

The Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Center (ITC)

Fifty-fifth Session (2 November 2021)

Statement by Japan

Thank you Mr. Chairman for giving me the floor.

At the outset, on behalf of Japan, I would like to express our appreciation to Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton and the entire ITC team for all of your work in the past year, including the publication of the Annual Report 2020 and the work on the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

Japan aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the donors.

Japan commends the work of ITC in 2020 even under the long-lasting influence caused by the pandemic. The Annual Report 2020 clearly illustrates many successful projects which contribute to Sustainable Development Goals. The projects include direct responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlight the timeliness and adaptability of ITC.

In the past year, we have also seen ITC's closer cooperation with other organizations. Especially, in various committees and working groups at the WTO, from gender to investment facilitation for development, ITC has offered a wide range of its experience and expertise to deepen the discussion and facilitate the work there. We appreciate the ITC's contribution in this regard and further encourage it to seek more synergies with the WTO and other organizations.

Japan has attached great importance to trade-related assistance particularly in the area of digital trade. For the past few years, Japan has been collaborating with ITC on projects to provide digital skills to people, including female entrepreneurs in many regions, displaced people in Somalia and refugees in the Gaza Strip in Palestine. These projects help them to sell their products and services online or gain new jobs on the internet, which assist them to become more economically self-reliant. The pandemic greatly accelerated digitalization, and assistance in this area is all the more important for our inclusive growth.

In closing, I would like to once again congratulate ITC on its significant contribution to the global sustainable development in the past year. We look forward to further cooperating with ITC and its partners. Thank you.