



Statement by Jamaica
53rd Session of the International Trade Centre (ITC) Joint Advisory Group (JAG)
Meeting
3rd July 2019

Thank you Madame Chair

Jamaica wishes to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this 53rd Joint Advisory Group Meeting. We also thank Ambassador Alvaro Molinari for his stewardship of the 52nd Session.

We thank the Executive Director, Mrs. Arancha Gonzalez, for her very comprehensive report on the progress which has been made on ITC activities and the planned events for the period ahead.

We also thank Secretary General Kituyi and Director General Azevedo for their insightful comments as well as the statements of invited Guests. Further, we align ourselves with the statement by the Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of CARICOM.

Importantly Madame Chair, the Jamaican Government places on record, its appreciation to the Executive Director, and the entire ITC Team, for the invaluable work which has been

undertaken over the years, in providing technical cooperation and assistance activities in favour of our countries.

Jamaica applauds the ITC for its excellent work in fostering inclusive and sustainable growth and development through trade, trade facilitation and international business development. We commend the ITC for its agility and responsiveness in seeking to address the needs of developing and least developed countries. In particular, the support to MSMEs operating in our countries has been invaluable. For Jamaica, this represents over 97% of firms. Of particular benefit, are those interventions aimed at improving market intelligence and assisting MSMEs to better target their products towards the most promising markets and in diversifying and adding value to their products. The ITC's suite of programs and online tools and databases such as the Global Trade Helpdesk and the Rules of Origin Facilitator, have contributed significantly in making global trade more transparent and have facilitated access to new markets for MSMEs.

In that connection, Jamaica takes this opportunity to, once more, commend the ITC on its annual SME Competitiveness Outlook report for 2018 and for its timely focus on the 'Business Ecosystems for the Digital Age'. The analysis provided on how digital platforms are transforming the ways firms do business is quite relevant and my Capital has been reflecting on the findings and areas of focus of the report including the threats and opportunities that digital platforms provide for MSMEs.

Jamaica is one of several Caribbean countries which is benefitting from a number of critical projects and programmes which are vital for our economic development. At the national level previous interventions included developing a National Export Strategy and undertaking a study on NTMs affecting Jamaican Businesses. One of the most recent ITC activities was the introduction of the “SheTrades Outlook” platform in Jamaica, in March 2019. As you are aware, “SheTrades Outlook” aims at assisting stakeholders to assess, monitor, and improve the extent to which their institutional framework supports the participation of women in international trade. The event provided an opportunity for data collection as well as provided encouragement for Jamaica to place on its agenda consideration for the establishment of a SheTrades Country Chapter. My delegate on welcomes the ITC’s consistent emphasis on empowering women in the global economy especially important in our country where women represent 50% of the population and 45% of the workforce.

Madame Chair, as mentioned by the Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica is one of the countries benefitting from a ‘Regional Coconut industry development Project, financed through EDF resources and which is being implemented by the ITC in collaboration with the Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute (CARDI), the Ministry of Industry Commerce Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF), the Coconut Industry Board, the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ), JAMPRO and the Scientific Research Council. The project aims at improving the competitiveness of the coconut industry with the

shared objectives of improving market linkages, increasing production performance and quality, and improving regional coordination. We are pleased that this project has been proceeding very well, with Jamaican companies increasing their production of value-added products. There have also been other improvements to the sector, such as in the packaging and marketing of coconut products.

Chair, we would be remiss were we not to mention that in the pursuit of its objectives in building capacity in our countries, the ITC has also facilitated strong people to people and institution to institution relationships, thus contributing to the sustainability of our trade capacity building, trade promotion and trade development efforts.

Finally Madame Chair, allow me to commend the development partners, many of which are represented here today, who continue to provide invaluable financial and technical support to the important work of the ITC. The record US\$64 million of extra-budgetary expenditures on technical assistance and capacity building during 2018, a 38% increase over that in 2017, is indeed commendable and highlights the strong demand that exists for the ITC's services. We, therefore, encourage the development partners to maintain this high level of support during the next cycle of the Strategic Plan activities.

Madame Chair, Jamaica looks forward to continued collaboration and cooperation with the ITC. We view the ITC as a key resource in our economic development strategy and thus embrace wholeheartedly their motto for this year “scaling up for Structural Transformation”.

I thank you.

PRUN Geneva
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