



**Statement by the Delegation of Nepal at the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Joint  
Advisory Group**

**WTO Room S1, 20 July 2023, 9:30 AM**

*Please check against delivery*

Madam Chair

Ms. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of WTO,

Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,

Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director of ITC,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates

At the outset, I appreciate ITC especially Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, and her team for the achievements made past year in the face of many global challenges, including COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflicts, rise in cost of living, among others. I congratulate for the annual report which presents the results achieved in the year 2022 based on its Strategic Plan 2022–2025. The four-year strategic plan lays out a roadmap for creating trade that is sustainable, inclusive and transformative by acknowledging the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as the engine of the economy.

We appreciate the ITC's continued efforts to set a global agenda linking MSME trade to digital connectivity, gender, green and youth. It has also linked MSME competitiveness with the attainment of SDGs. The ecommerce business has increased the opportunity for the MSMEs, however the LDCs are lagging to participate in and benefit from the ecommerce due to the digital divide. We urge ITC to engage strongly in strengthening the digital connectivity for the MSMEs

which would enable them to connect to the regional and global value chain. Having said this, I appreciate SheTrades hubs that provides women entrepreneurs around the world with a unique network and platform to connect to international markets.

Chair, as you know LDCs and LLDC have been hardest hit by the Covid 19 pandemic, and are still facing the challenges of inflation, energy crisis, impacts of climate change, weak productive capacity among others. I believe that LDCs alone cannot overcome these challenges, in this context international cooperation is essential. I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all donors who support ITC's initiatives and interventions, without which these achievements would not be possible.

Chair, let me turn to my own county. I would like thank ITC which has been an invaluable partner in building Nepal's export competitiveness while implementing the trade component of the Trade and Investment Program with the financial support by the European Union. The program aims to strengthen value chains in the area of Coffee and Chyangra Pashmina, high-end products from the high Himalaya goats of Nepal. I believe that the technical expertise of the ITC will enhance the capacity of the stakeholders especially farmers in collecting and processing the fibres from the Chyangra goats. The Government of Nepal is currently implementing a five-year Chyangra Pashmina Export Strategy for the development of this sector.

Finally, I would like to suggest some potential areas of cooperation between Government of Nepal and ITC in the future. These include support for technology transfer, market intelligence, and capacity development for MSMEs, as well as support for implementing the Nepal Trade Integration Strategy which has been recently approved by the Government of Nepal.

Nepal looks forward to further enhance collaboration and partnership with ITC in the days ahead. Thank you.