

Philippine Statement on the 57th Session of the ITC Joint Advisory Group
20 July 2023, 10am

Thank you, Chair (Ambassador Nadia Theodore), WTO Director-General Ngozi, UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan, and Executive Director of ITC Pamela Coke-Hamilton.

The Philippines congratulates you on your assumption as Chair of the 57th Session of the Joint Advisory Group (JAG) Meeting and extends our well wishes to Ambassador Usha Chandnee Dwarka-Canabady for successfully steering the 56th session. We also wish to express our gratitude and appreciation for the messages of vision and inspiration from the parent organizations of the ITC as delivered by WTO Director-General Ngozi and UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan. Special thanks, of course, for the 2022 Annual Report and Plans for 2023 to Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton and the whole ITC team.

The ITC is an important partner of the Philippines in promoting trade as an effective way to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic development and to successfully realize the benefits from an open and fair multilateral trading system. As a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, the ITC plays an institutional role in supporting developing countries and performs a critical role in our shared objective of improving MSMEs' global competitiveness and participation in international trade.

MSMEs are the backbone of the Philippine economy as they comprise the majority of business establishments and employ more than half of the workforce in the country. As such, we are pleased to have this ongoing partnership with ITC in strengthening the integration of our business sectors and fostering the participation of our MSMEs in the global market. We have successfully collaborated with ITC in

various projects and we look forward to our continued partnership through ongoing initiatives, such as the Global Trade Helpdesk, the SheTrades initiative, and the EU-funded ARISE Plus project which all contribute to integrating our business sectors and MSMEs in the global market.

ARISE Plus refers to regional trade integration (4 pillars: standards and conformity, trade facilitation, customs and ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS), and last but definitely not the least, trade statistics. Specifically, on the ARISE Plus Philippines project, we are pleased that we have reached the mid-term implementation and we hope to continuously build on the promising initial outcomes in various programs on start-ups, game development, and youth entrepreneurship to other sectors. We look forward to the launch of the business guide on “Exporting from the Philippines to the European Union” in Manila next week (25 July 2023), as this offers an actionable resource for Philippine MSMEs and exporters to understand key technical and regulatory requirements to help us leverage the \$13B export potential opportunities in the EU market.

Beyond the accomplishments in 2022 and looking ahead, we are pleased that among the three (3) winners of the ICC-ITC-WTO Small Business Champions this year is a Philippine startup, HeySucess. We also look forward to closely working with ITC on the EU-funded project “Climate Competitiveness: Building Opportunities in the Green Economy for Emerging and Developing Countries” to be implemented from 2023 to 2025.

In closing, we appreciate ITC’s partnership with the Philippines, and we remain committed to strengthening further our collaboration. We look forward to continuing working together with you in supporting our MSMEs to reach their full potential in

Word Count: 546 words

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the global market, and in building an inclusive and sustainable path forward for the Philippine economy.

Thank you, Chair.