

## **CHAIRPERSON'S SUMMARY JAG 2019**

Excellencies, distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the WTO Director-General, the ITC Executive Director, and our special guest speakers for their contributions to this 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the JAG. I also want to thank the many delegations that took the floor for their constructive feedback on ITC's recent and future work.

This morning opened with a reminder of the challenges facing global trade, and the importance of ensuring that trade continues to be an enabler of sustainable growth, development, job creation and poverty reduction.

We learned more about how ITC, UNCTAD and WTO are working together to make it easier for businesses of all sizes trade intelligence, non-tariff measures, and quality and standards.

Our three special guests provided insights into how to build on trade's contribution to structural transformation in Eastern and Southern Africa, West Africa, and Myanmar.

From COMESA Secretary-General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, we heard about the importance of human capital development, and of practical improvements to customs processes, physical infrastructure, and health and safety compliance to deepening regional economic integration.

ECOWAS Commissioner for Industry and Private Sector Mamadou Traoré reminded us of the need to leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area to bolster value addition in intra-African trade.

Myanmar's Deputy Commerce Minister U Aung Htoo described his country's efforts to use trade reforms to foster socioeconomic transformation. He pointed to Myanmar's work with ITC to promote community-based tourism, upgrade horticulture supply capacity, and develop national export strategies to increase export competitiveness.

It is difficult to boil down a day of varied discussions into a handful of points, but I will try.

Members were uniformly positive about their work with ITC, praising the effectiveness of its interventions to increase the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries. They singled out different aspects of their collaboration with ITC, from women's economic empowerment to e-commerce, climate adaptation, and efforts to build skills and foster entrepreneurship among young people. A number of delegations expressed the desire to set up national SheTrades chapters. ITC market intelligence tools were repeatedly cited for their utility in formulating trade policies. Many also praised ITC's advocacy in favour of multilateral cooperation and rules-based trade.

The Executive Director of ITC started the day by reminding us that modern structural transformation would be about value-addition in agriculture, industry, and services. The

specific projects mentioned by delegations today attested to how countries are partnering with ITC to enhance value addition from coconut and cocoa production through to garment manufacturing and tourism.

The donor coordinator commended ITC's work to bolster trade capacity and reduce trade costs for small businesses, and praised the reach of ITC events as well as its media presence. Funders praised ITC for creating \$17 in export and investment value for every dollar in extra-budgetary spending, and expressed satisfaction about how ITC was leveraging unearmarked 'Window 1' support to generate project-specific 'Window 2' support. Looking ahead, the donor coordinator urged ITC to try to influence other stakeholders wherever it can make a difference to MSMEs, and to work to ensure ITC's impact endures over time, with lasting local ownership.

Several delegations called for ensuring predictable funding for ITC. Some, including Canada, Denmark, and Norway announced on-going and future contributions to ITC.

ITC is leveraging innovative partnerships to create impact, as demonstrated by today's agreement with the UEFA Foundation for Children.

Today's session confirmed that ITC is an organization that learns from its work and engages with stakeholders to promote inclusive and sustainable development. It continues to innovate new approaches to make good trade happen.

In closing, I would like to thank you all for your participation, and express a special thanks to ITC's funders and beneficiaries for your continued trust, support and engagement.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your Chair.

Thank you.