

Statement of Uzbekistan during the 58th Joint Advisory Group meeting

Dear participants,

Allow me express gratitude to the International Trade Centre (ITC) for the support to Uzbekistan during ongoing reforms in economic development and its accession to the WTO.

Uzbekistan supports the activities and achievements of ITC in 2023 as contained in its Annual Report 2023.

Currently there are two main projects are underway in Uzbekistan with the participation of the ITC. Allow me briefly inform you about the main achievements of them over the last year.

In the framework of the “Ready for Trade: Central Asia” project:

- ITC launched Uzbekistan Trade Portal with the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade that provides easy access to information on cross-border trade procedures with more than 35 thousand users. The information is also integrated into the Central Asia Gateway, a regional trade information platform combining data from five national trade facilitation portals in Central Asia;

- ITC is also enhancing digitalization and paperless trade efforts, working on electronic queue management system and best practices in risk management;

- The project is enhancing capacities of SMEs through the Virtual Learning Space (VLS)- UzExport Academy platform in partnership with Tashkent State University of Economics, and tailored coaching, as well as through enhancing SMEs e-commerce activities;

- In partnership with the State Customs Committee of Uzbekistan the project is also improving gender-responsive trade facilitation practices through training of border officials on gender approaches in trade, women on cross-border trade requirements, and preparing women leaders in customs.

In the framework of “Assistance to the WTO accession”:

- ITC keeps supporting our accession process through turn-key technical assistance available under the EU-funded project. This assistance encompasses support that is being given to the ongoing legislative reform process to bring the national regulatory regime in line with the WTO rules as well as the efforts to further build the capacities of the negotiating team;

- Assistance has been provided with drafting the new draft Food Safety law and modernizing several sanitary rules and norms (SanPiNs) as part of the

ongoing food safety policy framework reform. The new legislation on trade remedies consisting of anti-dumping, countervailing duty, and safeguard measures regulations have been drafted with the project's support;

- To bolster the capacities of the Uzbekistan negotiating team, ITC has launched a Trade Policy Training Programme that is run jointly with the WTO Chair Programme and the Tashkent-based university – University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED). The program consisting of eleven courses covers all key areas of the WTO law and aims to equip trade policymakers with practical skills in negotiating accession commitments. Also, the trade negotiators continue to upskill their understanding of the WTO Agreements at the trade policy courses provided on the basis of the World Trade Institute of the University of Bern, Switzerland, and the Centre for the WTO Law in New Delhi, India;

- To support Uzbekistan's participation in the Working Party meetings, ITC has organized experience-sharing meetings with Kazakhstan's former negotiators on WTO accession. Through the focused technical exchanges, Uzbekistan's trade officials were offered advice and learned about Kazakhstan's experience in undertaking legislative reforms paving the way to the WTO membership;

- ITC also joined the efforts with the WTO and ADB in holding the 2nd Central Asia Trade Policy Forum, 3- 5 June 2024 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The event brought together the senior representatives of the five Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan to discuss the region's integration into the global economy through WTO accession. Among the attendees were eight senior government representatives of Uzbekistan.

In conclusion I would like to underscore that to further develop cooperation with the ITC in different fields including the improvement of the export potential of Uzbekistan and wider access to the foreign markets of our products/services.

We believe that this cooperation as well as participation of Uzbekistan representatives in the events organized by the ITC and WTO will scale-up measures for effective implementation of the projects.

Thank you for your attention!