

REPORT OF THE 53RD SESSION OF THE ITC JOINT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

Geneva, 2 July 2019



International
Trade
Centre

TRADE IMPACT
FOR GOOD

ITC mission:

To enhance inclusive and sustainable growth and development in developing countries, especially least developed countries, and countries with economies in transition through improving the international competitiveness of MSMEs.

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Report of the 53rd session of the ITC Joint Advisory Group

Geneva, 02 July 2019

Opening session

Opening remarks by the Chair of the 52nd session

1. Mr. Jaime Coghi Arias, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the World Trade Organization (WTO), on behalf of the Chair of the 52nd session of the Joint Advisory Group (JAG), former Ambassador Mr. Alvaro Cedeño Molinari of Costa Rica, opened the 53rd session.
2. Mr. Coghi Arias noted that Costa Rica's Chairmanship of the JAG covered a year where ITC has observed a number of good achievements including the impact of ITC's in-country work. He made reference to accomplishments such as: the launch of new export analysis tools and the introduction of new ITC interventions in the field.
3. Mr. Coghi Arias added that ITC carries out projects in countries and regions that face the most challenging development issues. ITC deals with this by operating as an agile organization that innovates to deliver effectively in different contexts.
4. He expressed his trust in ITC's ability to deliver trade impact for good and encouraged members and partner organizations to continue working with ITC in its quest to realize good trade.

Opening remarks by the Chair of the 53rd session

5. H.E. Ms. Terhi Hakala, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations Office and International Organizations at Geneva, took up her position as Chair of the 53rd session of the JAG.
6. In her opening remarks, Ambassador Hakala reiterated that ITC's role was to make trade happen. Through its expertise, know-how and engagement with strategic partners, ITC facilitates good trade – trade that promotes equitable, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth. ITC prioritizes micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), as they employ the most people and are therefore critical to achieving inclusive growth.
7. Ambassador Hakala stated that ITC's work aligns closely with Finland's development cooperation priorities. As such, Finland appreciates ITC's ability to achieve excellent results in changing people's lives. She referred to ITC's country-specific interventions in 2018, of which 86% focused on countries and communities where inclusive, equitable and green growth matters the most – namely: least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states, small vulnerable economies, and post-conflict and fragile states.

8. Through its projects on the ground, ITC has been able to: connect MSMEs to international value chains, help MSMEs cope with climate change, and partner with governments to address challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. She gave examples of ITC's work in Morocco's textile and agro-processing industries and Kenya's tea, coffee and cut flower sectors.
9. She also drew attention to ITC's contribution to the Buenos Aires Declaration on Women and Trade, of which Finland is an avid supporter given the country's priority in enhancing the rights and status of women and girls. The Ambassador noted that Finland also wants to help developing countries strengthen and diversify their economies while also being more inclusive. She further noted that building the competitiveness of MSMEs is essential in achieving this.
10. Ambassador Hakala concluded by underlining the importance of the JAG meeting as an opportunity for participants in the trade and development community to examine ITC's work, commend the good and highlight areas of improvement.

Statement by WTO Director-General

11. Mr. Roberto Azevêdo, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), highlighted that the meeting was taking place at a significant moment for the trade and development community. It was an opportunity to consider ITC's achievements over the past year, look to the challenges ahead, and discuss how the Geneva Trade hub - WTO, UNCTAD and ITC - could maintain and scale up their collaboration to make trade more inclusive.
12. Mr. Azevêdo recognized that ITC had an active 2018, which delivered concrete changes on the ground. He cited examples involving ITC's work in West Africa, Afghanistan, and Rwanda, noting that 18,500 enterprises improved their international competitiveness through various ITC projects.
13. Mr. Azevêdo commended ITC's SheTrades initiative and he aligned WTO with the importance of supporting the empowerment of women in the global economy. He highlighted that in 2018, almost 4,000 women entrepreneurs were trained as part of this initiative, helping them to improve the international competitiveness of their businesses.
14. He noted that the collaboration between ITC and WTO spanned a number of areas and projects including: several aspects of the WTO's regular work in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), accessions and capacity building, as well as digital tools such as the Cotton Portal and ePing. Additionally, the three organizations have joined forces on the Global Trade Helpdesk and are working together on a website to highlight the contribution of trade to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
15. The WTO issued a report underlining that the turbulence generated by the current trade tensions is continuing, as trade flows are being hit by new trade restrictions. However, Mr. Azevêdo propounded that we should be encouraged by the outcomes of the G20 Summit in Osaka, given the overall positive stance towards the multilateral trading system. He underscored that the only way to strengthen the system in a changing world is by being ready to seek changes in the system as well. In this regard, he emphasized that we must maintain our focus on trade's role in promoting development and fighting poverty.

Statement by Secretary-General of UNCTAD

16. Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), stated that the unique circumstances of multilateralism today pose new challenges for those who want to see trade deliver for development. He appreciated the efforts of ITC in aligning its new strategies with the changing global circumstances including the focus on connecting MSMEs to global markets.
17. Referencing the recent G20 meeting of Trade and Economy Ministers in Osaka, he highlighted the importance of ensuring that when discussing global development challenges it is important to include all countries in the debate. Those being left behind by globalization and its disruptors have to be at the table, especially when discussing the solutions to their challenges.
18. Mr. Kituyi highlighted the Global Trade Helpdesk which aims to provide the most vulnerable with access to critical information to assist them in taking advantage of opportunities in the marketplace. He added that he also looked forward to closer coordination in data collection on non-tariff measures – which is another frontier where UNCTAD, WTO and ITC share concrete interests.
19. Mr. Kituyi underscored satisfaction with the role that ITC plays in supporting the WTO and UNCTAD in their statistical work for monitoring progress against targets of the 2030 Agenda. In this light, he noted that UNCTAD launched SDG Pulse – a live statistical portal that gives updates against the SDG targets. He urged the three organizations to find practical solutions to sharing and sequencing work in a way that reduces duplication, improves efficiencies, strengthens collaboration and delivers with impact.
20. Mr. Kituyi expressed appreciation to Arancha González and ITC Senior Management for ITC's strong participation in the first African Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees, which UNCTAD hosted in Addis Ababa in November 2018.
21. In referencing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Mr. Kituyi noted that ITC's innovative ways of delivering for MSMEs would be an important ingredient in delivering on the promise of the AfCFTA.
22. In closing, Mr. Kituyi supported comments related to the work of ITC, particularly on connecting small business to global trade. He underscored that UNCTAD looks forward to greater partnership with ITC.

Statement by Executive Director of ITC

23. Ms. Arancha González, ITC Executive Director, thanked Costa Rica for its leadership of the 52nd session of the JAG and thanked Ambassador Hakala for chairing the 53rd session of the JAG.
24. Ms. González noted that 2018 and 2019 were the most challenging and exciting years for ITC. Trade became central to the global geo-politics debate and the role of MSMEs in supporting inclusive growth also became a top priority. She added that the Geneva Trade hub had a responsibility to dispel the myths and present the facts on trade.

25. Thanking the Director-General of the WTO and the Secretary-General of UNCTAD for their continued support to ITC, Ms. González explained that the three organizations have complementary mandates – making trade possible, making trade happen and making the global economy work more effectively for people in developing countries. She gave examples of their collaboration, referencing the Global Trade Helpdesk, the SDG monitoring website, and the collective partnership on trade facilitation and women’s economic empowerment.
26. Ms. González emphasized that ITC will continue to “fill the gap” by working in the space where the market does not. She underscored that MSMEs that trade employ more people, pay higher wages, have better working conditions and engender more innovation. And when they are able to connect to international value chains, the resulting gains are more broadly spread across society. For example, countries such as China, Colombia, Bangladesh and Kenya have grown faster than they otherwise might have, by hitching their wagons to the world economy.
27. Despite the positive gains, trade-led development is currently facing two serious challenges. Firstly, the open global economy itself is under threat with new trade restrictions on the table and secondly, technology is profoundly changing the face of structural transformation. Responding to these new realities involves a combination of: opening markets, making the most of existing market access, adding value across the board, and ensuring that gains are inclusive.
28. ITC is working to foster greater sustainable value-addition and value capture across the board. Ms. González noted that ITC’s interventions have generated increasing amounts of private investments. For instance, in 2018, ITC catalysed investments in the Caribbean coconut sector, in Ethiopia’s textile sector, for Afghan saffron producers, Moroccan agroprocessors, Kenyan tea and coffee producers, and Ugandan fintech startups. In this vein, last year’s SME Competitiveness Outlook focused on fostering business ecosystems for the digital economy.
29. She also highlighted the work in Myanmar in developing and implementing a National Export Strategy, which has already led to an increased compliance with health and safety standards in the oilseeds sector which has translated into higher incomes for oilseed producers in the country.
30. Along with its focus on MSMEs, ITC also places particular emphasis on empowering women, young people and vulnerable communities to tap into international market opportunities. In this regard, ITC launched SheTrades Invest, SheTrades Commonwealth, SheTrades MENA, and SheTrades Chapters in Zambia and The Gambia last year. In 2019, ITC will launch SheTrades AfCFTA at the World Export Development Forum (WEDF) in Addis Ababa.
31. Ms. González also highlighted that ITC has worked in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in Kenya to enable refugees and host communities to tap into international markets. Additionally, ITC’s Youth Empowerment Project (YEP!) promoted skills-building and access to finance to create decent work opportunities for young entrepreneurs in The Gambia.
32. Ms. González highlighted the rising demand from ITC’s clients. In 2018, ITC delivered a record \$100 million of expenditures on technical assistance. Moreover, extra-budgetary spending at \$64 million, was 38% more than the year before and 15% above the previous high-water mark. ITC estimates that it leveraged these expenditures into \$1.1 billion in export and investment value – roughly \$17 in international export and investment transactions for each dollar spent. Despite a constrained financial environment, ITC signed

\$165 million worth of grant agreements in 2018 – grants were larger, longer-term, and from a more varied pool of sources than ever before.

33. She also noted that in 2018, ITC was able to diversify sources of funding by building new partnerships and strengthening old ones, as the private sector was becoming a more prominent partner. In 2018, ITC partnered with Swiss retailer Coop to foster greater investment in the cocoa and yam sectors in Ghana. ITC also partnered with UPS and Maersk to support women in trade, DHL to address e-commerce in Rwanda, and Huawei to build capacity for services. Looking ahead, ITC had secured \$232 million in funding for project implementation for 2019 and beyond.
34. The Executive Director affirmed that organizations that call for sustainable development must also practice what they preach. ITC has become carbon neutral, is continuing to focus on gender equity at all professional levels, increased the presence of staff from developing countries and expanded its presence in-country by hiring local expertise. In an effort to create “one ITC”, the organization also welcomed over fifty project field personnel to its headquarters this week.
35. In closing, Ms. González thanked beneficiaries and funders for the confidence they placed in ITC and called for continued future support and partnership.

Trade for Structural Transformation

Statement by Secretary-General, COMESA

36. H.E. Ms. Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, Secretary-General, COMESA, underscored that COMESA has adopted a developmental approach to its regional integration agenda, which continues to place trade at its center and builds on the achievement of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and customs union.
37. In the context of Trade for Structural Transformation, COMESA is adopting a Digital FTA which places an emphasis on e-commerce. Instruments being developed as part of the Digital FTA include: e-certificates of origin, e-single window and an online trade portal. Ms. Kapwepwe added that trade facilitation portals are currently being implemented in ten COMESA Member States. COMESA is also giving industrialization more importance, by clustering MSMEs at all levels of the value chain in order to achieve sufficient volumes and meet the demands of the market.
38. Ms. Kapwepwe asserted that COMESA places importance on inclusivity – particularly of women and youth. She also recognized that while a lot of work on infrastructure development in the region is being done, more needs to be done to reduce the physical divide, to improve accessibility to energy and to provide improved ICT connectivity and availability. In this regard, human capital is critical for the region because most industries in COMESA are labour-intensive and ultimately, human capital is what drives innovation. She also gave examples where COMESA is providing support to Member States to achieve their goals and cited results yielded, such as: Zimbabwean shoe exports to South-America, the re-opening of litchi exports by Madagascar, and the supply of uniforms to government services by Malawian textiles and clothing clusters.
39. The Secretary-General thanked ITC for its successful partnership with COMESA. She highlighted that ITC has given COMESA and its Member States access to expert

knowledge and technical support in areas involving value chain development, standards, SPS, non-tariff barriers, gender and youth. ITC has also facilitated the mobilization of additional partners and resources for projects at regional and national levels. In closing, she also recognized the contributions of WTO and UNCTAD to COMESA, remarking that there was a need to strengthen, renew and establish collaboration with all partners of the Regional Economic Community.

Statement by Commissioner for Industry and Private Sector, ECOWAS

40. Mr. Mamadou Traoré, Commissioner for Industry and the Private Sector, ECOWAS, noted that 63% of the ECOWAS population is currently under the age of 25. The region is making significant progress in several areas, including: the harmonization of economic policies, the implementation of joint projects and programmes, and the construction of a common market, customs union and monetary union. He emphasized that there is a lot of effort being made to improve the economic performance of the region.
41. Mr. Traoré highlighted the AfCFTA as opening opportunities for economic growth, while recognizing the commitment of ECOWAS Member States to the continental market. Mr. Traoré added that ECOWAS had developed several protocol policies and programmes that will help to facilitate its integration into the common market. He also acknowledged the important role played by the range of technical and financial partners in their engagement with ECOWAS, particularly in the formulation and implementation of the various programmes aimed at strengthening productive capacities, private sector transformation and increasing exports in West Africa.

Statement by Deputy Minister, Ministry of Commerce, Republic of the Union of Myanmar

42. H.E. Mr. U Aung Htoo, Deputy Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar's Ministry of Commerce, indicated that with a view to enhance its trade sector, Myanmar has been working closely with development partners and associations. ITC has been cooperating with Myanmar on the development of a National Export Strategy and in many other areas such as in tourism. Mr. Htoo stated that efforts to encourage private sector activity and liberalize the economy have been extensively featured in the new long-term economic development agenda, and recent legislative reforms aim to further boost business engagement. Additionally, the Government of Myanmar continues to encourage equitable and inclusive private sector development – for example, many infrastructure projects are being developed through various Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Mr. Htoo drew attention to the fact that Myanmar's Sustainable Development Plan emphasizes that a competitive and dynamic private sector is key for job creation and economic development.
43. Myanmar has always been supportive of the multilateral trading system and he highlighted that the country's implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is an example of this. Myanmar has also been striving to meet the SDGs.
44. Mr. Htoo concluded by noting that Myanmar has committed to working closely with all development partners – particularly the ITC. He encouraged and called for support on development initiatives such as the EU-ARISE Plus Programme which would be launched shortly.

Statements by delegations

45. Delegates applauded ITC's excellent work in fostering inclusive and sustainable growth. They noted that trade is a powerful contributor to sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, ITC plays an important role in promoting trade for economic development and growth in developing countries, particularly in LDCs.
46. Many delegates called for greater support to multilateralism, recognizing that the multilateral trading system was an important buffer against complex global challenges. Multilateral organizations like the WTO were identified as key vehicles for integrating countries into the multilateral trading system. This sentiment was echoed by those who argued that if ITC did not exist, it would need to be created as its work in boosting economic and social inclusion allowed countries to benefit from the rules-based trading system.
47. Countries asked ITC to continue working with marginalized and vulnerable groups with the aim of supporting the poorest and helping those at the base of the pyramid. One delegate asserted that ITC should continue to make efforts to demonstrate that it delivers on income opportunities for the poorest.
48. Delegates noted that places with favourable environments may give more sustainable results, hence they commended ITC's work in challenging environments such as in LDCs, and fragile and post-conflict states. They underscored that LDCs still lag behind in areas such as value addition, competitiveness and market access, and placed an emphasis on supporting LDCs in these areas. They also called for a focus on plugging small businesses, particularly from LDCs, into the economic mainstream in a bid to combat extreme poverty.
49. Continuing the development of global public goods, with the goal of making trade more transparent and helping MSMEs identify new market opportunities, was recommended. ITC was also directed to focus on improving access to information on quality. Delegations stressed the significance of quality infrastructure and reliable product quality, as enhanced trade cannot be achieved in their absence. It was noted that ITC's programmes and products, including the Global Trade Helpdesk and the Rules of Origin Facilitator, have contributed to making global trade more transparent. However, delegations underlined that not enough countries are aware of ITC's market intelligence tools and greater efforts should be made in publicizing these tools.
50. Delegates commended ITC's holistic approach to delivering trade-related technical assistance. ITC's proven methodology of working with policymakers, institutions and enterprises, enables ITC to deliver effective work in fostering inclusive and sustainable development. ITC was called to provide more support on cross-cutting issues such as quality management, and by working on multiple levels, to help MSMEs reach their full potential in the global market.
51. Delegations highlighted the positive impact of ITC's work on Export Strategies in their countries and how these efforts translate into local ownership.
52. In addressing NTMs, delegates thanked and appreciated ITC for its assistance with NTM surveys. Delegates stated that it was important to identify existing NTMs and therefore there was demand for support on NTM identification.
53. E-commerce was identified as an important tool to support the execution of the AfCFTA – in particular, by establishing an e-commerce observatory for economic operators and policymakers to assist them in identifying market opportunities and to facilitate the monitoring of AfCFTA implementation. ITC was requested to consider support in this area.

54. ITC was recognized for its expertise in institutional capacity building – countries found this useful when looking to improving the institutional capacity of their respective Trade and Investment Support Institutions (TISIs). Delegations underscored that building such capacity was important for increasing the performance and efficiency of TISIs. ITC was encouraged to continue its good work in this area.
55. MSMEs were recognized as agents for development and a driving force in job creation. Therefore, countries found it important to help MSMEs reach their full potential in the global market and enable them to benefit from opportunities in the multilateral trading system. To achieve this, countries recommended engagement in more PPPs, in order to enhance competitiveness and obtain better market results for MSMEs. Delegates also underlined the importance of providing support for value chain development – noting that such support should begin with value chain analysis to identify trade opportunities and obstacles. Continuing support to MSMEs by assisting them in adding value to their products, improving their branding and packaging, and improving market linkages was highlighted. The 2019 China International Import Expo was identified by some delegates as an opportunity to do this.
56. Delegates voiced their support for ITC’s working the agricultural sector – particularly countries from the Caribbean. They endorsed ITC’s involvement in sector competitiveness noting that ITC’s decision to collaborate with local and regional partners contributed to its success. Additionally, ITC’s work in improving competitiveness by improving market linkages, increasing production performance and quality, and boosting regional coordination was commended.
57. Delegates stressed the value they saw in trade impact for good in relation to South-South trade. They asserted that the Global South is an area of potential and therefore advised ITC to continue supporting efforts to create business networks in this area.
58. Attention was called to the importance of combatting climate change – delegates underscored that the green economy was critical. For example, Denmark stated that its Government placed a strong focus on climate change and would therefore expect organizations like ITC to deliver on mitigation efforts. ITC was advised to raise climate resilience in MSMEs value chains through which green growth could be fostered.
59. Investing in women’s economic empowerment was recognized as an important driver of development and delegates strongly endorsed ITC’s work in the area of SheTrades. It was noted that the economic inclusion of women led to fairer and equitable societies. ITC was encouraged to apply a gender-based analysis approach when designing its projects. The SheTrades initiative was praised as it was identified as a mechanism which provided opportunities to women by connecting businesses to international buyers. Countries hoped to grow the SheTrades initiative, with Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Philippines and Mongolia looking forward to launching chapters.
60. Similar to the push for the economic empowerment of women, a focus on supporting youth entrepreneurship was also endorsed. ITC was advised to make a solid effort to build capacity for youth in Africa through the AfCFTA.
61. Delegates urged ITC to continue to deepen the reporting on mainstreaming gender, youth and climate sustainability efforts. In doing so, countries hoped to see more qualitative reporting that focused on tangible impact and also a deeper examination of quantitative results. ITC was also advised to continuously ensure that its support is aligned with the real needs and demands of beneficiary countries. Delegates asserted that ITC’s projects should be tailored with consideration for respective national development plans and Agenda 2030.

62. ITC was encouraged to leverage funds outside its own programmes and projects. Funders suggested the leveraging of funds from various sources, private and public, at country and regional level, to have an impact on the activities of other stakeholders in trade and development. Within the UN system the UNDAF was seen as important tool.
63. Similarly, delegates urged ITC to continue engaging through partnerships. Taking such an approach to its projects means that ITC can galvanize more impact and finance to do better work and scale projects as well as maintain sustainability in its work. Additionally, ITC's thought leadership and contribution on policy dialogues was commended.
64. ITC's efforts to ensure the long-term sustainability of results and to consider ways of fostering local ownership were lauded. To the same end, ITC should continue developing its existing risk management framework and systematically consider risks to country ownership by integrating this aspect in the ITC risk management approach, when planning and implementing country interventions. Additionally, one delegate suggested that reduced risk attracts blended and other long-term sources of finance, allowing ITC to further diversify its funding.

Kick for Trade – Youth empowerment through sports

Statement by Minister of Trade, Republic of Guinea

65. H.E. Mr. Boubacar Barry, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Guinea, opened his remarks by providing a broad background on the economy of Guinea. He added that poor economic performance due to various crises had encouraged the irregular migration of young people. In response, the Guinean Government was taking action, with one main area of intervention being job creation.
66. In this regard, ITC is supporting Guinea with the INTEGRA project which aims to: promote economic opportunities for youth, assist young people in accessing better employment opportunities following vocational training, and support the development and financing of businesses and cooperatives. Additionally, the Guinean Government has made the Boffa Youth Center available to ITC to set up a business incubator for its young people, in order to promote job creation via youth entrepreneurship. Minister Barry explained that the Boffa Incubator will be replicated across the country following a successful pilot.
67. In Guinea, sport (particularly football) is a powerful means of communicating with young people. The Minister noted that the Boffa Incubator will utilize sports to incite the interest of Guinea's youth population and raise awareness on educational values and migration.
68. In closing, Mr. Barry thanked the UEFA Foundation for Children and its General Secretary for traveling to Boffa to scope out areas of collaboration. He underscored that ITC and the UEFA Foundation for Children will be able to count on the support of the Ministry of Commerce.

Statement by General Secretary, UEFA Foundation for Children

69. Mr. Urs Kluser, General Secretary of the UEFA Foundation for Children, thanked Arancha González for the invitation, noting that he was honored to be present and to be able to sign the Memorandum of Understanding.
70. The UEFA Foundation for Children seeks to reach out to vulnerable and precarious communities; it uses sport to inspire young people and teaches them key social values such as discipline, team work, and respect for other people, amongst others. Mr. Kluser noted that through the course of their work, they have seen that employability is important to young people. Providing them with skills and opportunities is vital for preventing them from falling into crime or partaking in mass illegal migration.
71. Guinea was identified as a good location to launch a pilot project – in this regard, the UEFA Foundation is going to start with certain activities within the framework of the existing INTEGRA project in Boffa. Mr. Kluser underscored that the organization has been encouraged by what it has seen thus far – particularly the commitment of the Guinean Government. He added that in the near future, they will also be visiting The Gambia to assess the potential for collaboration.
72. In concluding, Mr. Kluser noted that with the support of ITC, he hoped that the UEFA Foundation for Children would be able to take first steps early next year in operationalizing these interventions.

Presentation of the 2019 Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report

73. Mr. Miguel Jiménez Pont, Head of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU), presented the ITC 2019 Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report (AESR). The report conveyed the critical learning points generated through evaluations conducted over the past year and contributed to an informed debate on how to improve ITC's performance to deliver sustainable development through trade-related technical assistance.
74. Regarding this year's key learning theme, the 2019 AESR addressed the issue of complexity. Mr. Jiménez Pont underscored that the Agenda 2030 increased the expectations on evaluation and the complexity and interlinkages between the SDGs is challenging the evaluation community like never before. He explained that SDGs are not a hierarchal system and understanding how they interact required an innovative approach. As such, the theme of "complexity" built on this development and the IEU applied the criterion of synergies to conduct the analysis for the 2019 AESR report.
75. ITC's interventions are increasingly complex, as it is one of many actors working in the ecosystems where its projects operate. Mr. Jiménez Pont underscored that when applying the new synergy criterion, ITC seemed to be ahead of the curve in adapting to complexity requirements.
76. In terms of lessons learned, he said that the report's high-level recommendations focused on strengthening intervention control, assessment and measurement mechanisms. The report also proposed that systems should be in place to ensure that ITC interventions address complexity challenges, in order to attain results. He added that with the introduction of the issue of complexity in the analysis, ITC hoped to move from a project-

focused approach to an on-going process of constant adjustment, flexibility and long-term interaction with stakeholders.

Closing session

Chair's summary

77. In closing, Ambassador Hakala thanked participants and speakers for their contributions to the 53rd session of the JAG.
78. She noted that the morning session served as a reminder of the challenges facing global trade, and she underscored the importance of ensuring that trade continued to be an enabler of sustainable growth, development, job creation and poverty reduction. She also provided a summary of key messages and takeaways from the interventions of guest speakers, and referenced areas in which ITC, UNCTAD and WTO are collectively making it easier for businesses to trade.
79. Ambassador Hakala summarized the guest speakers' insights into how to build on trade's contribution to structural transformation in Eastern and Southern Africa, West Africa, and Myanmar. Ms. Kapwepwe stressed the importance of human capital development, practical improvements to customs processes, physical infrastructure and health and safety compliance for deepening regional economic integration. While, Mr. Traoré shed light on the need to leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area to boost value-addition in intra-African trade. H.E. Mr. Htoo reported on his country's efforts to use trade reforms to foster socioeconomic transformation, and provided examples of Myanmar's cooperation with ITC in various sectors.
80. Ambassador Hakala added that Members were uniformly positive about their work with ITC. They praised the effectiveness of ITC's efforts to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs and they provided tangible examples of ITC's collaboration with respective beneficiary countries, focusing particularly on the benefits derived from ITC's market intelligence tools. She also highlighted that a number of delegations expressed the desire to set up national SheTrades chapters.
81. The donor group coordinator commended ITC's efforts to fortify trade capacity and reduce trade costs for small businesses, and extolled the reach of ITC events as well as its media presence. Funders also expressed satisfaction with how ITC was leveraging its financial resources.
82. The Ambassador stated that ITC is leveraging innovative partnerships to create impact, as illustrated by the establishment of an agreement between the organization and the UEFA Foundation for Children. The 53rd session of the JAG confirmed that ITC is an institution that learns from its work and engages with stakeholders to promote inclusive and sustainable development. It continues to innovate to make good trade happen.

Executive Director's Closing Remarks

83. Ms. González thanked all speakers and delegations for their comments, questions, observations and trust. She also expressed appreciation for their diverse examples on how ITC is delivering not just results but also impact. She requested beneficiaries to continue sharing their stories, so that ITC can better capture their respective views on what worked on the ground, along with the resulting impact.
84. Ms. González addressed questions by delegations pertaining to: mainstreaming, evaluation, leveraging and scaling up.
85. She emphasized that ITC aims to mainstream sustainability across projects, and to expand its footprint on supporting climate adaptation and mitigation with specific initiatives. ITC has set up a number of Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD) Hubs in Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam and Peru. Confirming that ITC also plans to further mainstream gender across projects, Ms. González announced that ITC will share how it intends to deepen its footprint in these two areas in the autumn.
86. In regards to the Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report, Ms. González asserted that ITC is ready to have a dedicated session at the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund (CCITF) on evaluation, to address additional queries.
87. ITC is leveraging resources across Window 1 and Window 2 sources, as well as other mechanisms such as: the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), Aid for Trade for Arab States, and the UN Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Production Capacity. She also highlighted that ITC is leveraging additional resources for its beneficiaries by triggering other organizations to implement projects that build on ITC's work.
88. In relation to scaling up, Ms. González revealed that ITC is strengthening its mechanisms and risk management frameworks. She added that while ITC's headquarters is based in Geneva, it is also represented by staff working in field offices across the world – in an effort to create “one ITC”.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

Street address: ITC
54-56, rue de Montbrillant
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Postal address: ITC
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Telephone: +41-22 730 0111

Fax: +41-22 733 4439

E-mail: itcreg@intracen.org

Internet: <http://www.intracen.org>

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