

**The Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre (ITC)
Fifty-first session (July 10th, 2017)
Statement by Japan**

Thank you Madam Chair,

I would like to join others in congratulating your appointment as the chair of the 51st Joint Advisory Group.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to Executive Director Ms. Arancha Gonzalez and the ITC team for their hard work, including the publication of the annual report 2016.

Madam Chair,

Japan fully supports the statement by the representative of the UK on behalf of the donor countries.

There is no need to repeat how important it is, at this critical juncture, to make trade more inclusive and ensure that all the stakeholders, including LDCs, MSMEs, women and the youth, can reap and feel the benefits of trade. We appreciate that the ITC has been striving to achieve such common goals on the ground, assisting growth and job creation that are strongly related to the SDGs.

Japan is especially pleased to see ITC's focus on women's empowerment and capacity building of women-owned-SMEs, including the SheTrades initiative. We are extremely grateful that Executive Director Madam Arancha Gonzalez participated in WAW!, the World Assembly for Women 2016, which was held in Tokyo last December. She showed herself as a role model of women's leadership and enriched the discussion of women empowerment in various fields.

Japan also appreciates ITC's initiatives on SMEs or MSMEs as well as on e-commerce and digital trade. We particularly congratulate the success of the first MSME Day event on 27 June. The ITC is the very organization to directly tackle these mutually related issues in a harmonized manner. Japan looks forward to engaging in ITC's discussion together with the WTO and the UNCTAD on improving access of information for SMEs.

On the operational side, Japan continues to support Executive Director's commitment to the institutional and managerial reforms as well as to transparency and accountability. We also commend ITC's effort to diversify its funding resources and strengthen partnerships with various actors.

Lastly but not least, Japan is promoting the approach of "Strengthening the Humanitarian-Development Nexus" in its own aid policy. This is a concept that, on one hand, humanitarian assistance for refugees is urgently needed, but at the same time, creating job opportunities for them is also critical to address a part of the very root causes of the problem and to ensure long-lasting peace and prosperity. We think the work of the ITC is valuable in complementing and reinforcing other international efforts to maximize their effectiveness. Japan, as its part, aims to further strengthen its cooperative relationship with the ITC from such a perspective.

Thank you, Madam Chair.