ITC JAG 2011 – Statement by Norway

ITC – Annual Report 2010

- Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Mr Chairman, let me join others in congratulating you on your election, and in thanking
the leaders of UNCTAD, the WTO and the Deputy Executive Director of the ITC for their
opening remarks.

1. ITC is one of Norway’s most important partners in the delivery of Aid for Trade, as it has
a strong focus on the needs of LDCs and Sub-Saharan Africa, export capacity building
through country and regional solutions, and increasingly on women in trade.

2. Mr Chairman, my delegation would like to thank the ITC for this Annual Report and
commend Management and Staff for progress in their work as well as better reporting. Guided by the principles of results-based management (RBM), we find that the Annual
Report for 2010 has further improved the focus on achievements compared to previous
reports. Table 1 on page 13 demonstrates this quite well. The results matrix now includes
baseline values from 2008-09, and the 2010 performance gives a clear indication of the
probability of reaching the corresponding targets for 2010-11. The indicators are specific,
concise and easy to quantify. The narrative ‘Clarification of results’ column is also a
useful addition to the figures, although to some degree the text still refers to activities
instead of results. Another area for further improvement in table 1 could be some of the
‘Expected accomplishments’ in the first column. While the stated expected
accomplishments describe processes that the ITC undertakes, we think that expectations
in this regard should rather point to concrete situations or conditions to be achieved
in the future. Another positive development is the outcome of the fourth Clients Survey,
described on page 16. While the previous survey mainly referred to the growing
satisfaction of policy makers, we note with appreciation that Trade Support Institutions
and Enterprises are now included, and that satisfaction levels are high.

More generally on the reporting, an area that still needs improvement is assessment and
management of risk, which in our view is not dealt with in a systematic way. In some
places there are references to ‘challenges’, but these are more often retrospective than
forward looking. Improved risk management is crucial for better reporting and learning
from experience. We would also encourage further clarity of the different levels of results,
in particular ‘outcomes’ versus ‘impacts’. In our view the most important level of reporting
for ITC is the intermediate level – outcomes – which concerns the users of ITC products
and services. That said, the wider society level – or impacts – is also important and quite
well accounted for in several parts of the Report. Mr. Chairman, turning to other parts of
the report, we note with particular appreciation that further progress has been made in
the building of partnerships between ITC and other relevant agencies (p.66). This is
particularly important in the context of the Enhanced Integrated Framework for LDCs.
Inter-agency cooperation to create synergies, avoid duplication of work, and obtain a sound division of labour, is something Norway encourages in all multilateral cooperation.

3. We appreciate highly ITC’s emphasis on gender issues and the progress made in the Women in Trade Programme, as described on page 52. ITC has increased the attention to women’s opportunities also in other parts of their programming – especially in Sub-Saharan Africa – like PACT II, ACCESS, Ethical Trade, coffee-related work, and Ugandan cross-border informal traders. At the same time, we believe it is important to further strengthen mainstreaming of gender into ITC programming, including in other regions. We trust that this will be improved when the internal mainstreaming component of the Women in Trade Programme is measured in the next annual report. With regard to gender-specific work, there are also possibilities for further partnerships in the future. For instance, ITC’s work in the coffee sector should be of interest for the International Coffee Organization, which had a session on women in coffee during the World Coffee Conference in Guatemala City in February 2010. Another example is the recently established UN entity known as UN Women, which at the LDC Conference in Istanbul in May presented studies on female cross-border traders in Liberia and Rwanda.

4. As a last comment on particular programmes described in the Report, let me also commend ITC’s work with the Ethical Fashion Programme, which has been very innovative and successful. The crucial issue now is to hand the programme successfully over to local management. This would mean a high degree of sustainability, which is a key criterion for successful development cooperation. If its works well the programme should be replicated in West Africa.

5. Mr Chairman, let me end Norway’s intervention by turning from the Annual Report to administrative and governance issues, which we also commented on at the last JAG in December. While the financial situation in 2010 seems to have been good, the improvement of financial transparency and the strategic dialogue between Management and Member-States continue to be important topics. Due to the institutional set-up with two ‘parent organisations’ in UNCTAD and the WTO, it has sometimes been difficult for Member-States to have a clear overview and provide strategic input to ITC’s financial management. In turn, this has tended to increase the share of earmarking of contributions. We therefore support the ongoing process to strengthen the role of the Consultative Committee in the governance of the organization. This will require, among other things, a meeting schedule set well in advance, as well as transparent financial information with income and expenditure figures that cover corresponding time periods and are comparable from one period to another. Commendable progress has been made in this regard, and we look forward to working more with Member States and Management on these issues.

6. Mr Chairman, let me conclude by reiterating Norway’s appreciation of the Annual Report and our continued strong support to the ITC.

Thank you.