

Thank you Chair,

First of all I would like to echo others in welcoming you ambassador as a new chair, and also thank the representatives in the panel for delivering inspiring statements today.

Turning to the Annual report I have some comments to share from our perspective.

Overall we find that ITC continues to provide critical public goods to facilitate SME trade to raise incomes and job opportunities in low income countries; that ITC continues to advance the policy agenda, such in the case of its prominent contribution to the work of the joint declaration on women and trade; and we are pleased to see that ITC continues to strengthen working and evaluation procedures to increase the efficiency of your important work.

Window 1 funding is critical for an innovative and successful ITC. 2016-2017 were tough years in this regard, and for Sweden, accounting for over 40 % of Window 1 funding in 2017, we were very happy to learn at the CCITF meeting in May, and confirmed today, that the funding situation for 2018 has improved significantly, creating good opportunities for achieving the strategic plan.

The annual report provides plenty of evidence of good achievements. A challenge and a great opportunity for the organisation is to learn from activities in other parts, to mainstream good practices and thereby leverage the impact of ITC work.

The Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report points in this direction, to mainstream lessons and approaches from programmes like She Trades, or Trade for Sustainable development, to promote “trade with adjectives” to use the Executive Directors wording. We hope to see even more of this integrated approach in the years ahead, also in the Annual report.

Finally, at ITC you are getting your boots dirty, you are also doing work in country, working with local TISI, government and private sector. As a global Geneva based organization this is not without challenges. Sustainable outcomes require ownership of strategic local partners, time and adaptation to local context. These challenges are not new and we know that you are working hard to be selective on where you engage and to be cost efficient. We welcome that you are increasingly targeting LDC and fragile states despite inherent challenges. We encourage you to further improve reporting on the cost efficiency of your work.

Chair to sum up, we would like to express our appreciation for a good report, for good progress made and not least, for the hard and professional work by you Executive Director, the senior management team and the staff.

Thank you