

ITC JAG MEETING 26 JUNE 2015

Statement by Norway

Considering that we celebrated ITC's 50th anniversary last year, I will start by pointing out that we are dealing with a potent and vibrant fifty year old organization. Norway has a long-standing relationship with ITC, and we intend to remain a partner.

It is obvious that Official Development Assistance (ODA) alone cannot meet the the dual ambition of eradicating poverty and tackling climate change. Only a small share of the funds flowing into developing countries is ODA. Private investments and remittances account for many times more.

ODA must therefore increasingly be targeted in a catalytic way to unlock funds from other sources. 9 out of 10 jobs in developing countries are in the private sector. Business is a key partner for achieving development objectives. Creating the right conditions for business and trade to grow is essential for development. An increasing part of Norwegian development aid will therefore be used to enable private sector development and leveraging private sector investments.

ITC's focus on increased export from small and medium sized enterprises corresponds well with Norwegian priorities. ITC's trade-related capacity building can contribute to necessary transformation.

We note with great interest ITC's new cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Seldom has the world witnessed so many humanitarian crises as we face today. There are now more than 50 million displaced people in the world. ITC's approach of building the economic resilience of refugees is therefore very timely.

Let me say a few words about the large programmes of ITC. In line with Norwegian political priorities, we put special emphasis on the programmes for Trade and Environment, Women and Trade and the Poor Communities and Trade. We will continue to use soft earmarking for these programmes.

We support the Trade and Environment Programme because climate change is entwined with the challenges of development. Poor people face prospects of tragic crop failures, reduced agricultural productivity and increased hunger, malnutrition and disease. International donors have a critical role to play in supporting developing countries' efforts in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

We have to realize that gender equality will not follow automatically from economic development. Rather, we have to start in the other end, and recognize that gender equality and women's empowerment is in fact a prerequisite for social and economic development. This is why the Women and Trade programme is so important. Let me also emphasize that Norway applauds the Executive Director's strong personal dedication to women entrepreneurs.

Turning to the Poor Communities and Trade Programme – we see the Ethical Fashion Initiative as an innovative way of using fashion as a vehicle out of poverty. Linking small textile producers with world famous designers would hardly have been possible without the efforts of ITC.

Finally, I would like to touch briefly on the need to increase aid effectiveness, achieve concrete results, enhance quality assurance, and improve the way we measure and communicate results. Norway has started the process of concentration of aid on fewer agreements, partners and countries to simplify and improve aid effectiveness. We are following up the OECD/DAC peer review recommendations of developing a more strategic, evidence-based and results-oriented approach in our aid efforts. In this context, we appreciate the dialogue with ITC on the importance of demonstrating and measuring results.

Announcement of the contributions to the ITC Trust Fund

I am pleased to announce that Norway has already disbursed our annual contribution to ITC of 20 million Norwegian kroner. Our intention is to uphold this level of funding and to be a predictable donor by having multi-year agreements with ITC.