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statement by the executive director
AT THE 8TH SESSION OF THE OPEN
WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS

“Promoting equality, including social equity, gender
equality and women's empowerment”

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Your Excellency, Mr. Csaba Körösi, Permanent Representative of Hungary,
Your Excellency, Mr. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya,
Distinguished Members of the Open Working Group,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address this eighth session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, and to provide some food for thought, from the International Trade Centre in Geneva, on the development agenda which will serve the world of tomorrow.

In her remarks, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women, brought to light key issues impeding gender equality and women's empowerment. She echoed findings revealed in the Secretary-General's report for the 58th Commission on the Status of Women, where he not only explored the challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, but touched on inequalities in our collective response.

The Secretary-General noted, and I quote, (para 61) with regard to the allocation of aid to address inequalities: “Gender-equality focused aid is concentrated in the social sectors of education and health, with alarmingly low levels of aid targeted towards economic sectors. **Only 2% of aid to the**

economic and productive sectors targeted gender equality as its principle objective.'

This imbalance in the focus of our attention as channelled through the lens of the MDGs must be addressed for three reasons:

1. Inclusive economic growth has proven a prerequisite for achieving development goals

In his report, 'A Life of Dignity for All', the United Nations Secretary-General observed "inclusive economic growth with decent employment and decent wages has proven to be a prerequisite for achieving the MDGs, particularly on Goal 1, on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger".

Without sustainable and inclusive growth, without jobs, the achievements we make in health, education, peace and security will not be sustainable.

2. Women and entrepreneurship are key: Women constitute both the majority of the poor and an engine for entrepreneurship

Women, particularly women in fragile states, in post-conflict societies, rural women and, increasingly urban women, need to be an integral part of eliminating poverty as they constitute the majority of the poor. In ITC's work as a trade-related technical agency we include in our assessments, analyses not only of products but of factors that inhibit the people – in particular women and poor communities– from achieving export success as entrepreneurs. We focus on entrepreneurs – on helping small and medium sized enterprises in developing countries succeed in trade – because small and medium sized enterprises are the main source of jobs. Across the developed and the developing world SMEs account for almost 80% of jobs. Increasing entrepreneurs' success increases jobs.

Helping foster women entrepreneurship – through capacity building, through facilitating setting up SMEs by women, through setting aside a part of government procurement for the benefit of women owned enterprises, through linking women owned SMEs to regional and global markets – as ITC does, needs to be part of the post-2015 development landscape.

3. Women's entrepreneurship: More jobs and income reinvested in family.

In developing countries, we now have 8-10 million women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises, often representing close to 40% of total SMEs. In some of these countries these firms are growing at faster rates than those owned by men. But, women's economic empowerment must be an integral part of our agenda not only because it generates employment but because women reinvest up to 90% of their earnings in the family, linking trade to development. The kinds of inequalities described in detail today, in terms of access to and control over resources, including those needed to build

productive capacities, are what we need to tackle to realise gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Conclusion: A stand-alone goal plus economic right to employment and entrepreneurship

Therefore, we need to cut the contours of the post 2015 development agenda clearly. We need a stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. And we need to ensure that women's economic rights are enshrined in the new development agenda in such a way as to foster both women employment and women entrepreneurship.

In addition, as the findings revealed in the Secretary-General's report for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) make clear, we need to monitor resource allocation and the ensuing outcomes and impact in a gender-sensitive way. We can do better than 2% of aid going to tackling gender inequality in the economic and productive sectors. To enable women's full participation in inclusive and sustainable economic growth, we need to build that mechanism into the development agenda now.

Thank you