

International Trade Centre (ITC) – Joint Advisory Group (JAG)

WTO, 25 June 2024

European Union remarks*

Thank you, and a warm welcome to you Chair.

Congratulations to ITC on its 60th anniversary, and for the excellent opening session today with the three keynote speeches which were very inspirational.

As major donor of ITC, together with its Member States, the European Union is happy to align with the statement that the United States has delivered as donor coordinator for ITC.

In 2023 the European Union again teamed up with ITC, partnering at country, regional and global level to promote sustainable and inclusive development. Gratitude to those ambassadors who have thanked the EU for funding projects and programmes in their countries and regions. This reflects the very professional ITC annual report and its highly informative appendices, for which we thank ITC warmly.

Within the large portfolio that the European Union has built up with ITC, allow me to mention just 3 examples from 2023:

1. On value chains, I would like to briefly update you on our partnership with ITC on developing & strengthening regional value chains in sub-Saharan Africa. Launched in 2022, since the end of 2023 we have strengthened our partnership with in-depth analysis and a roadmap for the most relevant value chains. This is proving relevant also for supporting value chains also at sub-regional level.

Sustainable value chains have been pursued and supported also outside Africa. We have partnered with ITC for putting in place accompanying measures for the implementation of relevant legislation relating to deforestation and corporate social responsibility. Those who attended this month's roundtable on deforestation-free value chains at the WTO will recognise that this was a positive, forward-looking exchange on best practices that can benefit all members, and indeed the planet.

2. Secondly. Joint work on trade facilitation and trade data also brings in another region, namely Central Asia where a solid partnership on trade facilitation has been built. In Africa, the African Trade Observatory is just one of several very useful tools. Worldwide, we have renewed our partnership with ITC to continue operationalising the Market Analysis Tools, such as the Global Trade Helpdesk platform, and create new maps to inform traders and MSMEs.
3. Thirdly, our "Climate Competitiveness" project with ITC aims to increase engagement of developing countries at the WTO on environmental issues. In 2023, we identified seven countries for this project: 3 in Africa; 2 in Asia; and 2 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

These activities are ongoing, and we will be happy to provide further information to all those interested, and to this body.

The European Union remains firmly committed to meeting our partners' needs. We thank them for their engagement. We also thank ITC for its hard work externally, and its efforts to improve the organisation internally.

* The EU statement complements the donors' statement delivered by the U.S.