

Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the floor. I will make this statement on behalf of Ambassador Alaa Youssef who regrets for not being able to attend this meeting.

Madam Chair,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you for your election as Chair of the 54th session of the Joint Advisory Group, and I would like to assure you my delegation's full support. I would like to thank as well the outgoing Chair for her excellent work. I also join other delegations in congratulating Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton for her new position as ITC Executive Director and wishing her success in fulfilling her mandate. I would like also to commend the results achieved in 2019 under the leadership of Ms. Arancha Gonzalez, and thank WTO and UNCTAD for their continuous and invaluable support to the ITC.

Madam Chair,

Egypt has strong ties with ITC and has benefited from its projects and programs throughout the years. In 2019, ITC has cooperated with Egypt in 3 areas of focus: strengthening trade and investment support institution, connecting to international value chains, as well as promoting and mainstreaming inclusive and green trade.

In this regard, I would like to highlight 3 main projects with ITC: the first one is the establishment of a specialized export promotion department within the Export Development Bank of Egypt, which will play a key role in promoting Egyptian exports. Secondly, the launch of a new phase of the Global Textiles and Clothing Program, developed within the framework of the GTEX MENATEX program, and implemented in cooperation with the Swiss Government, with the aim of increasing employment and income along the Textiles and Clothing value chain, through improving the institutional infrastructure of the sector and enhancing competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises in the textiles and clothing industry. Lastly, the "She trades" project which aims

to support women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses. This project aims at training at least 50 Egyptian women entrepreneurs by the end of 2021.

Madam Chair,

ITC plays an important role in supporting the African Continental Free Trade Area, which is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063. In this regard, I would like to commend the ITC on the creation of the “AfCFTA Tariff Negotiation Tool”, which aims to facilitate the negotiations of tariff lines within the agreement, as well as the implementation of the “African Trade Observatory”, which is an initiative of the AU Commission, funded by the European Union.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our full support to the work conducted by ITC, especially in these critical times in order to assist developing countries in mitigating the impacts of covid-19 pandemic and formulating their economic recovery plan. We strongly believe that ITC plays a crucial role in advancing economic growth and sustainable development in developing countries. We are looking forward to more programs from ITC to fostering women and youth empowerment, as well as enabling MSMEs to enhance their competitiveness and connecting them to global value chains.

Thank you.