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**Statement by Finland, ITC JAG 2014;**

- First of all, I would like to congratulate the chair for his/her election as the chairperson. We are confident that we will have a fruitful meeting under your able leadership.
- As this is the first JAG meeting held since the appointment of Arancha Gonzales as Executive Director of ITC - I would like to express the Finnish delegation's gratitude for your work. The first year under your stewardship has been impressive and we are confident that ITC is in good hands. In particular, we would like to support you in your determination to draw more attention to RBM, accountability, impacts and transparency. We look forward to working with you in the coming years.
- Finland is a long-standing supporter of the ITC. We see ITC as a key partner particularly in the area of Aid for Trade. We particularly value ITC's strong focus on private sector development, particularly the SME sector in poorest developing countries; on building capacity of developing countries to benefit from regional and global trade opportunities to fight poverty; and the strong commitment of ITC on promoting gender equality and environmental sustainability in the context of international trade. These are priorities that Finland also promotes in all its Aid for Trade cooperation.
- One of the issues at hand is the current evaluation of ITC. We are pleased to note that the evaluation confirms that ITC's mandate is both unique and very relevant to particularly developing countries and that ITC's expertise in this field is world-class. We are also pleased to note that ITC has made progress since the previous evaluations - however, we also note that, according to the evaluation, progress could have been much better with room for significant improvements still remaining.
- It is important that we carefully study and discuss the findings of the evaluation in detail, and after that evaluate what is the best way forward. This JAG meeting, in our view, is the point of departure for this work and we still have many discussions ahead of us. Our general remark is that it is important to take a very pragmatic approach, so that ITC will not be launched into another phase of very revolutionary reforms.
- Allow me to highlight some of the priorities in our cooperation with ITC from a donor perspective. We live in a world where financial resources are increasingly tight, and we have to constantly demonstrate to our tax payers that we are using their money prudently in a way that creates results. This means that we need to

increasingly focus on having better systems in place for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating to ensure results. It also means that communications to the broader public is becoming more and more important. We need package and disseminate our messages in ways that are appealing to a broad audience.

- Our current cooperation with the ITC is focused on strengthening regional trade in Eastern Africa, particularly in Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania by focusing on value chains and regional trade opportunities. There were delays in project planning, and consequently, getting this project on the ground, but we are confident that it will yield some very positive results. We look forward to working closely with ITC in this context. Another important area of cooperation is support to developing ITC analytical tools which are the basis of the organizations expertise.
- To conclude, I would like to thank the Executive Director Arancha Gonzales and her staff for your excellent work. As the last point, but definitely not the least, Finland would like to congratulate ITC for its 50th anniversary. As we heard yesterday at the ITC 50th Anniversary event, ITC has been unlocking SME competitiveness for the past 50 years. We are confident that ITC will continue unlocking SME competitiveness and creating trade impact for good also for the next 50 years! Thank you!