

Philippine Statement on 54th Session of the ITC Joint Advisory Group

25 November 2020, 10am

Thank you, Madame Chair.¹

At the outset, the Philippines would like to congratulate you on your assumption as Chair of the 54th Session of the Joint Advisory Group Meeting. We would also like to thank the ITC for organizing this annual meeting to update Members on ITC's activities and exchange views on its work programme.

The Philippines values the role of ITC in promoting trade as a means to spur inclusive and sustainable economic development, particularly for developing countries. We particularly recognize ITC's critical work in improving the competitiveness of micro, small and medium enterprises or MSMEs, including women entrepreneurs, to enhance their participation in international trade.

ITC is an important partner of the Philippines in strengthening the integration of our business sectors and fostering the participation of our MSMEs in the global market. MSMEs are the economic lifeblood of the Philippines and have been essential to its emergence as an important player in regional value chains. Increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs can spur resilience to the current pandemic and future shocks while promoting inclusive and sustainable growth.

The Philippines has successfully collaborated with ITC in various projects in the past years and we are glad to have continued our partnership on recent initiatives, such as the Global Trade Helpdesk, the Philippines SME Competitiveness Report, and the SheTrades Philippines Hub.

We are pleased to be among the early users of the Global Trade Helpdesk which has been a useful market research tool, especially for our MSME exporters. We are also happy to have worked with ITC on the Philippines SME Competitiveness Report which shed light on our

¹ (H.E. Ms. Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Republic of Botswana to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva)

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MSMEs resilience and competitiveness, particularly in time of the COVID19 pandemic. Further, we look forward to the virtual launch of the SheTrades Philippines Hub next week which we hope will further strengthen our country's efforts in promoting women's economic empowerment and contribute to the global target of connecting 3 Million women entrepreneurs to markets by 2021.

The Philippines remains committed in our collaboration with ITC. We appreciate ITC's partnership with the Philippines, and we look forward to continue working together in helping MSMEs reach their full potential in the global market, especially in these challenging times.

Thank you.
