

## **Talking Points**

### **Meeting of the Joint Advisory Group of the International Trade Centre (49th Session) June 26, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in room S1, WTO**

Thank You Madame Chair.

I want to thank Executive Director Arancha González for her leadership and the ITC staff for the hard work they have put in over the past year to elevate the role of evaluation and learning, to strengthen strategic planning, and to improve effectiveness and efficiency of programming in support of SMEs, on Non-Tariff Measures, and in support of women's economic empowerment.

The U.S. aligns itself with the donor statement delivered by our distinguished colleague from Germany.

#### **Annual Report**

We commend ITC's team responsible for the Annual Report on an excellent job of conveying complex information in a very visually appealing manner.

The annual report bolsters ITC's solid reputation for strong activity design, across an array of technical assistance programs, and classroom and online training programs supported by superb, easily navigated trade databases. ITC is not only doing more and doing it better, but also communicating this more effectively.

The Appendices are very helpful. Appendix IV on needs assessment and project design is excellent. Given the commendable work that ITC is putting in to evaluations, it would be nice to see a similar Appendix for evaluations.

Many of the graphics are indeed indicators. It would be helpful for stakeholders to also have a simple, text document that lays out the indicators with results in the result framework tree so we can see the higher level goal they link to.

The graphic draft results framework shared at the informal CCITF meeting last week is also very helpful. This is exactly what we were looking for in some of our comments at previous meetings.

We appreciate how responsive ITC has been in recent months, the informal CCITF, and the clear guidance on how and when partners can best engage in ITC's strategic planning processes. We look forward to further consultation.

### **Evaluation and Learning:**

We appreciate the emphasis ITC is placing on evaluation and learning. The new section in the evaluation report on evaluation services is welcome. The reflection and identified ways forward are notable (see paras 64, 65).

The report on Implementation of the ITC Evaluation Management Response Actions on page 2 says that the "theory of change" is done as found in the "One ITC" document, but my understanding from the CCITF meeting last week is that at least at the level of the 16 Programs, this is still in process. We note that the evaluation of TCCEP found "the synergy among individual projects and the coherence between operations in countries are not evident". Theory of change will address this.

We want to echo the donor statement in our commitment to work with ITC to improve measurement of impact of capacity building initiatives, moving from subjective self-assessments to more objective methodologies for measuring behavior change.

### **Partnership**

Lastly, I wanted to say a few words about our partnership with ITC.

With USAID support, the International Trade Centre (ITC) has been designing and implementing country training activities to improve trade capacity building and trade promotion capabilities since 2002.

In 2015, USAID has expanded this relationship by supporting the Ethical Fashion program in Haiti to assist artisans and microproducers, and a new multilateral initiative focused on streamlining trade barriers in the Middle East, complimenting ITC's on-going "Euro-Med Trade and Investment Facilitation Mechanism".

USAID is pleased to further solidify our relationship with ITC, particularly because of ITC's convening power on trade issues, role in donor coordination, and connections with political leadership, key regional organizations, trade support institutions, and SMEs.

In the year to come, we look forward to working closely with partner nations, Executive Director González, and ITC staff to ensure the organization continues to fulfill its mandate in an effective and efficient manner.

Thank you.