Statement by Sri Lanka on the Occasion of the 45th Session of the ITC Joint Advisory Group

30 June – 01 July 2011

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

At the outset let me congratulate you on your election as the Chair of this august body and believe under your able leadership the meeting would deliver its ambitious programme.

My delegation associates with previous speakers in expressing our condolences to Mrs Patricia Francis and her family at this sad moment.

Now let me take this opportunity to commend the ITC team for their continuous efforts in delivering high quality demand driven programmes, targeted at enhancing the export competitiveness of individual countries.

As a partner country, Sri Lanka acknowledges the unique style of ITC in delivering the programmes and the efforts taken in the areas of integrating of Results Based Management and quality assurance in its project planning and implementation, while mainstreaming gender, environment, sustainability and poverty reduction as cross cutting themes.

It is noted in the annual report that, assistance on access to global supply chain, extending the reach for public goods and involvement in Aid for Trade Programme are future events ear marked by the ITC for year 2011. We look forward for successful implementation of these activities.

On the same note, my delegation welcomes the innovative approaches adopted by ITC in creating market access tools such as Market Analysis Tools, Market Access Map, Trade Map, which have proven to be invaluable instruments to our private and public sector enterprises.

During 2010 ITC conducted a survey in Sri Lanka on NTB with the objective of increasing transparency and understanding of how the market operates for imports and exports. While thanking ITC and the donors for such assistance we believe that ITC
should not stop at this point but help countries with the next stage. That is to assist countries in finding meaningful ways in reducing the identified obstacle to trade.

Mr. Chairman the recent global financial and economic crisis had negative effects on our countries. Although signs of recovery is being seen, mentioned also by the Secretary General UNCTAD it is still weak and unstable: beside rising commodity prices have hit hardly the net food importing countries like Sri Lanka. As a result food security and energy security is becoming an important issue on the domestic agenda in my country.

Hence need for enhancing competitiveness, taking advantage of the market opportunities and the need for more innovative approaches at the macro and micro levels in never so important than today. Therefore, let me reiterate ITC to take into consideration the national priorities when programmes are being conducted in the future.

Sri Lanka continues to place high importance on the catalytic role of trade development in developing capacity among the small and vulnerable economies like mine to improve their efficient and beneficial participation in the international trade.

My delegation look forward working closely with the ITC Team in future projects.