

Finland's statement at 54th JAG, 25 November 2020

- Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the Finnish delegation. Let me first convey our warmest congratulations to you as the Chair of this Joint Advisory Group.
- Let me also thank our Permanent Representative, Ms. Kirsti Kauppi, for her contribution as the outgoing Chair.
- And one more set of congratulations will go to the new Executive Director, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton. Finland has a lot of expectations on your leadership, both in terms of continuing the excellent work of the former ED Arancha González, but also bringing your own priorities and working methods to the International Trade Centre.

Distinguished delegates,

- Finland has cooperated with the ITC for years. We regard the ITC as our number one partner in supporting women's entrepreneurship in developing countries. The rights and status of women and girls and gender equality is our key priority of development funding. We also want to strengthen the developing countries' own economies to generate more jobs, livelihood opportunities and well-being. Therefore, the priorities of Finland and the ITC are exceptionally well aligned.
- We also appreciate the ITC's efforts to support the youth entrepreneurship in developing countries. When a big number of youth is left idle, the society faces a big risk of instability. The ITC's support to young people is extremely valuable.
- I would like to highlight also the importance of ITC's two nascent initiatives. One is that of circular economy. Finland was the first country in the world to prepare a national roadmap for circular economy. The driving force behind the roadmap was SITRA, the Finnish Innovation Fund. Circular economy is a win-win: it helps mitigate environmental problems, and at the same time offers lucrative business opportunities. The second interesting initiative is One Trade Africa which gathers the ITC's support to the African Continental Free Trade Area under one umbrella. Finland will support both of these as part of the next cooperation and funding package.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- We are living through a very trying period. The Covid-19 pandemic has hit the world with devastating impacts, both healthwise and economically and socially. The International Trade Centre has achieved impressive results even in the middle of the pandemic and lockdowns. The ITC has showed that it's agile to adapt to new circumstances rapidly. It is highly important as the need for supporting developing countries has not disappeared anywhere even if travel and physical presence were restricted. Finland appreciates the ITC for swiftly changing the working methods when the circumstances so determined.

Madam Chair,

- As my last point, let me emphasize the importance of leveraging other public and private resources to sustainable development. Official Development Aid is only a small fraction of all the resource flows needed. I would like to mention especially SheTrades Invest that generates substantial amounts of impact investment to women owned enterprises, as well as self-funded SheTrades Hubs in 25 countries. This is exactly at the heart of Agenda 2030.
- To conclude, I'd like to thank the entire ITC for the excellent work done and for aiming even higher every year. I wish all the success for the ITC in 2021. Thank you, Chair.