

**Statement by India at the 56th session of the Joint Advisory Group of the
International Trade Centre delivered by Ambassador Priyanka Chauhan, Deputy
Permanent Representative
13 September 2022**

**Madam Chair,
Secretary General, UNCTAD,
Deputy Director General, WTO,
Executive Director, ITC,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I extend my congratulations to Ambassador Usha Chandanee Dwarka-Canabady, Permanent Representative of Mauritius, on being appointed as the Chair of this Session. I take this opportunity to also thank the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Paul Bekkers, Permanent Representative of Netherlands, for steering this Group during the last year. I also thank ITC Secretariat for their exemplary work, and for the organisation of this Session. I further thank distinguished speakers so far for their presentations and statements.

Madam Chair,

2. India appreciates the important role that ITC has been playing in supporting the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and building their capacity to engage in external trade. Its work in promoting trade as a means of economic development, including development of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and the economies in transition, has been an important factor in enabling them to deal with the adverse impact of Covid-19 pandemic on their external trade.

3. India has been both a donor and partner for ITC. Our annual contribution of 50,000 US dollars to the ITC Trust Fund, although modest, provides ITC the flexibility on its utilization. Our partnership is exemplified by the project SITA or Supporting Indian Trade and Investment for Africa (SITA), a project implemented by ITC in five Eastern African countries, namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, offering policy advice and institutional support to promote trade, investment and technology and knowledge transfer. It has led to significant increase in trade and investment exchanges between India and East Africa.

4. In order to enhance India's cooperation with ITC, we have made a few proposals to the ITC Secretariat: the first relates to continuation of the SITA project; the second relates to our offer of providing technical assistance and capacity building to National Standards' Bodies of developing and least developed countries to strengthen their standards' regime; and the third relates to our offer to undertake capacity building and training programmes, as per countries' needs, under the e-ITEC initiative of the Indian Technical and Economic

Cooperation programme. We look forward to receiving ITC's positive response to these three proposals.

Madam Chair,

5. In the post-pandemic era, India has launched an ambitious mission to build an *Aatmanirbhar Bharat*, that is a self-reliant India. This does not imply closing India's doors but greater engagement with other countries. It is focused on five pillars, namely economy, infrastructure, technology in governance, demography, and demand. The Government has spearheaded various reforms to improve the business regulatory environment. Historic labour reforms have been introduced. India ranked 63 in the World Bank's Doing Business Report 2020, a rise of 79 ranks from 142 in 2014.

6. In spite of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Indian economy is on the track to a robust recovery. It grew at 8.7% during the financial year 2021-22 and is set to grow over 7% during the current financial year. India has also been successful in re-invigorating its external trade. India's external trade in goods from April 2021 to March 2022 was more than 1 trillion US dollars and external trade in goods and services during the same period reached 1.4 trillion US dollars. India has set the goal of realizing external trade of 2 trillion US dollars by 2030. India's fast-growing economy, including its fast expanding external trade, offers immense opportunities for India's trade partners to enhance their bilateral economic relations with India. ITC can play a role in highlighting to developing countries, including the LDCs, the growing opportunities for trade in goods and services with India.

7. Guided by our civilisational ethos of *Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam* and *Sarvodaya*, that is 'the world is one family', and 'welfare for all', India has been engaged in developmental partnerships with fellow developing countries since its independence. India's development cooperation is guided by the priorities of our partners. Its focus is to build as much local capacity and create as many local opportunities as possible. One of its key elements is grant-in-aid projects. Our grant-in-aid projects, totalling over USD 4 billion, cover various sectors such as infrastructure, hydroelectricity, power transmission, agriculture, education, health, industry etc. Extension of Lines of Credit on concessional terms is another important component, with India extending over 32 billion dollars of Lines of Credit to more than 64 countries. We have continued to undertake capacity building programmes under our flagship ITEC scheme.

Madam Chair,

8. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that we value our relationship with the ITC and look forward to working closely to continue our cooperation, aimed at strengthening our bilateral collaboration, and contribute to the ITC's global initiatives.

I thank you.