



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SIERRA LEONE TO
THE UNITED NATIONS AT GENEVA**

STATEMENT BY SIERRA LEONE

**57th Session of the Joint Advisory Group of the
International Trade Centre (ITC)**

20 July 2023

WTO room S1

**Madam Chairperson of the 57th Session of the Joint Advisory Group,
Ambassador of Canada**

Madam the Director General of the WTO,

Madam the Secretary General of UNCTAD,

Madam the Executive Director of the ITC,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

Madam Chairperson, thank you for giving me the floor and for convening this meeting. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, let me begin by congratulating you for presiding over this 57th Joint Advisory Group meeting of the ITC and wishing you a successful tenure. My delegation would also like to extend a special thanks to Ambassador Dwarka-Canabady of Mauritius for steering the work of the JAG so well during the past year.

Your Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen, The Government of Sierra Leone wishes to extend its appreciation to Executive Director, Pamela Coke-Hamilton and staff of the ITC for their untiring efforts and commitments to enhancing trade capacity of developing and least developed countries including Sierra Leone. We are particularly grateful to ITC for implementing the following Trade Related Technical Assistance Projects in Sierra Leone during the reporting period.

- 1. The West Africa Competitiveness Program (Sierra Leone and Regional Components)**
- 2. She Trades West Africa**

These projects are funded by the European Union and the Korea International Cooperation Agency and the Government of Sierra Leone extends its appreciation to these partners for the funding.

Over the past year both the WACOMP and She Trades project have visibly impacted on value chain developments in the cocoa, cassava, palm oil and cashew sectors of Sierra Leone especially as the target beneficiaries of these interventions have been Women, Youth, Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises. The impact of these projects over the next few years will be realized on improved inter-regional trade of these commodities as well as improved incomes and livelihood of the beneficiaries.

Madam Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Sierra Leone pursues a policy agenda of promoting regional and intra-regional and welcomes ITCs current initiatives with a host of partners in facilitating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) through its One Trade Africa Initiative which Sierra Leone is benefitting from.

The Government of Sierra Leone is also highly appreciative of the new ITC program to be implemented in Sierra Leone in 2024, **Empowering Youth through Digital Technologies** funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) which is in line with our development agenda. The objective of this project is to contribute to economic growth and job creation in Sierra Leone by enhancing economic opportunities for youth through digital skills and will contribute greatly to the realization of the SDGs.

Madam Chairperson, ITCs theme "*New Trade Routes, New Opportunities*" speaks to the Government of Sierra Leone's strategic direction in the face of a Post Covid Recovery and economic challenges resulting from global external conflicts and we are heartened by ITCs interventions through projects, programmes and trainings to improve trade and livelihoods not only in Sierra Leone but in the West Africa Sub-Region.

In this regard, as LDCs are disproportionately impacted by the huge digital divide, additional support and interventions are needed from all our development partners to bridge this gap especially in digital economy and e-commerce, and human and institutional capacity building. Of note, we look forward to further enhanced collaboration and partnership between the Government of Nepal and ITC in the areas of technology transfer, market intelligence and capacity development for Micro, Small and Medium

Enterprises, especially in order to empower women and Youth Entrepreneurship in particular.

My delegation extends sincere appreciation to all donors supporting ITC's programmes especially where they relate to attainment of the SDGs. We encourage Development Partners to continue to support ITC.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Madam Aissatou Diallo with whom the trade sector of Sierra Leone has had a long and fruitful relationship on her appointment as Head of the Office of Africa at the ITC and we look forward to working with her, Ms. Coke-Hamilton and the entire ITC team to achieve our common objectives in the period ahead.

Thank You