

ITC Joint Advisory Group, 25 November 2020

Norway's draft intervention

Check against delivery

Madam Chair

The pandemic is threatening to reverse years of development progress. We are no longer on track to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Extreme poverty is increasing, jobs are being lost on an unprecedented scale, and children are being deprived of their education.

Norway appreciates the efforts of ITC in adjusting its programmes to be able to deliver technical assistance in times of crisis. Trade is essential for revenue generation and jobs, and a key part of the recovery. Nothing drives poverty reduction as much as access to good, steady jobs and living wages. We see that green solutions often support new business opportunities and growth, as well as helping us in the fight against the climate threats. ITC has an important role in supporting MSMEs in resuming and expanding trade opportunities disrupted by the pandemic.

Norwegian international development policy is focused on the poorest and most vulnerable groups. Again, the most vulnerable are hit the hardest. Our aim must be to reach those furthest behind. For Norway, this means an even stronger

commitment to the least developed countries and sub-Saharan Africa. In the midst of the pandemic, when COVID-19 is threatening progress on poverty eradication, this is more important than ever.

We note a slight decrease in the share of LDCs in ITC's region-specific delivery in the first six months of this year, compared to 2019 when the LDC share was 57 %. We hope that the LDC share will have been restored to its former level by the end of 2020.

The pandemic is not gender neutral. Harvesting the benefits of gender equality should be at the forefront in our efforts to re-ignite growth. Doing the right things does not only mean to build back greener. It must also mean to build back with more equality. We must ensure that we apply a gender lens on our efforts.

Finally, let me conclude by informing the Joint Advisory Group that Norway will very soon be signing a new multi-year grant agreement with ITC. All our funds go to Window 1.

I thank you for your attention.