

CARICOM Statement at ITC JAG

Thank you to the ITC and its staff for delivering another good year of support to developing countries, our MSMEs, women entrepreneurs and to global thought leadership on key issues.

For those of us in CARICOM we welcome some of the specific attention such as SheTrades Caribbean to be launched later this year, the continued excellent work of the Alliances for Action team in many of our countries, and the continued attention to supporting our vulnerable economies in reaching our climate commitments and helping our businesses to invest in the green transition.

Going forward we would like to see the long in the planning SIDS strategy operationalized so that we can have a better sense of the full gamut of support that will be offered to SIDS. We have made much progress with UNCTAD in developing a focused programme for SIDS and we would welcome that same approach with ITC. Going forward we would welcome more strategic discussions with ITC on supporting our digital transition, our effective integration into the platform economy, technical support to improve productivity of our MSMEs, and better mapping our sustainability related needs with the growing offers on the ITC side. The ITC's tailored projects for products, such as turmeric, coconuts, ginger, cocoa and spices, and services development, in addition to projects for conservation of the environmental eco-systems linked to sectoral activities has also had a positive impact on the trade performance of the region in those areas. The ITC's projects linked to food security in the Caribbean have proven helpful in our bid to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the geo-political tensions in Europe. We look forward to receiving ITC's support to the region in its implementation the 25 by 25 initiative in which the Region plans to reduce its dependence on imported food by 25% by 2025.

We also call for ITC to continue to be more involved in the different work streams at the WTO including support that can be offered to interested countries to implement key elements of the agreement on investment facilitation for development. We also wish to encourage ITC to continue to support the work on MSMEs, Trade and Gender, E-Commerce and trade and environment given that it is ITC which has some of the tools, scalable interventions and links with the MSMEs and TPOs that can best support us. We welcome the initial work that was done to showcase the economic underpinnings of the region's push for greater economic relations with Africa and we look forward to ITC, through its One Trade Africa programme, in further supporting greater business, people to people engagement, and policy linkages between the Caribbean and Africa.

The one area where ITC has always excelled is in innovation and being one step ahead of the curve. From your innovation lab to your trade and intelligence tools such as export potential map and sustainability map. We also welcome some of the short and focused thought pieces that have been prepared by the ITC including the monthly trade briefs. We call for more of this evidenced based research especially in the area of trade, climate and sustainability- focused on solutions and innovations for small countries.

We welcome the thought leadership of the SMECO and the various events led by ITC such as the recently concluded WEDF, the T4SD forum and more.

On the internal front we welcome the institutionalization of the Partnerships4Purpose initiative to better professionalize how ITC approaches partnership development- and here I am particularly proud to see that an issue that I worked on with many colleagues in ITC just a year ago

when I worked on partnerships - the collaboration with Visa Foundation- has come to fruition and will be launched next week. Bravo to my former colleagues.

We are also pleased to see the continued internal work on diversity and inclusion including on gender equality, and the efforts of senior management to address certain concerns of staff through the 'ITC moving forward' initiative.

We call on development partners to continue to invest in ITC which has a proven track record of excellence.

Thank you