Chair, please convey to the Executive Director Sweden’s deepest condolences. Life is a precious gift to be cherished. Each time death comes to visit, is too early. Perhaps it is not possible to prepare for the grief that follows, but there will be, I hope, deliverance at the end of the tunnel. Our thoughts are with Patricia, her family and friends. May their healing come sooner rather than later.

Chair, turning to the Annual Report. I have some general comments and some detailed ones coupled with some questions.

As regards the general comments, Sweden finds that the Annual Report demonstrates significant improvements compared to previous years in terms of reporting back to stakeholders. Sweden welcomes this progress which shows that ITC is on track when it comes to establishing a more strategic line throughout the ITC, from strategic direction to policy formulation and project design.

Sweden also appreciates ITC’s positive feedback on the Swedish comments on the draft Annual Report 2010 raised during the Consultative Committee meeting this spring. We are happy to note that the ITC will take some positive actions regarding it’s Client Survey. We welcome the intention to provide information on operational conclusions drawn from the Client Survey for subsequent reports and to extend the approach to the alignment of projects with the beneficiaries’ national development plans.
There are however some aspects still to be further developed, and one missing improvement we would reiterate is the lack of an aggregate overview that through a logical chain is linking the specific projects to the overarching Strategic Objectives they are designed to contribute to.

Chair, turning to my more detailed comments and questions.

Primo, on ITC’s objectives and performance indicators.

Sweden has through the years asked for a sharper assessment of results and a deeper analysis on the outcome of ITC’s activities. We understand that ITC is planning to develop a corporate log frame together with new IMDIS indicators to which the expected achievements of each project will be linked at the outset of 2014. Does this mean that we are not able to get a sharper assessment of results until 2014?

Secundo, on the Quality Assurance Group

We have noted very positively the establishment of the Quality Assurance Group and would like to ask about the experience and challenges so far. Streamlining the quality assurance process into the regular project cycle is key, as well as making sure that project managers feel that this process is a support function, not an administrative burden. Sweden strongly supports the Group and would be happy to share our own experience from similar Quality Assurance Groups in our Swedish agency, Sida.
Thirdly, the Millennium Development Goals

The Report states that all ITC work contributes to a global partnership for development (MDG 8) and that exports generate employment and better incomes, contributing to the eradication of extreme hunger and poverty (MDG 1). Sweden supports that ITC links its operations to the MDGs. However, some projects are labelled as “MDG projects” and our question is what makes these different from other ITC projects, if all work is supposed to achieve the MDGs?

Fourthly, Lessons learned on Cost Sharing

We note that ITC has tested a new business model in developing export strategies on a cost-sharing basis and that partner countries are willing to share the costs of trade-related technical assistance. Will ITC undertake further analysis of the cost-sharing aspects and are there any challenges considered with cost-sharing.

Fifthly and last, Open access to ITC knowledge and information

Sweden is a strong supporter of the openness and access to information agenda. ITC produces a number of knowledge products and tools that by their nature are global public goods. Has ITC looked into the possibility of providing this knowledge, free of charge, and what impact would that have on revenue?

Chair, let me end by assuring you of Sweden’s strong support of and confidence in ITC.

Thank you chair.
Announcement of trust fund contributions to ITC

Chair, Sweden entered into agreement with the ITC in 2009 for an un-earmarked contribution amounting to 120 million Swedish kronor for a period of four years. In line with the Aid for Trade recommendations as well as the Paris principles, Sweden has increased our support both in volume and in longer-term engagement.

We hope that other donors will be able follow suit and make multi-year pledges with minimal earmarking as well.

Thank you chair.