

General Statement by Finland, ITC JAG, 4 July 2016

Thank you Mr Chair, for giving me the floor. Allow me to start by saying that my country, Finland, aligns herself with the statement made by Germany on behalf of donor countries.

Mr Chair, I would like to express our warmest congratulations to Ambassador, on your election as the new chair. I would also like to express our gratitude to the outgoing chair, Ambassador, Patricia O'Brien for her excellent leadership during the past year.

ITC is an important partner to Finland particularly in the area of Aid for Trade. Finland's new Development Policy puts a strong emphasis on the rights of women and girls, as well as, on private sector development. These areas are critical contributors in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are very pleased to note that our overall foreign policy goals align very well with ITC's work, particularly in these areas. ITC has a strong focus on SMEs and connecting SMEs to markets. ITC is also doing a lot to connect women businesses to markets, for example the SheTrades - initiative.

A definite highlight in our cooperation with ITC this year was the International Forum on Women in Business that was held recently in Helsinki, Finland on the 8th of June 2016. The event was very well attended and the discussions were of very high standard. The event was opened jointly by Finland's then Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Lenita Toivakka and ITC Executive Director Arancha González. We also had the honor of welcoming Honorable Minister Julia Duncan from Liberia at the Forum and many other excellent panelists and participants. I want to warmly thank ITC, ED Arancha González and the SheTrades team in ITC for all your hard work, passion and commitment in promoting Women's Economic Empowerment.

We have also been pleased with a broad range of cooperation between ITC and Finland in various areas. For example Finpro, Finland's trade and investment support institution (TISI) is a member of ITC's TISI board. Finnpartnership – a Finnish programme that promotes business partnerships - has collaborated with ITC in promoting imports from developing countries. Finland's MFA's Evaluation Unit has collaborated with ITC in a peer-learning exercise to strengthen evaluation work at ITC. We are very pleased to see our relationship with the ITC developing into a broad partnership.

Finland has been a reliable funding partner to ITC. In 2015 we supported ITC's work in market intelligence, TSIs, trade facilitation and trade integration in the EAC region. A multi-year programme to strengthen intra-regional trade and value chains in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia is coming to an end in July 2016. We are very impressed on how hard ITC has worked to make the project successful. Many concrete results are beginning to emerge from the project. While the project is coming to end, we hope that

ITC will continue to engage with the project partners to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the project results.

Finland's Aid for Trade work was recently evaluated. Some of the recommendations related to our cooperation with multilateral organizations, including ITC. In general, the evaluation noted the high quality of work done by agencies such as ITC. However, it was also noted that costs of international projects are often high compared to locally run projects. Therefore, we need to focus on value for money, particularly as aid budgets are increasingly tight.

Finally, we would like to commend ITC for its work that the organization continues to carry out to implement the recommendations of the recent evaluations, to improve results orientation of its work and to have a clear strategy of what the organization is aiming to achieve. These are, nevertheless, areas where continuous further work still needs to be done. We are all facing increasing pressure to demonstrate results and also communicate them to our constituencies, such as parliaments and tax payers.

Thank you.