



**Statement by Jamaica**  
**55<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Trade Centre (ITC) Joint Advisory Group (JAG)**  
**Meeting**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021**

Thank you Ambassador Paul Bekkers and my delegation wishes to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this 55<sup>th</sup> Joint Advisory Group Meeting (JAG).

Let me also use the opportunity to express thanks to Ambassador Ataliah Molokomme for her able stewardship over the 54<sup>th</sup> Session and for her statement delivered at the start of this morning's session. My delegation thanks Director Moreno and DDG Zhang for their remarks on behalf of Secretary General Grynspan and Director General Ngozi. We also express our appreciation to the Executive Director of the ITC, Ms. Pamela Coke Hamilton for her comprehensive overview of the Organization's work.

Chair

Jamaica, wishes to commend Pamela and her team for the ITC's agility in responding to the challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. The rapid pivoting, a term borrowed from the title of the 2020 Annual Report, as well as the credible response of the Organization, is a clear demonstration of the ITC's unwavering commitment to fulfilling its mandate.

Jamaica takes positive note of the ITC's Annual Report for 2020 so fittingly titled "*Pivoting with Purpose*" and is pleased that the ITC continues to align its Work Programme with the Sustainable Development Goals and offer support to developing countries across the globe.

We also take note of the ITC's Strategic Plan: 2022 - 2025 and its vision to, inter alia, strengthen its work at inclusion, sustainability and prosperity.

Chair,

The findings of ITC's COVID-19 Business Impact Survey highlighted that nearly two-thirds of micro and small firms were negatively impacted by the pandemic, with many facing the risk of permanent closure.

Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, in her contribution to the SME Competitiveness Outlook 2021, highlighted the inability of MSMEs to quickly rebound from the pandemic. She further highlighted some of the traditional challenges facing ours MSMEs, including limited access to new technologies and the inadequate access to capacity building opportunities.

That is why the ITC's **ecomConnect** programme and other initiatives which focus on building ecommerce strategies, and which offer exposure to other digital tools, should continue to be a key area of focus for the ITC. Such support will help MSMEs to boost their international competitiveness, tap into new markets allowing them to be well positioned to maximize on those opportunities that will arise from the digital economy.

The Global Trade Helpdesk, a collaborative effort with UNCTAD and the WTO provides timely and relevant trade intelligence to empower firms to take advantage of market opportunities and adapt to new post-COVID commercial realities.

We are pleased at the ITC's attention and role in supporting SIDS countries in critical areas such as trade, sustainable investment, and climate resilience.

Chair,

Specifically, from the national perspective, the Government of Jamaica is pleased with the positive results of ongoing work of the ITC in our country. There has, of course, been a longstanding relationship with the ITC, which Jamaica values greatly and which continues to contribute to the country's economic and social development.

We continue to hail the Cocoa and Coconut project through which we have benefitted tremendously. The coconut project for example is directly impacting lives, from value addition to training in soap making using coconut produce, with a focus on product safety and quality control, to ongoing work on climate-smart irrigated intercropping, which allows coconut farmers to generate income by intercropping with cash crops.

Not only do these programmes directly impact the lives of Jamaicans, but at the same time, tackle issues such as food security and climate change. We look forward to these partnerships being replicated in even more sectors and products in the region.

Food and the culture are major elements of Jamaica's national identity and national pride. Gastronomy tourism for example cuts across many sectors in the country. We thank the ITC for its ongoing work on Jamaican specialty foods which is aimed at introducing innovative approaches to showcase the viable opportunities to unique products and cooking techniques with a view to impacting better the tourism and restaurant industry. I should also mention the ITC's work in the area of creative industries.

We look forward to concretizing plans for organizing capacity building activities and explore evidence-based policy options and opportunities for better trade integration and agribusiness support. We thank the Office of the Latin America and the Caribbean for its outreach and engagement in that regard.

Chair, The She Trades initiative continue to be an important one for Jamaica and we look forward to strengthening our engagement with the ITC, especially in light of the revelation from the Competitiveness Outlook 2020 which showed that business operations of 64 per cent of women-led firms were deeply compromised by the pandemic.

We wish to emphasize the importance of involvement of the youth in trade and encourage the ITC to continue bolstering its support for young entrepreneurs and for youth empowerment generally.

I wish to also mention the services sectors especially tourism which are key economic drivers from many developing countries and which have been severely affected by the pandemic. We look forward to the ITC increasing its attention to work in that area.

Chair,

It would be remiss of me not to commend the donors and other developments partners for their continued invaluable contribution to the regular budget and extra budgetary resources as well as technical support that continue to ensure that the ITC is equipped to execute its programme of work annually.

Trade has the potential to unlock economic and social development across the globe and Organizations such as the ITC continues to ensure that this potential is realized. The continued support of our development partners to the ITC, is therefore critical.

I end by congratulating, once more, Executive Director, Pamela, for what she was able to achieve in a pandemic laced and difficult year. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the ITC as it seeks to implement its vision at becoming what Pamela has termed "a more agile, expert and connected partner".

I thank you.