

57th Joint Advisory Group of International Trade Centre

Thank you Chairperson,

Mauritius is pleased to participate in this 57th Session of the Joint Advisory Group Session.

Many countries of the developing south are still coping with the effects of the Pandemic and of geopolitical instability, and the four Cs as enumerated by the Executive Director; COVID, Climate Change, Conflict and Cost of Living are hindering developing countries in their economic trajectory.

The global economic growth is forecasted to slow from a 6.1 percent in 2021 to 2.8 percent in 2023 and 3 percent in 2024.

Against this bleak backdrop, we are happy to note that the ITC pledges to remain engaged as it has done so in 2022, in favour of supporting growth in the developing countries.

Mauritius like many other countries we see the ITC as a reliable partner for sustainable economic recovery and building resilience for trade and development.

We note with appreciation that the actions of the ITC for year 2022 have comprised:

- 520 000 business stakeholders have gained awareness of international trade from the ITC business trade and market intelligence
- 27 000 MSMEs improved competitiveness out of which 10 000 MSMEs are led by Women.
- 77 000 SME Trade Academy participants with 48 percent of women

We particularly welcome the impact areas for MSMEs namely in:

- Sustainable and resilient value chains
- Inclusive Trade
- Green Trade
- Digital Trade
- And in
- Regional Integration and South South Trade

With respect to Africa we appreciate that the ITC has interventions the ITC has interventions in 50 of them out of 54 countries, with a coverage representing 92% in addition to initiatives on a regional platform like supporting technically the implementation of the AFCFTA.

For Mauritius, as a Small Island we value the concrete support of the ITC in these following areas:

PEECAC Project

The three year - *Partnership for Enhancing Export Capacity of Africa to China* (PEECAC) Project which was launched in September 2021.

PEECAC is a 3-year project sponsored by China that aims at assisting 8 African beneficiary countries, namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia, to increase their agricultural and food products export to China and to attract Chinese sustainable investment. We hope that this mechanism will help us address the trade imbalances.

Trade Obstacle Alert Mechanism (TOAM) for Mauritius - developed with the technical and financial assistance from the International Trade Centre (ITC) to facilitate through digital means for Business operators to report trade obstacles and other impeding elements which they might face in the course of exports and imports.

The new Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism (TOAM) and the complementary mobile application was launched in September 2022 by the Hon Minister of Foreign Affairs Regional Integration and Trade of Mauritius.

SheTrades Hub

We are very happy that in March of this year the Mauritius She Trades Hub was launched in Mauritius . Mauritius was honoured to welcome the Executive Director for the event and during the visit, important meetings were held at the highest level including with Prime Minister of Mauritius, The Honourable Pravin Kumar Jugnauth whereby women empowerment through entrepreneurship was discussed.

The ITC has assisted Mauritius in the drafting of the Drafting of the National Trade Facilitation Implementation Plan and our National Export Strategy (NES)

Green economy and Climate Change

Mauritius is among the first group of countries working actively with the ITC for the “Climate Competitiveness” project funded by the European Union, which we thank again for its continuous support . The project will promote complementarity between trade policy and build climate resilience and to decarbonize the economy. It will promote adaptation capacity of MSMEs’ capacity to map and comply with trade-related climate measures.

It will also upscale engagement of states with the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) at the World Trade Organization.

We will continue to have recourse to the ITC for specific capacities in the deployment of the different tools and techniques to be used in the conduct of trade potential analysis for goods and services and in the enhancing of utilisation of the free trade agreements that Mauritius has signed and to identify bottle necks that are hindering trade and how to diversify export in terms of products and markets.

Chairperson,

As we try to look ahead with serenity, the recent unfolding situation is not assuring particularly when we see the impact of the geopolitical situation will have on food security.

The developing countries will be further affected and, it is feared that some will even have to face famine. We are yet to ascertain the collateral damages with the cost to energy prices and the negative ripple effects in all sectors of national economies .

As we work towards the WTO Ministerial Conference 13 early next year, we would kindly recommend that the ITC intensifies its actions in the area of promoting food security by upscaling regional production, revisiting supply chains and build advocacy and resilience for developing countries, especially NFIDCs.

In the face of the 4Cs of COVID, Climate Change, Conflict and Cost of Living as mentioned by the Executive Director, we will need another set of 4Cs, which are:

Commitment of the Global community for overall recovery
Creativity by us all to address the extraordinary current challenges
Certainty of actions, stability and predictability for our business operators

And lastly and importantly

Continuous collaboration and accompaniment of the ITC, along with other development partners and the donors to the cause of the developing countries.

Thank you Chairperson