

## **Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am glad to participate in the 55th Joint Advisory Group meeting and have an opportunity to speak on activities of ITC in Uzbekistan.

Nowadays “Facilitating the Process of Uzbekistan’s Accession to the WTO” project which is a five-year initiative fully sponsored by the European Union that is being implemented by ITC.

In 2017 at the initiative of the **President of the Republic of Uzbekistan HE Shavkat Mirziyoyev** the process of WTO accession of Uzbekistan was resumed.

In this regard, currently we are carrying out comprehensive reforms aimed at ensuring the achievement of acceptable conditions for the accession of Uzbekistan, including bringing the national legislation in line with the norms and principles of the WTO.

ITC’s five-year project supports Uzbekistan’s economic development plans through leveraging the process of accession to the WTO. It is worth to acknowledge that the project was launched exactly at the time of covid-19 pandemic arrival. However, despite significant obstacles caused by this, ITC has proven itself to be highly adaptable to new formats of providing technical support in a short period of time and effectively accommodating the needs of our country and various relevant stakeholders from Uzbekistan. We thank ITC for the constructive cooperation and useful contributions.

Allow me outline some of the tangible outcomes achieved with the help of this project. We benefited from the ITC support for the preparation to the 4th Working Party Meeting on Uzbekistan’s accession to the WTO that was held a year ago, in July 2020. Based on that successful experience, we continued our collaboration on preparation to the next 5th Working Party Meeting. ITC advisory support constituted a valuable asset in preparation of a number of critical negotiating inputs to facilitate the accession process.

We do also appreciate the work of ITC on building capacities of our public and private sector representatives on understanding the WTO agreements and implications that will stem from the WTO Membership. Over the last year and a half, hundreds of Uzbekistan’s government officials enjoyed an opportunity to get deeper understanding about intricacies of the WTO rules and practices covering various areas.

Finally, ITC support is very useful is ensuring that some of our domestic regulations are WTO compatible (e.g. IPR).

Also, on 21 of July 2021 Chief Negotiator of Uzbekistan on WTO accession, Deputy Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade H.E. Mr. Badriddin Abidov had a productive meeting with ITC Executive Director, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton. During the meeting they had a

chance to discuss in more detail implementation of the project and identified actions further needed. We are looking forward to get support on this matter from the ITC on implementation.

We wish the project further successful implementation and do reconfirm our readiness for our beneficial collaboration.

Thank you!