

Draft CARICOM Statement on the occasion of the 53rd Joint Advisory Group Meeting of the International Trade Centre (ITC)

2 July 2019

Check Against Delivery

Thank you Madame Chairperson,
Executive Director,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This statement is being delivered on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Group.

The CARICOM group is pleased to participate in this the 53rd meeting of the Joint Advisory Group (JAG) of the International Trade Centre (ITC). We believe that there is tremendous value in this annual meeting that examines the activities of ITC. Chair, please allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairperson of this 53rd session. We also wish to recognize the efforts of Mr. Jaime Coghi Arias, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the World Trade Organization (WTO) who served as Chairperson of the 52nd Session.

As a Group we wish to express our gratitude for the work undertaken by the ITC. We wholeheartedly applaud the sterling contribution of the Executive Director in guiding the work of the ITC and the professional staff at the organization who are the main

drivers behind the wonderful output. We thank all officials who have delivered statements in connection with this meeting.

Chair, many Members of our Group have benefitted from initiatives of the ITC. The coconut sector in the Caribbean is an area that is benefitting from ITC's work. To improve sector governance and rectify competitiveness gaps at scale in the sector, ITC partnered with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and a network of local and regional partners. The ITC's 2018 Annual Report notes that with financing from the European Union, the ITC mobilized over 2,000 coconut producers and 450 extension services officers and formed market-led partnerships in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guyana, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

It is important to highlight that four years into implementation, the project's impacts are visible at three levels: investment, network creation, and technical capacity and training. We look forward to future work on this project. It should be noted that the ITC and CARDI submitted a proposal to the European Union for a second phase of the project, seeking to increase its impact and scale, with a stronger focus on climate-smart agriculture, from 2019 to 2023.

ITC has solid expertise in strengthening the performance of trade and investment support institutions to help enterprises to reach their internationalization goals and this expertise has been extended to CARICOM Members. An example of this is ITC's benchmarking assessment which serves as a management tool for institutions to assess their efficiency and effectiveness against globally recognized good practice.

The ITC recognises that supporting women owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a key step for generating economic growth and contributing to poverty reduction. Since SMEs account for almost 80% of jobs around the world and 95% of firms in a given economy, they are a prerequisite for a vibrant private sector, job creation and economic development. Commendation must be given to the ITC for its SheTrades initiative. At present Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica are currently engaging with ITC with a view to establishing a local SheTrades Chapter. The ITC has been able to foster partnership with the Department for International Development (DFID), with a view to creating opportunities in trade for businesswomen across the Commonwealth.

The CARICOM Group commends the role ITC has played in the adoption of the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic empowerment. On 1 July 2019, Trinidad and Tobago co-hosted the fifth workshop of the Trade Impact Group with the European Union and Senegal. The topic of the workshop was "Women in Digital Trade".

Chair, the CARICOM Group anticipates future collaboration with the ITC especially regarding capacity-building initiatives.

We thank you for allowing us the opportunity to contribute to this meeting and wish the ITC continued success.

Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago, Geneva
2 July 2019