

Deputy-Director General, Secretary General, Executive Director, Excellencies, and distinguished delegates. I am pleased to be here today for the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual ITC Joint Advisory Group.

Let me begin by thanking DDG Zhang, the Executive Director *[and the many delegations]* for their words of condolence, tribute and support, in these last few difficult days for me and my country. This is a time of national mourning for the United Kingdom. Her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second was, as I think we all know, a truly remarkable person, and an era has ended. She was our greatest diplomat. She will be remembered for her dedicated service to her country, the realms and the Commonwealth.

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The UK would like to echo the thanks to the outgoing JAG Chair, Ambassador Bekkers and welcome Ambassador Dwarka-Canaby to the role. We noted, in particular, Ambassador Dwarka-Canaby's pertinent point that throughout these turbulent times, trade has stood out as one of the positives for developing countries. Highlighting exactly why working with ITC is so important for us all here today.

The United Kingdom fully supports the donor statement delivered by our friend from Korea and would like to join other delegations in congratulating the ITC for the results that were achieved in 2021. It has been wonderful to hear from the field this morning as well.

We welcome the 2021 Annual Report and are very pleased to note some of the fantastic results. There are some impressive statistics; 5,100 days of trainings and workshops, 3 million women connected to international markets through the SheTrades initiative. A fantastic year of outcomes and multiple examples of how the ITC's approach has had real tangible impact around the world.

We also welcome the continued improvement in corporate areas such as risk management, evaluation, and corporate governance. We welcome ITC's focus on gender equality from a corporate perspective, and particularly like the Women's Power Lunch Series; it is these small steps which make the incremental differences we need to promote gender equality at all levels; both in our programming and our institutions.

We were also delighted to read about the increased focus on green trade. The 2021 Annual Report demonstrates this clearly; ITC invest more in green and sustainable trade than any other sector – pioneering the approach to programming for the future.

As others have noted in their interventions, many countries continue to grapple with the impacts and aftermath of COVID-19. And 2021 remained a difficult year with waves of partial reopening's and lockdowns, both here in Geneva and in the field. ITC performed well in managing these uncertainties, demonstrating continued flexibility and agility in their programming, and managed to achieve impressive results in spite of this.

2022 has brought even more challenges, with Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine sending shock waves through the global economy and triggering a food security crisis. We concur with the sentiment expressed in the donor statement delivered by Korea; the linkages between trade, humanitarian and development assistance have become more important and we as donors should continue to take heed of this. The UK has condemned and continue to condemn Russia's actions in the strongest possible terms and calls on the Russian Federation to end their illegal invasion immediately.

The UK has been a long-standing supporter of the ITC. The UK contributed almost 11 million USD in 2021. We are proud to implement the UK Trade Partnerships Programme through our partners at ITC. This programme promotes access to trade information in ACP countries and financed the development of eight customised versions of the ITC Market Analysis Tools for integration into the websites of trade

promotion organisations. The ITC Market Analysis Tools supported the economic recovery through the COVID-19 pandemic by enabling companies to realise an estimated \$182 million in trade transactions in 2021 and we are proud to have funded part of that fantastic outcome.

We were also delighted to read that SheTrades Outlook has now been rolled out to 46 countries. The UK confirmed continued funding for the SheTrades initiative earlier this year, which amongst other activities, we hope can support new SheTrades Hubs to provide direct training, mentoring, and support for up to 1000 women-owned businesses; helping them build capacity, networks, and business leads to the UK and overseas.

Chair, to conclude, allow me to reiterate the UK's full support for the ITC's programme of work, and our full support for the Executive Director. The ITC remains a partner of choice for us, and the UK stands ready to support ITC to implement its Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025, and its focus on digital, gender, youth and the environment.

Thank you.