

Finland's statement at 55th JAG, 2 November 2021

- Thank you, Mister Chair. Finland aligns itself with the statement made by the Donor Coordinator. Let me also to say a few words in my national capacity.
- Let me first convey our warmest congratulations to you as the Chair of this 55th session of the Joint Advisory Group.
- Let me also thank the outgoing Chair for her valuable contribution to the 54th session of the Joint Advisory Group.
- And of course, our gratitude goes to the Executive Director, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, for her able leadership during the challenging first year, not least because of the heavy restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Distinguished delegates,

- Finland has cooperated with the International Trade Centre for a long time. The expertise of the ITC in sustainable value chains, competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, women and youth entrepreneurship, and livelihood opportunities of refugees, to name a few areas, is impressive. I want to particularly underline women's entrepreneurship and SheTrades initiative that match well with Finland's number one development policy priority of the rights and status of women and girls and gender equality.
- Finland appreciates also the ITC's efforts to help the developing countries make their trade greener. The two huge challenges of the humankind are climate change and biodiversity loss. Climate change is already visible everywhere in the world, manifest as extreme heat, drought, rains, landslides, storms, floods. The loss of biodiversity is also well documented but it's much less visible. Yet, it's happening. The positive sign is that many countries have made their commitments of carbon neutrality at some point in the future. Finland aims at 2035.
- Everything that the ITC does to reduce the speed of climate change and help the developing countries, businesses and eventually the people living in those countries, to adapt to the climate change, is valuable. Companies are at the forefront of using raw materials, water, land and atmosphere, and therefore, we must expect the business sector to do its share. Green business, sustainable value chains and circular economy are at the heart of this, and ITC's role is appreciated there.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- I would like to highlight the importance of ITC's efforts to improve the entrepreneurship and income earning opportunities of the people in the most vulnerable situations. ITC is already active in refugee communities. We find it important and welcome. Internally Displaced Persons and refugees often work or operate their microenterprises in the informal sector. They do it because they have no choice.
- Finland pays keen attention to nondiscrimination and the rights of persons with disabilities. It's one of the cross-cutting objectives of our development policy that we take into account in everything we finance. We hope that the share of projects and partners that improve the rights of persons with disabilities will increase in the future. We are confident that ITC can and should spearhead in supporting the income earning opportunities of the persons with disabilities. We believe that ITC is among the partners of ours that actually can do it in an impactful way. We would certainly welcome it with a lot of interest.

Mister Chair,

- We want to express our appreciation for the ITC Annual Report. We find it very informative and well written, even the illustrations look appealing. What we would like to suggest is that the Annual Reports could highlight the results and impacts in a more systematic way so that the indicators and the overall story, that the indicators tell, continue to be comparable from year to year.
- To conclude, Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank the entire ITC for the excellent work done even in these trying times. I wish all the success for the ITC in 2022. Thank you, Chair.