

**Statement of the Russian Federation
at the 54th Joint Advisory Group meeting of the International Trade Centre**

25 November 2020

Executive Director of ITC,
Secretary-General of UNCTAD,
Deputy Director-General of WTO,
Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

We would like to take this opportunity to join in congratulating Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton on the appointment as the new Executive Director of ITC. We are confident that under your dynamic leadership ITC will effectively continue the ongoing efforts in favor of the MSMEs as well as launch new ambitious projects and initiatives.

Your assumption to the post of executive director of ITC happened in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, when severe socio-economic crisis hit hard the world economy and pushed SMEs into highly challenging environment. We note with satisfaction that under pandemic conditions ITC aligned its activities with the urgent task of mitigating economic shocks caused by the COVID-19.

We consider research products and analytical tools prepared by ITC during current turbulent times to be of practical importance, notably Global [map](#) of COVID-19 temporary trade measures. This online portal is user-friendly and representative; it provides up-to-date information on trade regulations of vital medical supplies and other essential products.

At the same time annual report 2019 demonstrates the success of the ITC work last year. It is worth mentioning that most of the performance indicators exceed target benchmarks set by the Operational Plan.

Russia continues to monitor and examine products of analytical and project activities of ITC on a regular basis, without losing sight of the recommendations on SMEs development.

Currently Russian Government steadily intensifies support of SMEs in the face of COVID-19 challenges. From the most recent measures I can cite the official [launch](#) of a “single window” for exporters which is planned for tomorrow. It will allow exporters, including SMEs, to reduce time and expenses, decrease paperwork and establish electronic communication with various government agencies and organizations involved in providing export services. In general, [roadmap](#) for overcoming the economic consequences of COVID-19 pandemic includes interest-free loans and grants for SMEs to pay salaries, deferral and reduction of tax and insurance payments, expansion of soft loan programs for SMEs and others.

SME support remains one of the priorities of the Russian foreign assistance. This year the Russian Federation funded SME related projects worth almost \$40 mln through UN organizations¹.

In conclusion, we look forward to strengthening cooperation between the Russian Federation and ITC during your tenure, Mme Executive Director, and welcome new ITC initiative in this field.

Thank you!

¹ WFP projects in Cuba (\$5 mln), Nicaragua (\$5mln), Syria (\$20 mln)
UNDP projects in Guinea (\$1,2 mln and \$1,5 mln), Madagascar (\$4mln), Laos (\$1,5mln)