



PERMANENT MISSION OF PAKISTAN TO THE WTO

56th session of the Joint Advisory Group (JAG) of the International Trade Centre (ITC)
13th September 2022 – Room S1 - WTO

Chair, Excellency Dwarka-Canabady,
DDG Zhang
UNCTAD Secretary-General, Ms. Rebeca Grynspan,
ITC Executive Director, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton,
Excellencies,
And Colleagues,

First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Bekkers for his dedication and leadership over the last year and to congratulate the Ambassador Dwarka-Canabady for assuming the Chair of the JAG. And I am thankful to all of you for being mindful of the crises unfolding in Pakistan and keeping its people in your thoughts, and for all the countries that have come forth with material support and offers.

Chair, I am delighted and truly honoured for the opportunity to be here and especially thank all the main relevant stakeholders without whom the much-needed support to the developing and least developed economies would not have been possible.

In 2021, ITC operated in a context of multiple challenges as mentioned by the ITC Executive Director in her foreword of the ITC report. ITC's achievements in such context are truly commendable. Pakistan has been assisted very effectively in fulfilling its TFA obligations and in trade related projects that support women in some extremely marginalised areas of Pakistan.

I would be amiss without underscoring the importance of the support from donor countries to the ITC's work. Your contribution made a difference and we are grateful for your continuous support.

I cannot agree more with you Executive Director about the multiple challenges that we are facing, let me add as well that the challenges are not only multiple but also complex. I can speak for my country, Pakistan, which is now experiencing one of its worst flooding in living memory. We had barely managed to get back on our feet after the pandemic, war driven inflation and constantly struggle with macroeconomic challenges, then a massive flood has brought havoc by taking many lives, destroying millions of livelihoods and now we are bracing for deadly trail of health issues that normally ensue such flooding. The full scale of the damages has yet to be assessed – and the rains continue. After one of the hottest summers – temperatures in certain areas registered 50 degrees centigrade- we experienced heavy monsoon rains, in waste swathes, in Sind and Baluchistan – coincidentally both provinces are ITC GRASP project areas- it rained 5 to 6 times the average. (Pamela, I believe ITC is in the process of reaching out to the project beneficiaries and learn lessons for future programs, including climate resilience and micro-insurance). About a third of the country – a land mass about the size of the United Kingdom is under water affecting almost 30 million people. In short Pakistan is probably in the eye of the storm of the Four-Cs crises that the Executive Director pointed out rightly. The floods have wiped out hundreds of thousands of acres of crops including cotton and rice, some of our key exports, and the mainstay of millions of small farmers. Their land is submerged and probably not productive for a couple of years; most physical and social service infrastructure is gone. Hunger and disease seem inevitable.



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The complexity of the challenges we are facing stems from the fact that our fragile economy is impacted by external factors way beyond our control. And I am not even getting into the impact on our economy over the long term of regional geopolitics, and successive wars in Afghanistan.

There is widespread agreement that we are at the receiving end of mostly a man-made disaster, that is going to unfold for all of us eventually, slowly but surely. Unless we as a global community decide to do something about it. And we know what to do, but the question is whether we have the collective and individual will to do it as a comity of nations. Chair the matter of fact is that Pakistan contributes less than 0.5% of the global green- house gases while it is in the list of top ten countries when it comes to those most vulnerable to climate change. This disproportion in perpetrator and culprit clearly makes the case of the ‘the polluter pay principle’ very strongly relevant.

Today we are confronted with an immediate huge task of rescue, relief and recovery as well as of medium- and long-term objectives of climate adaptability, resilience and mitigation. These tasks are simply far beyond our capacity and capability as we can barely provide for our large population and partly that of Afghanistan, which together make about 260 million people.

At this juncture, we call for more partnerships and collaboration between all relevant stakeholders to support us and to contribute to our recovery and to build a more resilient economy. We also call for more cooperation to address such global commons as they cannot be addressed through competitive approaches.

By way of conclusion, we believe the work for ITC is clearly cut out and well identified. We once again thank the ITC, its donors and its partners for their work and we wish to encourage you all to continue your support to trade and development. I am reassured that with Ambassador Usha in the Chair, the JAG will be a great forum of support and guidance to the ITC.

Thank you
