

The Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre (ITC)

Forty-eighth session (June 11 and 12, 2013)

Statement by Japan

(draft)

Thank you [Mister/Madame Chair].

At the outset, I would like to join others to congratulate you for your election as a chair of the 48th Joint Advisory Group.

We would also like to extend our appreciation for Executive Director Ms. Arancha Gonzalez and the team for its report on the achievement of 2013 as well as the Operational Plan for 2014.

Japan commends Executive Director's effort to set clear goals to achieve further impact, while responding to the UN wide cuts in operational costs. Japan supports ITC's commitment to strengthen its management based on the result, and stands ready to actively engage in the discussion to further enhance the quality of ITC's work.

[Mister/Madame Chair],

The expansion of regional and global value chains provides opportunities for Small and Medium sized enterprises and micro producers to participate in the international trade. An effort to support SMEs could also generate

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quality jobs, which serves as the base for robust economic growth. In this regards, we see the value on ITC's clear focus on private sector development, especially SMEs, and on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, Japan would like to underline our support to place SME development at the heart of the work of the ITC.

Regarding a specific project, we are pleased to see the positive development of the Ethical Fashion Initiative in Japan in 2013. Japan has been contributing to the Ethical Fashion Initiative since 2007, with a view to support local artisans, especially women, to connect them to the value chains. From 2013 to 2014, we have seen a significant growth in the Ethical Fashion market in Japan, starting from ITC's collaboration with major distributors like Isetan and Takashimaya. In April this year a new Ethical Fashion brand was launched under the collaboration between ITC and United Arrows, one of the major fashion brands in Japan, to bring products from Burkina Faso and Kenya to Japanese consumers. We acknowledge the positive impact that Ethical Fashion Initiative has brought to the local communities and look forward to its further development to support the micro-producers in Africa.

Thank you, [Mister/Madame Chair].