

Statement by Qatar during the 54<sup>th</sup> session of the JAG.

11/25/2020

Thank you Madam Chair,

At the outset, we would like to thank H.E. Ms. Athaliah Molokomme for her chairmanship during the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the JAG and take this opportunity to congratulate you Madam chair on your appointment as chair of this 54<sup>th</sup> session.

We also take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton on her recent appointment as ITC executive director and we look forward to working with her in enhancing the relationship between the State of Qatar and the ITC in the coming years.

We also thank and take note of the statements made by UNCTAD secretary General Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi and WTO Deputy Director General Mr. Yonov Fredrick Agah.

Madam Chair,

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the opportunity to discuss the work of the ITC and to contribute to its strategic direction in going forward. The ITC has played a critical role in supporting the work of the Geneva Trade Community and we commend the multistakeholder approach it has always adopted and for the concerted priority that has been allocated to issues concerning developing countries, LDCs, small and vulnerable economies and MSME's, particularly in the backdrop of this global pandemic. To this end, allow me to congratulate the ITC for the substantial progress achieved in 2019, in particular to what the ITC executive director has highlighted in her statement earlier as the State of Qatar is glad to hear that the ITC has reached the targets that were set out in 2019.

The short videos presented earlier by the beneficiaries of ITC's work is a testament to these achievements.

Madam Chair,

This is no ordinary year by any scale. The global pandemic has struck the global economy in unprecedented ways and we must prepare for the affects that this pandemic has caused and will continue to cause until life is able to return to normal. When it comes to the trade related issues, we would like to signal the importance of adhering to the rules of the multilateral trading system

and refrain from adopting trade distorting measures. At the beginning of this pandemic we saw a surge of such measures when it came to pharmaceutical and essential food products. With time we are witnessing increased trade restrictive and trade distorting measures in many unrelated fields to the pandemic. This has a rippling affect in many sectors in the global economy and the largest victims are MSME's since their participation in global value chains is hit dramatically as they are not able to compete or adapt as quickly as large multinational corporations.

Madam chair, the State of Qatar recognizes that this fight against Covid-19 must be dealt with in a global effort. In this regard Qatar has responded by providing urgent medical assistance to nearly 78 countries, amounting to nearly 89 million USD in addition to contributing 150 million USD to help fight this pandemic in the Gaza strip. No one must be left behind, and as the development of a vaccine continues to progress, we must ensure that it will be accessible to all.

Looking to the future, we encourage further work in supporting MSMEs benefit from the multilateral trading system, including in areas such as non-tariff barriers, standardization regulations and access to finance. We also encourage to seek for creative and innovative means to have MSME's contribute - in a larger role - in global value chains so that they may benefit from the global recovery.

To conclude, we would like to state our gratitude regarding the ongoing partnership Qatar enjoys with the ITC. We look forward in continuing to support the ITC's work both in Geneva and elsewhere and we wish the ITC a fruitful and productive JAG.

Thank you,