with digital entrepreneur skills.

We appreciate the ITC's close cooperation with other organizations and further encourage it to seek more synergies with the WTO, UNCTAD and other organizations. With this regard, as one of the co-convenors of the WTO e-commerce JSI, I look forward to cooperating with the ITC in the discussions.

In addition, we are pleased that the ITC participated in the Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) – an international conference led by the Government of Japan to promote development in Africa – which took place a few weeks ago in Tunisia. The side event focused on sharing their experience on a vaccine industry development project in Nigeria that Japan has been funding.

To conclude, I would like to once again congratulate the ITC for its positive contributions to inclusive and sustainable growth. We look forward to working with the ITC and other partners. Thank you.