

58th Joint Advisory Group of International Trade Centre
25 June 2024
Statement by the Mauritius delegation

Thank you Chairperson,

1. Mauritius is pleased to participate in this 58th Session of the Joint Advisory Group Session and looks forward to participating in ITC's 60th anniversary celebrations this year.
2. And, indeed, we have much to look back on and celebrate the ITC's achievements as we did for UNCTAD some weeks ago.
3. Much has changed over 60 years.
4. The world pre-globalization and post-globalisation and the world pre-COVID and post COVID have shaped outlooks and expectations which are a radically different.
5. Artificial Intelligence has become the key word for finding solutions for the future but there is still broad uncertainty as regards governance and accessibility to allow those who are digitally deprived to leverage on this opportunity.
6. So, we remain fragile and can fully identify with the theme Fragility for the ITC's flagship report, the 2023 SME Competitiveness Outlook.
7. It is against this background of fragility that we acknowledge ITC's projects, often run in fragile settings. Not all of them could be pursued and we regret that some nonetheless there are good sparks. The creation of self-employment opportunities for Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups in Gaza through Go Digital or Building Economic Resilience of Displacement Affected Communities in Ukraine, both projects financed by Japan.

8. Despite the fragility of situation, the ICT pursued work and we welcome all projects that were particularly aimed at building resilient value chains and the competitiveness of MSME's.
9. We note with appreciation that the actions of the ITC for the year 2023 have included:
 - 540 000 business stakeholders gaining awareness of international trade from the ITC business trade and market intelligence.
 - 40,000 MSMEs either improving business operations or receiving investment.
 - 116,000 participants at the SME Trade Academy of which 43% were women
10. We particularly welcome the impact areas for MSMEs namely in:
 - Sustainable and resilient value chains
 - Inclusive Trade
 - Green Trade
 - Digital Trade
 - Regional Integration and South South Trade
 - As well as working with WIPO to protect the intellectual property of Women entrepreneurs
11. With respect to Africa, we are happy that since the inception of African Continental Free Trade Agreement, in January 2021, the ITC has positioned itself as a prime support partner for consolidating and promoting MSMEs as a vehicle for pan-African Trade. We welcome its engagement in the One Trade Africa initiative and in harnessing ways and means to foster the business eco system including for the development of priority value chains.

12. Mauritius continues to see the ITC as a reliable partner. As we strive for sustainable economic recovery and building resilience for trade and development, we have outreached the ITC participation in the WTO Trade Facilitation implementation plan for Mauritius, the She Trades Outlook, the partnership for enhancing export capacity of the African countries to China (PEECAC) and ITC Project on Climate competitiveness.
13. We also thank ITC for its support on our National Export Strategy and look forward to the early implementation of capacity building on data collection in the services sector.
14. Thank you to the ITC team for its continued support.