

Statement by India at 54th Session of the Joint Advisory Group of the International Trade Centre (ITC) delivered by Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, Permanent Representative on 25th November 2020 in Geneva

Madam Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, a very good morning to you,

I thank you Madam Chair for giving me the floor. At the outset, I congratulate Ms. Pamela Coke Hamilton on taking over as Executive Director of the International Trade Centre. I thank the outgoing Chair PR of Finland for leading the Joint Advisory Group. I also thank the ITC Secretariat for preparation of the documents for this meeting.

Madam Chair,

2. Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented global crisis and the current global economic and trade scenario looks bleak. It is a global crisis and requires global solutions, anchored in forging cooperation amongst both the developed as well as developing countries. As underscored by our PM in his speech at the recent G-20 Summit, for inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery in a post-Covid world, effective global governance is required and reformed multilateralism, through improvement in character, governance and processes of multilateral institutions, is the need of the hour.

3. India appreciates the role played by the ITC in promoting trade as a means of economic development, including economic development of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and economies in transition. The ITC's role in developing South-South linkages, supporting regional economic integration, strengthening trade and investment support institutions and connecting to international value chains is praiseworthy.

Madam Chair,

4. In spite of the constraints imposed by the pandemic, the cooperation between India and the ITC has continued to grow. India is both a donor and a partner of the ITC. India has been one of the principal core funders of ITC in 2019. Our contribution of 50,000 USD to the ITC Trust Fund, although modest, is under window 1, which provides flexibility to the ITC on its utilisation.

5. The India - ITC partnership is exemplified by the ITC's Project, 'Supporting Indian Trade and Investment for Africa (SITA)' to improve the competitiveness of select value chains in five Eastern African countries through promoting trade and investment partnerships between institutions and businesses.

6. In area of technical cooperation, India has continued to collaborate with the ITC by organizing training sessions as well as study tours. In 2019, ITC provided support to building capacity in metrology through a study tour by technicians of Afghan National Standards Authority to National Physical Laboratory of India in New Delhi. We also appreciate the role played by the ITC in disseminating information and raising awareness about India's Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme (DFTP) for Least Developed Countries. We are also pleased to note that the Export Potential Map launched by the ITC witnessed an increase of 62% visits in 2019 compared to 2018. India has been one of the leading countries to make use of this service.

Madam Chair,

7. Development Partnership has occupied a prominent place in India's international cooperation. It is based on two main pillars; firstly, our development cooperation is rooted in partnerships for mutual benefit and mutual prosperity. Secondly, our partners determine and decide their priorities and contours of their development projects. This fundamentally differentiates our "partnership model" from the traditional "donor-recipient model".

8. We have cooperated with our partners in dealing with Covid-19 pandemic. Our development projects have continued to be implemented in spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic. Despite our own requirements, we have ensured that supply of essential medicines is not disrupted during the pandemic. We have provided essential medicines and equipment to 150 countries mostly as a grant. We have demonstrated that we are a responsible stakeholder in the global health products supply chains. India has also offered its vast vaccine manufacturing capacity for production of Covid vaccines and has not resorted to vaccine nationalism which has been practiced by a number of countries.

9. We have continued to implement our flagship technical and economic cooperation programme, ITEC, with our partner countries, with focus on building their capacities and developing their human resources. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, developmental projects under the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and the IBSA Fund have also continued to be implemented.

Madam Chair,

10. With the changing situation in the wake of covid-19 pandemic, India has adopted a self-reliant India, an Atmanirbhar Bharat, Initiative, which will enable India, based on its competence and dependability, to become a reliable pillar of the global economy and supply chains. The initiative is about unlocking India's latent potential. India has been focussed on boosting indigenous manufacturing through its emphasis on Make in India, encouraging skill development through Skill India Mission, promoting indigenous research and development through Innovate India and Start-up India Missions and creating basic infrastructure.

11. India has improved the ease of doing business. We have continued to carry out essential reforms, including recent reforms in labour and internal trade in agro products. We have eased restrictions on FDI and in spite of pandemic we have been able to attract a record amount of FDI.

Madam Chair,

12. India is keen to further deepen its trade and economic relations with the world. We value our relationship with the ITC and look forward to working closely with it.

Thank you, Madam Chair.