

Statement by The Gambia
ITC – 56th Joint Advisory Group Meeting
13 September 2022

Thank you Chair, and congratulations on assuming this important role. Our appreciation as well to the outgoing Chair for his able stewardship of the 55th session.

My delegation commends the ITC under the leadership of Executive Director Mrs. Pamela Coke-Hamilton for the strong results achieved in 2021.

We found the Annual Report publication to be informative as usual, and it clearly demonstrates the numerous interventions ITC dedicated to the development of MSMEs amidst a challenging global environment.

We also commend ITC for developing and launching its new Strategic Plan 2022–2025, and for placing a sharper focus on maximizing the contribution of MSME competitiveness and trade to the achievement of the SDGs. We are pleased to note that in 2021, the ITC directly supported 11 SDGs. This commitment of supporting accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is worthy of emulation.

ITC and The Gambia enjoy a longstanding relationship that continues to grow. The vision and objectives of our National Development Plan are anchored in private sector led growth and our partnership with ITC is instrumental to implement this agenda. We have seen great results from investing in entrepreneurship, enhancing and developing market led skills, and boosting the competitiveness and market access of small businesses.

Allow me to highlight a few key results as a result of our collaboration. In the last 12 months alone, ITC in partnership with relevant ministries, agencies, and the private sector supported more than 2,000 youths through technical and vocational skills training. More than 1,500 women entrepreneurs have improved their knowledge and skills to access new markets.

In December 2021 we reached an important milestone in our partnership with the ITC. After the successful completion of the SheTrades Project, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment institutionalized the initiative, and The Gambia has now joined the global network of SheTrades Hubs. We have also launched a project supported by ITC and the EIF to facilitate market access for women.

Despite these gains, my country remains very vulnerable to external shocks. We are still recovering from the pandemic and tourism is far below the pre-crisis level. We also remain extremely prone to climate-related disasters.

We need to step up our efforts in the face of adversity. Investing in small businesses will help us cope, create resilience, add value, and create more and better jobs.

I would like to conclude by thanking the donor community for their continued support which enables the ITC deliver on its mission.

We wish the ITC continued success and look forward to strengthening our partnership going forward, as we aim to realize our goal of a better future for our citizens.

Thank you.