Statement of Canada to ITC Joint Advisory Group, 30 June 2011

Merci M. le President.

C’est avec beaucoup de plaisir pour le Canada de prendre la parole. Nous partageons notre voix aux autres pays pour apprécier le travail important du CCI, et nous avons l’honneur d’assister aujourd’hui et demain pour cette 45e session du groupe consultatif commun. Nous apprécions les présentations ce matin sur le rapport annuel et le budget 2011.

It is with deep regret that we recognize that Patricia Francis is not able to be with us today due to tragic recent events. Our condolences go out to her and her family, and we assure the JAG and ITC that she has our full support.

We commend Patricia Francis, her management team, and the ITC staff for their ongoing efforts in delivering high-quality and demand-driven programming, and in preparing the inputs to the Joint Advisory Group. We appreciate the timely submission of the Annual and Financial Reports.

Overall, we note with satisfaction the efforts of ITC over the past year at integrating results-based management and quality assurance in its project planning and implementation, while mainstreaming gender, environment and poverty reduction as cross-cutting themes. We urge ITC to continue these efforts and assure them of our full support in this regard.

In our view, the Annual Report for 2010 provides a stronger analytical approach than in previous years. We welcome in particular ongoing efforts in tracking progress on ITC objectives against specific indicators, though further emphasis could be given to displaying the important work underway on RBM and value for money. Notably, we would welcome analysis on the outcome of ITC’s activities and how these are related to the Strategic Plan. Specifically, it would be useful to see a greater narrative of ITC’s individual projects working toward the Strategic Objectives, linking the Strategic Objective indicators to actual projects, and showing what percentage of funds has gone towards each Strategic Objective. We are of the view that the elaboration of a well-thought-out corporate level logical framework could help in this regard, and look forward to rapid progress on this front in coming months.

Further, we continue to encourage ITC to make additional efforts at moving from smaller project-based initiatives to larger programmes that can bring a more measurable and lasting impact.

ITC’s work programme is directed at making a real difference in building the capacity of small and medium enterprises in developing countries to access and take advantage of the global economy and of regional integration. This has been borne out in ITC’s project-based work, towards which Canada has been a major contributor.
First, we note the good progress in the implementation of Programme for Building African Capacity to Trade (PACT II), and look forward to the results of its forthcoming mid-term evaluation. We sincerely hope that the positive results of this exercise could feed into ITC’s platform for implementation of Aid for Trade in Sub-Saharan Africa and bring other donors, beneficiaries and stakeholders under the same umbrella.

We are pleased to note that the Enhancing Arab Capacity for Trade (EnACT) program is now up and running. This focuses on export-led job creation, particularly for youth and women in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, and has been able to connect producers to regional and international markets, allowing for the creation of new jobs through exports. In early 2011 ITC experienced a rapid acceleration of program activities in all EnAct countries. In the first months of 2011 the entire region experienced unprecedented political upheaval. ITC has engaged with the new governments to adapt the programme to the most urgent priorities of counterparts. As a result a number of activities have been given priority, while the overall objectives of the programme stay on target. ITC has been responsive and flexible in order to stay relevant as a development partner in these highly dynamic and changing times, and we commend them for this.

We are also pleased to have come to an agreement on a new export promotion project in the West Bank in partnership with UNDP, ITC and the Palestinian Trade Promotion Organisation, PalTrade. In the framework of this project, we believe ITC will provide PalTrade the appropriate knowledge and skills to help Palestinian micro, small and mid-sized enterprises develop and implement successful export strategies as well as to effectively engage the public and the private sectors in trade policy dialogue. As appropriate, we would encourage that this project seeks synergies with the ENACT project and other projects being implemented by the ITC in the West Bank and in region.

Regarding the issue of governance, we recognize the essential role played by the JAG as well as by ITC’s reporting and engagement with its parent bodies, the WTO and UNCTAD in providing feedback and direction to ITC’s budget and programmes. We further welcome the enhanced opportunities for members to provide strategic direction and oversight through the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund, a practice that has proved useful already in 2011.

Chair, as we move toward the 3rd Global Review of Aid for Trade, we note that ITC will be making essential inputs to the review exercise, both in bringing an essential private sector element in general and in emphasizing the important role of women as producers and traders.

Finally, in our role as ITC donor coordinator, we look forward to working closely with other donor countries, with ITC client countries and with the ITC secretariat to help enable the organization to fulfill its mandate in an effective and efficient manner.

I thank you Chair.