

Philippine Statement on the 58th Session of the ITC Joint Advisory Group
25 June 2024, 10am, Room W

Thank you, Chair (Ambassador Hend Abdalrahman Al-Muftah), WTO Director-General Ngozi, UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan, and Executive Director of ITC Pamela Coke-Hamilton.

The Philippines congratulates you, Chair, on your assumption as Chair of the 58th Joint Advisory Group (JAG) Meeting and extends our well wishes to Ambassador Nadia Theodore for successfully steering the 57th session. We also express our appreciation for the messages of vision and inspiration from the parent organizations of the ITC as delivered by WTO Director-General Ngozi and UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan. We also thank the ITC for organizing this annual meeting to update Members on its activities and exchange views on its work. This meeting comes at an opportune time, coinciding with the Aid for Trade Global Review Week, where we collectively discuss and advance our efforts to promote inclusive and sustainable trade.

The Philippines is pleased to participate annually during the meeting of this Joint Advisory Group to express our appreciation, in particular, for the contributions of the ITC to supporting MSMEs reach their full potential and for Members to further integrate in the global trading system. This session is a vital platform to discuss and acknowledge the invaluable support that ITC extends to developing countries, such as the Philippines.

Over the past year, ITC has been a key partner of the Philippines in promoting trade as an effective way to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic development through its targeted projects and initiatives in the country. We would like to

particularly highlight two key projects: the EU-funded ARISE Plus and the She Trades Hub, which have significantly impacted and empowered our communities.

Through the ARISE Plus, we are mainstreaming sustainable and green trade across various activities from policy to MSMEs. Our MSMEs have also received direct support through capacity building and market linkages. These include supporting trade fairs participation, developing an AEO scheme for MSMEs, and designing e-curriculum on import/export procedures among a number of activities.

Similarly, the SheTrades Philippines Hub implement initiatives for women-led or owned businesses in the country to improve their capacities and their access to markets. As one of the five (5) SheTrades Hubs in Asia, the SheTrades Philippines Hub has been involved in the discussions on new governance structure, strategy, and work planning with all SheTrades Hubs to share and learn from best practices in supporting and scaling up efforts for women in trade.

We are also in the implementation stage of the EU-funded project “Climate Competitiveness: Building Opportunities in the Green Economy for Emerging and Developing Countries” which examines the role of trade in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives.

These initiatives are among the numerous collaborations exhibiting the important role of ITC in driving sustainable development and inclusive growth and specially in promoting the participation of MSMEs in the global market. We are particularly appreciative of ITC’s tailored approach, which aligns with our national priorities and development goals.

To further enrich the impact and effectiveness of ITC's initiatives, we recommend continuing the good work in the local TACB programs, strengthening public-private partnerships, and promotion of inclusive policy frameworks.

In closing, the Philippines extends our appreciation to the ITC, the WTO and UNCTAD for their support and partnership. We look forward to further strengthening our collaboration and witnessing the continued positive impact of ITC's initiatives in the Philippines and beyond.

Thank you, Chair.