
52ND JOINT ADVISORY GROUP (JAG) MEETING

10 JULY 2018, GENEVA – WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION, ROOM S1

Opening Statement by the Chair of the 51st Session: H. E. Ms. Frances Mary Lisson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the World Trade Organization

Executive Director Arancha González,
Director-General Azevêdo,
Secretary-General Kituyi,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the **52nd session** of the International Trade Centre's Joint Advisory Group.

The past year has been an exciting time to be the Chair of the Joint Advisory Group, and I have enjoyed accompanying the ITC on its journey towards delivering **trade impact for good**.

2017 was a strong year for export and import growth, but a more delicate one for multilateral cooperation on trade. Against this challenging backdrop, the ITC has continued to work to ensure that micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises are better equipped to: take advantage of market access opportunities; and, better integrate into global trade.

This morning, I would like to refer to a few highlights from the past year:

- Firstly, and as we all know, the ITC played a key role in driving the **Buenos Aires Declaration on Women and Trade**, and has continued to contribute to discussions under this initiative in the WTO in 2018. Indeed, women's economic empowerment has been a key theme running through the full range of the ITC's work, in particular, through the expanding **SheTrades** program.
- Secondly, the ITC has supported exports and investments valued at \$646 million through its market intelligence, business support and institutional support. Tools such as the **Global Trade Helpdesk** – which we will hear more on today – as well as the **Export Potential Map**, will continue this good work by providing information for countries and companies seeking to enter or expand into new markets



- And lastly, the ITC's **SME Competitiveness Outlook publication** has provided valuable information and ideas around promoting inclusive trade through regional integration initiatives.

We have seen the ITC continue to evolve over the last year, adopting new tools, new methodologies and new areas of focus. For example, the ITC has increased its focus on addressing trade challenges in post-conflict and fragile states; and is working to improve the skills and employability of vulnerable segments of the society, including migrants, refugees and internally displaced people.

The ITC is also encouraging new types of cooperation – particularly to boost African trade and investment with China and India through partnerships with export and investment promotion agencies.

It has been a very productive year and I'm looking forward to see what the year ahead will bring.

From what I have seen this past year as Chair of the JAG, the ITC's strong **partnerships with governments** – both here in Geneva and in the countries where ITC works – are key to its efforts to support and promote trade which creates positive and inclusive economic, social, and environmental impacts. To that end, I urge you all to continue working with the ITC in support of this important work.

Finally, I would like to personally thank the ITC, and particularly Executive Director Arancha Gonzales, for inviting me to take up this rewarding position and I wish them all the best for the year ahead.

I now call upon His Excellency Mr. Alvaro Cedeño Molinari, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the WTO, to take up his position as **Chair of the 52nd session** of the Joint Advisory Group.