

Statement by the International Trade Centre (ITC)

1st Preparatory Committee for the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) New York, 22-26 January 2024

The International Trade Centre is proud to bring the voice of small businesses to the **Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States**. We thank UN DESA for the opportunity to contribute inputs related to trade and the perspectives of small businesses during the drafting process of the Outcome Document.

The conference's theme of "Charting the course toward resilient prosperity" and the importance that the United Nations has given to including the private sector in the ongoing discussions is a recognition of the leading role that micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMES) play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In that same spirit, ITC is also eagerly supporting the SIDS Global Business Network Forum, in partnership with UNOHRLLS and taking place just before the conference.

MSMEs from SIDS are confronted with specific challenges, which often affect their very survival. These include a high exposure to climate change's impacts, a lack of economies of scale, inefficiencies of their

business environments and in the delivery of business support services, and a lack of affordable financing. These are challenges that must be faced head-on if we are to deliver on the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At ITC, we know small businesses and we understand SIDS. Our work in Jamaica with the Alligator Head Foundation and the Jamaican Coconut Industry Board won the SIDS Partnership Award in 2023. Looking ahead to the next Programme of Action, ITC will continue working with SIDS governments and our partners on several areas, including:

- Climate resilience and financing to ensure business continuity and mitigate risks and impacts of climate-related disasters.
- The availability of trade-related data and the growth of digital and e-commerce capabilities for small businesses.
- Economic diversification to boost exports in emerging high value niche sectors;

We are confident that our collective efforts in the framework of Fourth International Conference on SIDS and beyond will help transform SIDS economies, making them more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient, leading in turn to more prosperous and peaceful communities.