

SE National Statement at the 56th Joint Advisory Group of ITC

Chair, Excellencies, Executive Director, Secretary General, Deputy Director General, dear ladies and gentlemen

First of all, Sweden joins the statement delivered by the Republic of Korea on behalf of donor countries and the statement of the European Union.

After two years of digital meetings, it's a joy for me to physically be present in this meeting room today participating in the JAG.

ITC is not only overseen by the two mother organisations, WTO and Unctad, but also by its donor members as well as partner countries.

As one of the largest donor-countries to ITC, Sweden values our strong long-term relationship. And we would like to extend our greatest thanks to Executive Director Coke-Hamilton for her strong leadership in the past year, as well as our appreciation of all the staff of the ITC, and their efforts are well reflected in the annual report.

Sweden's financial support to the ITC comes mainly from two programmes:

1. *Sweden's strategy for **Global Development Cooperation in Sustainable Economic Development**, and*
2. *Sweden's Strategy for **Regional Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa***

There is also a *bilateral development cooperation through the Embassy of Sweden in Ukraine* – and here we are happy to say that ITC has been able to bring back up activities in Ukraine again after these were frozen in early 2022 following the Russian aggression.

I'm also glad to announce that Stockholm is in the final stages of preparing new financial support to ITC, which we hope to be able to conclude by November this year.

As a major Window 1/un-earmarked funder, Sweden was pleased to see that despite operating in the challenging context during 2021, ITC has been able to deliver very good results around the world, including in the most challenging contexts. We would like to encourage other donors to

consider un-earmarked funding as an opportunity for the ITC to respond to the unpredictability of our times.

Being conscious of the fact that 2022 will be yet another challenging year, it is important that ITC is provided the flexibility to sufficiently adapt their operations.

Sweden would also like to applaud ITC for its foresight in the timely delivery of the *SME Competitiveness Outlook of 2021*, which focused on “*Empowering the Green Recovery*”. Green firms are the future, and we can already see that the global trade community is moving towards establishing rule-based frameworks to promote more sustainable trade.

This development will further the transition to sustainable trade, but also risks creating additional obstacles to the participation of low- and middle-income countries in international trade, especially LDC.

Sweden is therefore pleased to see that the ITC is set to mainstream the *Green to Compete strategy* throughout the organization and we believe that ITC is strategically positioned to provide the technical assistance needed at *macro, meso, and micro* levels to support countries and firms to go green.

Sweden also welcomes the positive results in the *Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report (2022)*. To foster long-term sustainability of interventions, the report places high importance made on ensuring an exit strategy and not least the links to external value chains.

In this context, Sweden is happy to say that ITC is currently working with the *Swedish Development Agency's (Sida's) Market System Development-Helpdesk* and that the ITC has set out on this process and we are certain that this will further strengthen ITC's position as a provider of high-quality services to its beneficiaries with sustainable results.

All in all, as you hear, Sweden is very satisfied with the collaboration with the ITC and we look with optimism on further collaboration with ITC the years to come – I thank you all for your attention.