

Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the floor. I will deliver this statement on behalf of my Ambassador Dr. Ahmed Ihab Gamaleldin who regrets for not being able to attend this meeting.

Madam Chair,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you for your election as Chair of the 56th session of the Joint Advisory Group, and I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support. I would like to thank as well the outgoing Chair H.E. Ambassador Paul Bekkers, of the Kingdom of Netherlands for her excellent work. I would like also to commend Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, the Executive Director of ITC, for the results achieved in 2021 under her leadership, and thank WTO and UNCTAD for their continuous and invaluable support to the ITC.

Madam. Chair,

Egypt attaches great importance to the work of ITC and appreciates the long-lasting cooperation with the Centre throughout the years.

In 2021, Egypt continued benefiting from the Global Textiles and Clothing Program, developed within the framework of the GTEX MENATEX program and co-funded by Switzerland and Sweden. This project aims at improving export competitiveness of the textile and clothing sector in Egypt through enhancing the institutional infrastructure and SMEs competitiveness. In addition, ITC has launched the second phase of the “She trades” project in Egypt, funded by the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation and the Islamic Development Bank. This project focusses on supporting women-owned SMEs in the handicrafts sector in export-oriented value chains by boosting their competitiveness and enhancing their capacity to penetrate both local and regional markets. This project contributes to the national efforts to foster women empowerment in Egypt. **In this regard, we would like to reiterate the need to expand the scope and the scale of this project to include more women entrepreneurs and cover new sectors where women in Egypt are highly involved, especially textile design and other design sectors.**

In addition, many industries in Egypt have benefited from ITC programmes and tools, such as the “**Value added to Trade programme**”, which helped many industries to develop their COVID-19 recovery plans; and the Arabic version of the “**African Trade Observatory Dashboard**” which was launch in 2021.

Furthermore, Egypt is benefiting from two regional projects, one related to training SMEs to enhance their export capabilities in the context of the African continental free trade area; and the second related to the “Euromed Trade and Investment Facilitation Mechanism (TIFM)”, funded by the EU. We thank ITC, as

well as the funders, for all these efforts and we look forward to further deepen and broaden the scope and prospects of our cooperation.

Madam Chair,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our full support to the work conducted by ITC, especially in these critical times, to assist developing countries in achieving sustainable recovery and building resilience to overcome the current global crises. We strongly believe that ITC, through its new Strategic Plan 2022–2025, is well positioned to play a significant role in advancing economic growth and sustainable development in developing countries in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda. We are looking forward to continue working with ITC to foster women and youth empowerment and enable MSMEs to enhance their competitiveness and connecting them to global value chains.

Finally, I would like to welcome the presentations made by the beneficiaries of ITC projects in Palestine, Gambia and Guatemala and congratulate them and ITC for the successful results. We believe that highlighting success stories from ITC work is an excellent practice in our meeting. We commend ITC for that and call it on to replicate these success stories in other countries.

I thank you, Madam Chair.