

56th Joint Advisory Group (JAG) of the International Trade Centre (ITC)

STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Delivered by Amb. Marcel R. Tibaleka, 13 September 2022

Chair of the 56th Session and Permanent Representative of Mauritius,
H.E Usha Chandnee Dwarka-Canabady

The Director-General of the WTO, Ms Ngonzi Okonjo-Iweala

The Executive Director of the ITC, Ms Pamela Coke-Hamilton

Thank you and good morning to you all,

The Delegation of Uganda extends its thanks to the Chair and the Executive Director for convening this meeting of the Joint Advisory Group of the ITC.

Uganda joins others in acknowledging the extensive work of the 55th session and its chair, Ambassador Paul Bekkers, which we are now building on in this 56th session.

We thank the Executive-Director for her vision and insightful remarks, and for clearly enumerating the steps being taken, in collaboration with partners, to strengthen the competitiveness of micro, small and medium-sized exporters and help build vibrant, sustainable export sectors that provide entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly for women, young people and vulnerable communities.

We note with appreciation the 2021 Report on Activities of the ITC and commend the Centre and its partners for their determination to design and deliver support in innovative ways as to help developing countries, especially the most vulnerable ones, recover better from the pandemic and steadily progress towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.

As the only international agency fully dedicated to the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises through aid for trade, the International Trade Centre is uniquely placed to make an invaluable contribution towards the development of our informal sectors, and our efforts to find all-round, durable solutions to the challenges faced by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, that go beyond finance and address the major stumbling blocks such as technology and human resource gaps.

The Value Added to Trade programme for instance is making it possible for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries to meet market requirements and integrate into local, regional and global chains of production. In Uganda, we are pleased to note that the Netherlands Trust Fund IV project has had a positive impact on the export competitiveness of the information technology and IT-enabled services sectors, with, 34 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises having engaged in international transactions worth \$3.8 million as a result of ITC support.

My delegation is pleased to note that the Centre's new Strategic Plan 2022–2025 will push ITC's business model towards creating even more competitive micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, stronger business ecosystems, better regulatory environments and more relevant global public goods.

We are looking forward to working with the centre to expand our collaboration to include projects that develop green, inclusive and technological

dimensions of trade and investment. This should enable us to respond to current and emerging needs as well as opportunities to improve the performance of export sectors with a focus on greening value chains, generating sustainable investment, and stimulating job creation.

We are particularly excited about the opportunities presented by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), for impactful technical cooperation with Africa, and as such, we recommend the continuation and strengthening of the AfCTA Export Training Programme for African SMEs given that Intra-African trade may offer greater (and, to date, largely untapped) scope for supporting economic diversification.

I thank you!