



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA**

Intervention on the occasion of the 58th Joint Advisory Group Meeting of the

International Trade Center

25 June 2024

Excellency Chairperson, Ms. Hend Abdalrahman Al-Muftah
Excellency DG Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Excellency SG Rebeca Grynspan
Excellency ITC Executive Director, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton
Dear colleagues, (*protocol observation*)

On behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, I would like to commence by expressing our heartfelt appreciation to the Executive Director of ITC, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, and her team, for the dedication and continued tremendous support provided to Timor-Leste on our pursuit to integrate into the regional and global trading system.

As you know, since October last year, the ITC is implementing a three-year project in Timor-Leste, funded by the European Union, aiming to boost economic growth and support regional integration and trade through the accession and post-accession processes to the WTO, ASEAN and the EU-Pacific EPA Agreement.

The ITC team has played an important role in the final stages of our successful accession to the WTO providing valuable technical assistance to the team in Dili and the Mission in Geneva, and drafting policies and reviewing pieces of legislation included in the WTO Legislative Action Plan. The ITC team has also worked closely with the WTO Secretariat to support our government in the analysis of the commitments made during the accession process as a part of our national WTO post-accession strategy. I am confident that this excellent work will continue during this new phase as full members of the Organization.

Right now, there is an ITC mission in Dili working together with the Vice-Minister for ASEAN Affairs, as the designated lead for this project, as well as with other members of the Government, the Parliament and the Private Sector to supporting our journey to become full members of ASEAN and our accession to the EU-Pacific EPA.

The ITC is providing assistance to the drafting of the Initial Market Access Offers for the main ASEAN Economic Agreements and supporting the reforms that the ASEAN process requires in terms of capacities and institutional and legal reforms. The project is also focusing on the establishment of synergies between the WTO and the ASEAN accession processes which, as you know, are connected to each other. Also, I think that it is important mentioning that the project has an important component aiming to boost the capacities and support the MSMEs as per the mandate of the ITC with a focus on women-led businesses which I consider of the

paramount importance taking into consideration the need for granting gender equality and empowering women as indicated in our National Development Strategy and the SDGs.

Timor-Leste is in a crucial moment of its economic development and, as my government has stressed to our Development Partners recently, the projects need to be owned and lead by us and must use country systems for their implementation. In this sense, the ITC is answering to that request and the project is fully aligned with our priorities and objectives. I thank again the ITC team in charge of this project for answering this request and for their sound commitment with Timor-Leste.

On behalf of my government, I would like to stress that these achievements would not be possible without the steady support from the European Union, our devoted partner and long-standing friend.

We believe that continued support from ITC and our Development Partners remains crucial for LDCs and Developing Countries to diversify their economies and to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth in line with the SDGs.

In this regard, we would like to call for more dedicated technical assistance and capacity building for LDCs and Developing Countries, based on each country's specific needs and national priorities

I am sure that this is the beginning of what will be a long-standing and fruitful relationship between Timor-Leste and the ITC.

From our side, we will continue being a reliable partner fully committed to making efforts to realize the aspirations of the Timorese People to create a prosperous and strong Nation. A Nation that will be able to defend our interests and to guarantee the prosperity and well-being of our population in today's complex and rapidly changing world.

Thank you.