

56th Joint Advisory Group of International Trade Centre

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

Mauritius is pleased to participate in this 56th Session of the Joint Advisory Group Session and commend the ITC for the holding of this Session as countries are trying to recover from the effects of the pandemic and of the geopolitical instability in certain parts of the world.

We are happy to note that for year 2021 and for the coming years the ITC has premised its assistance to surmount the ongoing affliction caused by the pandemic and the other Cs as enumerated by the Executive Director.

For Mauritius on a gender basis, it is with pride that, in terms of global economic governance, three highly capable and prominent women head the UNCTAD, the WTO and the ITC.

We reckon that the timing though is quite unfortunate by the adversities and the challenges created by the Pandemic and the geopolitical instability impacting normal trade and development.

These headwinds have not prevented us to have a successful outcome at the UNCTAD XV, with the Bridgetown covenant and a historical Ministerial Conference 12 with clear decisions on critical areas as we chart the way to surmount the current difficulties.

Be it the bridgetown covenant or the WTO decision on fisheries subsidies on food security, the TRIPS waiver and WTO reforms ongoing negotiations, to walk the talk on all these areas the developing world will need a reinforced ITC endowed with adequate resources in order to be able to be successful in the fulfilling of the current and the new created mandates.

With respect to the ITC we commend all the actions and the dedicated initiatives it has undertaken during these period where challenges are ubiquitous .

We note with appreciation that the ITC, has interventions in 130 developing and LDCs and in terms of training and capacity building alone, the ITC provided more than five thousand days of trainings to our project beneficiaries, including to nearly 120,000 participants in its SME Trade Academy.

We note that for Africa alone, the ITC has interventions in 50 of them out of 54 countries, with a coverage representing 92%. ITC's current portfolio of projects in Africa carries a weight of USD 150 million.

For Mauritius, as a Small Island we value the concrete support of the ITC in these following areas:

PEECAC Project

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the implementing agency of the *Partnership for Enhancing Export Capacity of Africa to China* (PEECAC) Project which was launched in September 2021.

PEECAC is a 3-year project sponsored by China that aims at assisting 8 African beneficiary countries, namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia, to increase their agricultural and food products export to China and to attract Chinese sustainable investment. We hope that this mechanism will help us address the trade imbalances.

2. Trade Obstacle Alert Mechanism (TOAM) for Mauritius - developed with the technical and financial assistance from the International Trade Centre (ITC)

This web-based platform allows Business operators to report trade obstacles such as non-tariff barriers and other constraints which they might face in the course of exports and imports.

The new Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism (TOAM) and the complementary mobile application will be launched on 29th September 2022 by the Hon Minister of Foreign Affairs Regional Integration and Trade of Mauritius.

SheTrades

Mauritius and the ITC are together on the SheTrades Initiative and we look forward for the implementation of the initiatives under this project. We look forward for the strengthening of institutional capacity with the ITC building a global network of government focal points on trade and gender.

The ITC has assisted Mauritius in the drafting of the Drafting of the National Trade Facilitation Implementation Plan and our National Export Strategy (NES)

In the near future we will still need the ITC for

The deployment of the different tools and techniques to be used in the conduct of trade potential analysis for goods and services

Build capacity of resources to identify market access opportunities prior to negotiating free Trade Agreements together with the conduct economic analysis and simulations to quantify the impact of existing Free Trade Agreements

Enhancing utilisation of the free trade agreements that Mauritius has signed and to identify bottle necks that are hindering trade and how to diversify Mauritius export in terms of products and markets

It is known to everybody that the developing countries are cash strapped and rising debts and cost of living are serious issues. Debt sustainability is a key priority for developing countries and need more attention .

In these conditions it is very challenging for developing countries to plan for any meaningful recovery .

The UNSG at the UNCTAD 15 last year clearly highlighted that:

Advanced economies are investing nearly 28 per cent of their GDPs into economic recovery. For middle-income countries, that falls to 6.5 per cent. And it plummets to 1.8 per cent for the least-developed countries.

1.8 per cent of a very small gross domestic product.

It is in this particular context that we highlight the crucial roles of the ITC, a longstanding partner now endeavouring together , towards recovery. Whilst we mention our praise to the ITC we also encourage the donor partners to allow for adequate resources to support the ITC in implementing its strategic plan .

Thank you chairperson