**Trade Facilitation Committee**

**Meeting of 19-21 October 2021**

**Dedicated Session on Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Support**

**Intervention by Finland**

Finland places great importance on trade facilitation, as e.g. infrastructure- and logistics-related challenges can be serious bottlenecks for economic development and enhancing regional cooperation.

During recent years, Finland has been funding several regional and multilateral trade development projects. Our funding is channeled mainly through Multilateral Agencies, e.g. the WCO, that have the required expertise to deliver technical assistance in trade facilitation.

Today I would like to especially highlight our long-standing support to the TradeMark East Africa (TMEA). TMEA works closely with East African Community (EAC) institutions, national governments, the private sector and civil society organizations in order increase trade and unlock economic potential. TMEA operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded by the development agencies of various countries. The cooperation aims at advancing trade and supporting regional trade integration within East African Community (EAC) e.g. by reducing the time and cost of transiting and transporting goods. Improving conditions for women to participate in trade is also a central part of the strategy of the TradeMark East Africa and important for Finland. Our support to the TMEA for the years 2021-2024 totals 10.5 million euros and aims to help revive and boost trade in the region following the decline caused by the pandemic. Finland has also provided support for the TMEA’s COVID-19 response programme.

The Finnish government believes that the combination of supporting regional trade and assistance to the private sector will accelerate economic growth and support job creation, with the ultimate goal of poverty reduction.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_