

Joint Advisory Group (UNCTAD/WTO) on the ITC
Fifty-sixth session, Geneva, 13 September 2022

Statement by Switzerland

Excellences, Dear Delegates,

First of all, the Swiss delegation wishes to warmly thank the Executive Director of the ITC, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, the Director-General of the WTO, Ms. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and the Secretary-General of the UNCTAD, Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, for their presence this morning and their substantive introductory remarks.

Our thanks also go to Ambassador Bekkers for chairing the 55th session of the Joint Advisory Group and to Ambassador Dwarka-Canabady who will be chairing the 56th session.

Our gratitude also goes to the delegation of the Republic of Korea for the statement held on behalf of donors, which we fully support.

Excellences, dear Delegates,

The past one and a half year has been particularly challenging for the world economy in general and for developing countries in particular. Sanitary and environmental challenges have led to an economic slowdown in most parts of the world and to reduced trade flows. In addition, the unprovoked and unjustified aggression by Russia on Ukraine, not only directly affects the lives of millions of people, but further destabilizes the world economy.

Given this context of raising economic uncertainties, the Swiss delegation is particularly satisfied with ITC's work and achievements. Switzerland and the ITC share a longstanding relationship based on trust and common views on ways to strengthen the private sector in developing countries.

That is why the Swiss government decided last year to contribute to the Window 1 Trust Fund in order to allow the organization for more flexibility in its operations.

In concrete terms, allow us to commend the ITC on two specific aspects which, in our view, are central.

Number one, in today's world, partnerships and coordination appear to us as more essential than ever. In this regard, ITC has proven to be an important player in enhancing coordination between multilateral stakeholders, as reflected in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, which lays a solid ground for action.

Number two, Switzerland particularly welcomes ITC's engagement with SMSEs and recognizes it as one of the most effective ways of promoting inclusive growth and hence contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. That is why, for example, Switzerland decided to continue its cooperation with ITC and Swiss companies of the textile industry. The program seeks to strengthen SME's capacities from producing countries by enhancing skills and know-how on sustainability and circularity of both buyers and brands on the one hand and suppliers on the other. In addition, we are glad to be able to announce that a new ITC program supported by Switzerland is about to start. Its objective will be to improve capacities of export-oriented businesses of the agri-processing sector in several countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

As a conclusion, the Swiss delegation wishes to, once again, commend the ITC for its remarkable work in a particularly volatile context and to reaffirm its commitment in our common efforts for a sustainable and inclusive economic growth for all.

Thank you.