

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY ZIMBABWE DURING THE MEETING OF THE FIFTY'S-SECOND SESSION OF THE JOINT ADVISORY GROUP OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE: 10/7/2018.**

Thank you Chair,

My delegation would like to thank the Executive Director for ITC, Ms Arancha Gonzalez and other speakers for their comprehensive and insightful reports. We would like to join other in paying tribute to the outgoing chair and welcome the chair for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session.

We note with appreciation the significant progress and effort made by the ITC in working with partners around the world to support inclusive growth as well as improving competitiveness of MSMEs to connect to international markets. This is demonstrated by the increase in trade transactions which amounted to US\$288 million in 2017. Furthermore, 27 000 participants benefitted from ITC courses whilst an additional 15 200 enterprises were supported to improve their international competitiveness.

The ITC continues to provide valuable trade related technical assistance to Zimbabwe. To this end, allow me to share with you the recently completed program on strengthening the National SPS Institutional Framework in Zimbabwe. The project which was funded by the European Union to the tune of EURO 950, 000 and was implemented by the ITC started in 2016 and was completed in January 2018.

The program improved the Phyto - Sanitary Standards (SPS) and thus promoted Zimbabwe's agricultural exports to the EU. This has also supported the implementation of the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) with the EU.

The program also enhanced the knowledge of 254 beneficiaries in 8 themes ranging from risk based controls, EU import requirements, to rules of origin and residue monitoring and

planning, all related to Sanitary and Phyto - Sanitary standards. Additionally the beneficiaries' monitoring skills were enhanced through training workshops and a training attachment to the UK. The project also ensured a 50% participation rate of women among all beneficiaries.

Following provision of more than 100 laboratory testing facilities, there has been positive impact on our five SPS institutions' capacity to handle SPS related matters. The enhanced capacities enable the institutions to carry out controls and monitor food safety, plant and animal health through testing, inspection and certification.

Furthermore, the project has enabled the SPS institutions to provide enhanced support to the private sector in; certification, inspection and testing on phyto - sanitary standards. The beneficiaries are now able to undertake new and improved key functions based on the training and equipment provided.

The project identified areas for further support to; Standardisation, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology (SQAM) institutions so that they attain internationally recognised accreditation.

We look forward to, the ITC's successful implementation of the planned Regional Integration and Capacity Building for Cotton to Clothing sector project in Zimbabwe.

My delegation greatly appreciates the EU and other donors' increasing support in realising our objectives and I would still like to appeal to them for further assistance to enable successful and sustainable implementation of the ITC Plan as well as additional complimentary SPS related and other projects already identified in Zimbabwe. We look forward to our participation at the upcoming World Export Development Forum to be held in Lusaka, Zambia.

**I thank you.**