



STATEMENT BY ZIMBABWE
TO
THE MEETING OF THE JOINT ADVISORY GROUP OF THE
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE
GENEVA 13 SEPTEMBER 2022

Zimbabwe would like to thank the Executive Director, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, and her team for the well-presented **2021 Annual Report**; and for the work that ITC continues to do in assisting countries develop their micro, small and medium size enterprises.

We also want to express our profound gratitude for the support that ITC continues to receive from its cooperating partners. For, it is through this funding that ITC is able to design and implement projects to help our communities - most especially our women and our youth - to venture into mainstream economic activities.

As articulated in the **Annual Report**, the environment in which ITC undertook its work-programmes in 2021, proved to be very challenging indeed : and their core constituency of micro, small and medium enterprises certainly felt the strain of those challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic, characterised by global lockdowns, impacted heavily on the informal sector and on small scale enterprises in all countries - including in Zimbabwe. Notwithstanding these difficulties, ITC persevered with its work : and that resilience and commitment are manifest in the positive and most encouraging results reflected in the Report.

Accelerated implemented of the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) will be critical as we approach 2030, and as we try to make up for ground lost during the pandemic. ITC's portfolio of projects and programmes provides direct and

indirect support to 11 of the 17 SDG's, underlining the critical importance of the role this Organisation is playing. Of particular relevance is the recently-launched **MSME Programme on Competitiveness for the SDG's** - which we find highly commendable in all its aspects.

Zimbabwe has benefitted from ITC technical assistance in a number of areas where positive changes are being realised among our small and medium enterprises. Such projects include:

The **Zimbabwe/United Kingdom Trade Partnership Programme** - launched in 2020 and which is still ongoing. The project is focused on exports of high-value horticultural produce, and supports some 600 smallholder farmers - mostly women, youths and other vulnerable groups.

The objective of the project is to transform the agricultural sector through diversification and commercialisation of agricultural activities, and to increase employment and household incomes through the production and export of horticultural produce to the lucrative UK market.

This project contributes to SDGs 1, 2 and 5 - namely **Zero Poverty, Zero Hunger and Gender Equality**.

In parallel, our Trade and Investment support institutions have also been capacitated to improve their services to the horticultural sector.

Again, ITC in partnership with **ZimTrade**, Zimbabwe's export-promotion organisation, conducted training-for-trainers programmes, as well as providing comprehensive guidance for our private sector entities on how they might benefit from export opportunities under the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**.

ITC technical assistance to Zimbabwe has also seen the launch of the next **She Exporter** programme, which is generating very considerable interest from our entrepreneurs.

We also envisage that the national **SME Competitiveness Survey**, where ITC experts will work with our **National Competitiveness Commission**, will be undertaken and completed within the given time frame. The survey is expected to identify barriers-to-trade confronting Zimbabwean micro, small and medium enterprises. We need this sector to gear up and be able to engage in sustainable business in both the local and export markets.

We conclude by once again thanking the **Executive Director** for her Report and for the excellent cooperation which exists between Zimbabwe and ITC : and to say that we look forward to continuing this collaboration with ITC and to expanding existing technical assistance into other areas, including that of **digital trade** - now more relevant than ever before - as well as continued support towards further capacitating and strengthening our trade-negotiating teams.

I thank you