

57th JAG – ITC Executive Director Closing Remarks

Thanks so much Chair.

In my opening remarks, I said that Ambassador Canabady of Mauritius set a high bar for JAG chairing. Let me just say now, Ambassador Theodore, that you have raised the bar even higher. You did such a phenomenal job today to keep us to time, moving the discussion along and dealing with the rare IT connection issues with Canadian good humour. Thank you so much for your hard work today and you have fully earned commemorative your gavel next year!

You did such a masterful job of summarizing the discussion, so let me be as brief as possible so that we can wrap up to time.

First and foremost, I want to thank everyone who spoke today. For your support, your frank views and your dedication to ITC's core mission. I appreciate your patience as we went through the speakers' list, particularly given the multiple overlapping commitments here at the WTO and elsewhere.

I really like the JAG. During our trainings, speeches and set-piece events, ITC tends to do a lot of talking. That's why I look forward to the JAG every year: it's a time for my staff and I stay quiet for once, to listen to our clients, and to learn.

This year's JAG has given me so many lessons and insights:

- I've heard your appreciation for the work my staff does in your countries, or with your taxpayers' funding, in the service of our client MSMEs.
- I've heard about how ITC supports your development and strategic priorities – how our impact areas and core services help to make your MSMEs more competitive, your ecosystems more supportive and your policies more responsive.
- I heard your call for us to stay focused on those countries, companies and communities that most need support, particularly in our priority countries.

As the Chair noted in her summary, it wasn't all compliments:

- You want us keep being ambitious, aiming for ever-greater impact and reach
- You pushed us to keep innovating our tools and our training
- You asked that we remain focused on improving our internal processes and workplace culture.

I welcome these points and ask that – for this and every JAG to come – that while we love to hear where we are doing well, we need to hear more about where we can do better. I used to be a delegate in the GATT days; I know the constraints of diplomacy. But here, we are all part of the same ITC family. I want your frank and honest feedback so that ITC keeps going from strength to strength.

As I did at last year's JAG, let me also echo my call for the Geneva missions to join us on project visits. Geneva is lovely, especially in the summer, but there is nothing like seeing the impact of ITC's work on the ground in the 130 countries where we operate. These country visits change your perspective on a lot of things. So, if you're interested, perhaps you can let us know and we can see how we can work it out over the next year.

I opened with the theme of change so I'll close there as well. A change is long overdue:

- Where COVID might be in the rear-view mirror but its long-term effects are not
- In the middle of the hottest week the world has ever seen
- Where geopolitics threaten the global trade routes that bring the basics of life to families across the world, and
- Where the cost of those basics are still so unacceptably high for too many.

I hope that if you've taken away anything from a rich day of discussions, it's that your investments in ITC – and whether you are a funder or beneficiary country, you are investors in our work – are part of a change in global trade.

A change towards trade that is more inclusive, more sustainable and more connected.

So let me thank you for your affirmation, for your perseverance, for your staying here with us. Thank you for your engagement. And as we move

towards our sixtieth anniversary – where you will all be invited to a lot of great parties – thank you for your support.