

The Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Center (ITC)

Fifty-eighth Session (25 June 2024)

Statement by Japan

Director General Okonjo-Iweala, Secretary General Rebeca Grynspan, Executive Director Coke-Hamilton, distinguished Ambassadors and delegates,

At the outset, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating H.E. Ambassador Hend Abdulrahman Al-Muftah on your appointment as the Chair of the 58th Joint Advisory Group. I would also like to extend our appreciation to Executive Director Coke-Hamilton, and the ITC Secretariat for their hard work, including the publication of the Annual Report 2023 and the Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report. Allow me to also congratulate the ITC on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary since its inception.

Japan aligns itself with the statement made by H.E. Ambassador Maria Pagán of the United States on behalf of the donor countries.

Amid ongoing conflicts and crises, the increasing devastation wrought by natural disasters caused by climate change, the importance of the role that the ITC plays in promoting trade for inclusive and sustainable growth is increasing, as it is MSMEs, women, youth and refugees that are impacted most by such crises. Japan fully supports the continuous work of the ITC, which is well in line with the priorities of Japan.

ITC has been an important partner for Japan in trade-related technical assistance, particularly in the area of e-commerce, digital trade and gender. One example is the “SheTradesConnect” project, to which Japan has been a donor since 2018, and has supported women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses to participate more effectively in digital trade.

Furthermore, as introduced in the video earlier today, Japan has been collaborating on projects to increase the presence and competitiveness of Nigerian MSMEs in E-commerce by building their technical and managerial capacities, strengthening market linkages, and creating a conducive and enabling environment, with particular emphasis on growing agri-food businesses. With this regard, we will be holding a session to present this case study in collaboration with ITC at this week’s Aid For Trade Global Review on 28 June, and we are very much looking forward to you joining us.

In this context, we would like to recall ITC’s critical role in conducting by utilizing ITC’s Market Analysis Tools, such as the Global Trade Helpdesk platform, as the US ambassador stated earlier on behalf of the donor countries.

In the past year, we have also seen closer cooperation between ITC and other organizations. Especially, in various committees and working groups at the WTO, ITC has offered a wide range of its experience and expertise to deepen the discussion and facilitate the work there. This was greatly valued at the margin of MC13, where our State-Minister of Foreign Affairs had the opportunity to meet and discuss with Executive Director, Ms. Coke-Hamilton. We appreciate the ITC's close cooperation with other organizations and further encourage it to seek more synergies with the WTO, UNCTAD and other organizations.

To conclude, I would like to once again congratulate the ITC for its positive contributions to inclusive and sustainable development. We look forward to further continuing work with the ITC and other partners. Thank you.