

- Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the MFA Finland
- International Trade Centre is a very important and highly valued partner to Finland's Aid for Trade. ITC is actually our number partner in the area of women's entrepreneurship and women in trade, and also a key partner in the development of the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries. This resonates nicely with Finland's development policy priorities to enhance the rights and status of women and girls as well as support developing country economies to create more jobs, livelihoods and well-being for the people. All of our work is based in universal human rights and aim at strengthening the human rights of the people in developing countries.
- ITC's effort to improve the results based management of its operations is very welcome. We are particularly delighted to see concrete results and also evidence of significant leverage of funding. Finland is developing its own results reporting system and I can assure you the road has been rocky. We produced last year the first ever results report of Finland's development cooperation, at the whole of Ministry level. That report is not public. However, this year we will produce a public report of the results of the Finnish development cooperation. Some key results of the ITC will therefore feed also into Finland's results report.
- I still want to return to women's entrepreneurship and women in trade. Having seen the enthusiasm and commitment of the hundreds of women entrepreneurs at SheTrades Global in Liverpool a couple of weeks ago, I can't help thinking if we have really understood the full potential of the SheTrades community around the ITC. My advice is to think big. You have obviously thousands of business women in the community, ready to take this initiative and the idea behind it to the next level. The practice of launching national SheTrades chapters is really welcome, it's a way to "outsource" the management of part of the network to people who are willing to do it on the ITC's behalf.
- However, there's still more that we can do to unlock the full potential of SheTrades. Having talked to many of the women entrepreneurs in Liverpool, several of them were wondering if they could use the SheTrades name or logo somehow in their marketing. I couldn't give an answer. The idea is, however, attractive. Such a recognition by being able to use the SheTrades brand for business purposes could bring much needed credibility for the women running their own companies, both in financial negotiations and in international trade. Over a longer term, SheTrades could be even developed into a certificate with clear criteria and verification mechanism. Think of Fair Trade label. Could SheTrades become the next-generation ethical trade label?
- I'd like to also mention one thing in which the ITC still has room for improvement. The share of professionals at P5 level and above has increased significantly from 2015 to 2017, being 24 %. Although the direction is right, I'd like to encourage the ITC to pay increased attention to recruiting women in its own organization also at the management level.
- As to the conclusions and recommendations of the 2018 Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report, the report highlights many important issues in which the ITC still has work to do. Sustainability, impact, objective setting, beneficiaries' buy-in and baseline data are some of the issues that the Synthesis Report highlights for the need of improvement. Looking back at Finland's own experiences in development cooperation, I have to admit that these challenges are by no means ITC-specific. We all sit in the same boat. What the Report also reveals is that the ITC takes evaluations seriously and really wants to improve its operations as suggested by the recommendations.
- We are currently in the process of finalizing our next funding and cooperation package with the ITC. Our intention is to move from full soft earmarking to a combination of totally unearmarked core funding and some soft earmarking. The ITC's valuable work aligns so beautifully with Finland's development policy priorities that we can easily stand behind everything that the ITC does for the benefit of poverty eradication. The soft earmarked part, accounting for half of our contribution, will support women's entrepreneurship, women in inclusive and green trade and engagement in value chains, highlighting the top priority of women's status and gender equality in Finland's development policy.

- As a conclusion, I'd like to thank the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director, the rest of the management and the entire staff of the International Trade Centre for its valuable work for the benefit of Agenda 2030 and the achievement of the SDGs in developing countries. Thank you, Chair.