



REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

50TH JOINT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER

STATEMENT BY SIERRA LEONE AMBASSADOR YVETTE STEVENS

4 July 2016

Mr. Chairman,

Sierra Leone aligns itself with the statement of Benin on behalf of the Least Developed Countries.

My delegation would first of all like to thank the Ambassador of Ireland, Ms Patricia O'Brien for her dedicated work in presiding over the affairs of the Joint Advisory Group over the past year, and to congratulate Ambassador Negash Kebret Botorra for his election to chair this august body.

Sierra Leone takes the floor to acknowledge the excellent work being done by ITC. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda dedicated a section on "Trade as an Engine of Development", and the importance of ITC to make this a reality, cannot be overestimated. As a joint body of WTO and UNCTAD, ITC has a key role in assisting developing countries to translate the global trade rule promulgated by WTO and the global trade policies of UNCTAD into concrete actions on the ground.

ITC is also a partner in the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), where it is providing valuable assistance to catalyze wider trade development activities in the Least Developed Countries.

From the foregoing, it is clear that ITC is well-placed to provide the support required by developing countries in the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

ITC's practical approach needs to be commended. Indeed, empowering women, youth employment, skills development and employment of refugees, as well as SME development are all vital elements in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

But ITC needs to be enabled to allow it to deepen and widen its outreach. If the international community would like to ensure that "no one is left behind", then investing in ITC represents excellent value for money.

Mr. Chairman,

Sierra Leone has, and continues to benefit from ITC projects and programmes. In addition to ECOWAS projects, ITC has supported cross-border trade between Sierra Leone and Liberia, as well as trade competitiveness of selected agro sectors and support to the Export Development and Investment Corporation.

My delegation is pleased to report that it is one of the beneficiary countries benefiting from capacity building on the landmark WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Sierra Leone is also looking forward to the implementation of a new project targeted at SMEs, which is currently in the pipeline, and which could be most useful as the country strives to recover from the Ebola crisis, which adversely affected all of our social and economic activities.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Sierra Leone would like to thank the erstwhile Executive Director and her staff for their commitment, dedication and unflinching support to the poorest countries.

Mr Chairman, I thank you.