



## **PROGRESS REPORT ON WTO MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS TECHNICAL WORK ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

The following communication, dated 5 November 2021, is being circulated at the request of the delegations of Botswana, El Salvador and Iceland.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. Members recall that the WTO work on trade and women is based on the 2017 Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment and on the Interim Report establishing on 23 September 2020 the Informal Working Group (IWG) on Trade and Gender in the WTO (WT/L/1095/Rev.1);

1.2. Members reiterate the objectives of the IWG on Trade and Gender and recall that its work is based on four pillars: (i) reviewing analytical work undertaken; (ii) experience sharing; (iii) considering the concept and scope for a "gender lens"; and (iv) contributing to the Aid-for-Trade Work Programme;

1.3. Based on these pillars, Members have advanced their technical work to acquire a better understanding of the trade and women's economic empowerment nexus and how this issue is integrated into Members' trade and trade policies. They highlight in this document the key points raised under each pillar combined by category of policy interventions.

### **2. TRADE EXPORTS IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND LIVELIHOOD**

2.1. Through a combination of capacity-building programmes, donations, promotion of productive projects, economic and financial, technical and institutional support by international and national organizations, the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fisheries (facilitating exports) and the Ministry of Telecommunication and the Information Society have developed an e-Commerce National Strategy that benefited women providing assistance to create a website to sell products internationally. All the income comes back to the communities (Ecuador, Association of Waorani Women: women's economic empowerment in the Ecuadorian Amazon region while preserving the ecosystem and indigenous culture).

### **3. DATA COLLECTION LEADS TO INFORMED POLICIES**

3.1. Based on the results of online surveys to assess the needs of potential women exporters, the Women Entrepreneurs Network Programme and the Export Academy for Women-Owned Small Businesses were created to provide technical assistance and information on how to export and on e-commerce (use of online platforms, return procedures, packaging and quality standards), and support networking activities. As a result, 44% of the participants increased their exports; 18% started to export, and 92% included export activities among their future plans (Turkey);

3.2. Importance of data and gender-based analysis: (i) women traders and producers in the Pacific region identified the need to improve national capacity through enhanced policy coordination, transport and trade infrastructure; (ii) address obstacles such as access to training, skills development, and finance; and (iii) simplify trade and business formalization procedures. Hence the

importance of examining the specific needs of women and adopting policies based on these identified needs (New Zealand);

3.3. Data collection methodology on women-owned businesses to identify trade characteristics of women-owned and men-owned businesses as well as trade obstacles by using two types of datasets to analyse the entrepreneurship gender gap: administrative data (e.g. census, tax filing, and export registry) and surveys. The methodology includes qualitative and quantitative analysis to identify characteristics of women-owned and men-owned businesses, as well as how these firms are impacted by trade and trade policies. Surveys also enabled to identify trade obstacles faced by women such as logistical barriers and foreign border administration. Other methods used imply conducting research to explore the sharp rise in export likelihood (e.g. digital trade and innovation) but also to understand why women export less in terms of value - networks, trade barriers and others (Canada);

3.4. Examining data on women's business ownership: (i) by using administrative source-based data, such as the business owner and the administrative tax files that provide a match between employees and employers in the economy; (ii) by using survey-based data that provides information on ownership characteristics, barriers to growth, business engagement, and the changing use of e-commerce and the Internet, among others (Canada);

3.5. Providing a structure to ensure the cooperation between the bureau of statistics and the decision-makers to understand the data need better and strengthen evidence-based decision-making (Canada);

3.6. Adoption of a national statistical standards to ensure quality statistical information, improve transparency and create a meaningful statistical portrait of people, society, economy and the environment, among other purposes (Canada);

3.7. Improving gender-disaggregated data collection to better understand this linkage between gender and trade by including statistics related to the number of businesses, trade destinations and volumes, employment performances (Korea);

3.8. Data collection to better understand the distribution of trading firms by using two databases fostering women's participation in trade as employers and employees. One database provides information regarding the firms' characteristics (e.g. firm size, industry, productivity, export value by product and destinations). It is based on five sources: (i) customs trade data; (ii) business registry; (iii) corporate tax data; (iv) business survey data; and (v) monthly payroll data. The other database provides information regarding employees' characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, regions and location and salary). It is based on four sources: (i) individual tax data; (ii) census data; (iii) other admin data; and (iv) monthly payroll data. The results from this methodology corroborate the underrepresentation of female employees in good-exporting firms. There is a significantly larger portion of male employees in exporting firms (41.7% women and 58.2% men). The wages are higher in exporting firms compared to non-exporting firms. However, the gender pay gap is higher in direct and indirect export firms than in non-export firms. Depending on the sectors, the gap varies between 11% to 43%. These findings highlight the need to promote women's participation in high-level skilled jobs and leadership positions in trader firms. In addition, women employees are more likely to work for larger goods-export firms than men, but women-owned exporters operate in similar numbers to men-owned businesses. Data collection will be extended to the services sector and will help define the concepts of ownership and leadership in business while cover indigenous people (New Zealand);

3.9. High quality in data collection and analysis is key to tracking progress on the results of domestic and international trade and gender initiatives. In this regard, the bureau of statistics produces annual gender indicators, which disaggregate outcomes for women and men across the domains of economic security, education, work and family balance, safety and justice, democracy, governance and citizenship. Each release tracks progress made on greater equality (Australia);

3.10. Important challenges remain to be addressed in the development of national statistics. For example, the statistical analysis of trade as a branch of economic activity in national surveys often does not clearly distinguish between foreign trade and domestic trade (Peru);

3.11. Online gender analysis tool to be developed, specifically adapted for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) architecture, to assist APEC economies to make better use of data to create and inform gender-responsive policy. This work is currently in its early stages (New Zealand).

#### **4. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF TRADE, TRADE POLICIES AND TRADE AGREEMENTS ON WOMEN**

4.1. Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+): methodology to assess the impact of trade policies and trade agreements on diverse groups of men and women. The analysis goes beyond gender or sex. GBA+ ensures the incorporation of a gender lens in all policies. It also helps to identify domestic policies that need to be developed, changed or eliminated and what data is missing. GBA+ requires gender-disaggregated data across a number of economic and trade variables, the capacity to interpret data in a trade policy context, and to develop and implement economic modelling. This method combines a quantitative and qualitative analysis. This method could be used to inspire the development of a gender lens to the work of the WTO (Canada);

4.2. Research conducted on evaluating the sustainable and inclusive impacts of trade. This includes looking at the distributional characteristics of women in trade by using business database to explore the experiences of women as both business owners and employees within the tradable sector (New Zealand);

4.3. A framework of analysis to support governments to develop gender-responsive trade policies by assessing the impact of their trade policies on women. It also helps to design accompanied domestic policies and programmes to mitigate the unintended negative impacts. The framework of analysis comprises a quantitative and a qualitative component. There are four aspects to the quantitative analysis: (i) measure impacts of trade and trade policies on women's employment, wages and other job characteristics; (ii) measure price impacts of trade on consumers, especially the most vulnerable; (iii) ascertain indicators of trade facilitation and regulatory transparency; and (iv) assess barriers to women's participation in trade (access to credit and resources; networks; lack of time). The qualitative analysis aims to survey women to identify trade barriers. This involves active engagement with stakeholders that integrates gender perspectives, identifies promising avenues for gender-sensitive outcomes, and highlights potential adverse effects. Recommendation: women should be involved in trade policy development (OECD);

4.4. Research that is contextualized to a country's unique realities is a critical enabler to addressing gender equity issues in trade. Example of UNCTAD's research in the Pacific regarding women in Kiribati and their participation in intra-island and international trade: a number of factors complicate data collection in the Pacific region, including its unique geography, dispersed and remote communities, and the small size of some populations. One of the challenges highlighted in UNCTAD's report was collecting data on women's trading roles in the informal sector. Reflecting this in research requires unique methodologies and thoughtful adjustment to country contexts (New Zealand and UNCTAD);

4.5. International organizations' research on the impact of trade on women:

- a. Women and men work in different sectors, and trade policies and agreements differently impact them. Trade liberalization reduces prices for goods and increase the purchasing power of vulnerable groups in which women are disproportionately overrepresented. Women-owned firms are smaller, younger, and less financed than men-owned firms (OECD);
- b. Firms that trade employ more women: women make up 33% of the workforce of export firms, compared with 24% of non-exporting firms and 28% for non-importing firms. Women constitute 36% of the workforce of firms involved in GVCs and 38% of the workforce of foreign-owned firms. This is a 11% and 12% more than non-GVC firms and domestically owned firms (respectively). In some countries female workforce in export firms is higher. In Morocco, Romania, and Viet Nam, women represent 50% or more of the workforce of exporting firms, which have created jobs for more than 5 million women, roughly 15% of the female population working in these countries (WTO and World Bank);

- c. Firms that trade, pay women more: women working in firms engaged in trade are more likely to be employed formally, which has an impact on their income level (more stable source of income). For women, the probability of being informal goes from 20% in sectors with low levels of exports to 13% in sectors with high levels of exports. Figures are similar when looking at the level of involvement of firms in GVCs. Trade increases women's wages and help close the wage gap. If developing countries double their goods exports, women would increase their share of total manufacturing wages from 24% to 30% through a combination of increased employment and higher salaries. (WTO and World Bank);
- d. Impacts of regional integration on gender - the examples of the EAC and the MERCOSUR: a microsimulation to assess the impact of trade integration on gender employment in manufacturing with regards to export tariffs and import tariffs showed that in both regions, a reduction in tariffs on export markets contributed towards the feminization of labour in manufacturing, mainly for production workers without significant change for non-production ones. In contrast, import competition had no significant impact on women's employment in EAC, while it had some negative effects on women's employment in MERCOSUR. However, the new opportunities for women are mostly at the low-skilled level. Hence, measures should be put in place to foster women's access to employment in high-skilled and tradable sectors that empower women. Regional funds could also be used to provide childcare and other services that would allow women to work outside their households and increase their skills. Data collection should be increased to assess women's needs and governments' commitments. Cooperation should be strengthened to foster sharing experiences among WTO Members. Accountability is also key to ensure the implementation of the commitments on gender (UNCTAD).

#### 4.6. Research conducted by WTO Members:

- a. New Zealand: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is undertaking research on evaluating the sustainable and inclusive impacts of trade, including gender as part of "Trade for All" (see also sharing experience section below). In mid-2020, some initial, high-level findings were published in a working paper, which concluded that women employers and employees were under-represented in trade. On-going work is being conducted on female participation in trade;
- b. United Kingdom: research on the impact of imports/exports on the United Kingdom's labour market split up by sector, region, and personal characteristics, including gender. The United Kingdom is funding the OECD Science, Technology and Innovation Directorate to develop its trade and employment database, to incorporate additional indicators including gender;
- c. European Union: assessing the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs in the European Union, when engaging in trade activities, showed they face a number of obstacles such as access to finance networks and red tape related to customs obligations (with ITC); and developing better indicators for a more gender-responsive trade policy (with UNCTAD). The analysis conducted by the European Union Chief Economist showed that in 2017 there were more than 13 million female workers who had jobs that were supported by exports of goods and services compared to the rest of the world. However, there is a gender gap when it comes to the employment prospects offered by European Union exports. Only 38% of those jobs, dependent on exports to the world, are held by women in the European Union. Such a gap is largely due to the concentration of female employment in the less export-oriented sector, notably in services. Also, labour compensation for female workers in export-supported jobs has stagnated in comparison to total employment over the time that the study considered. While all export-supported jobs benefit from a wage premium there is a gender gap of 4% points.

## 5. PROMOTING FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

5.1. Women Entrepreneurship Programme supports women at all stages of entrepreneurial activities, through informative and professional courses, to enhance entrepreneurial knowledge and

skills. Digital marketing courses (in collaboration with Facebook and Google) and mentorship for women entrepreneurs are elements of the programme. It also focuses on providing women-led start-ups with greater access to capital, business matching opportunities, and links to resources in the industry (Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator), and presents awards to promote role models for women entrepreneurs - Women Entrepreneurship Award (Chinese Taipei);

5.2. Strategy package for women in MSMEs: online package to support women-led MSMEs and increase their exports. This includes providing assistance with budget, organizing virtual meeting opportunities with foreign buyers, training on topics such as e-commerce, items sourcing and market analysis, and mobile shipping (Korea);

5.3. Promoting female entrepreneurship through technical guidance and counselling for existing and potential women entrepreneurs, organization of fairs for women entrepreneurs with various stakeholders (e.g. local authorities and supermarkets); ICT-based capacity-building programmes for women entrepreneurs and awards for innovation to encourage entrepreneurs to use innovative ways to market their products. (Mauritius - National Women Entrepreneur Council, The National Computer Board and Women Entrepreneurs Innovative Award);

5.4. National laws to support women-owned MSMEs and the association of women entrepreneurs (Viet Nam);

5.5. Export Strategy providing women's economic empowerment and the improvement of women-led MSMEs' competitiveness; SheExports platform increase women's participation in enterprises and the export process, has a dedicated programme to promote the creation of a regional network of women entrepreneurs, and provides consultative services on business start-ups (Ukraine);

5.6. Regional activities to promote female entrepreneurship, increase women entrepreneurs' financial inclusion through an online multinational networking platform; provide access to different financial and non-financial services; build their capacity to export and integrate them into regional trade and development activities (50 Million African Women Speak Project - COMESA and COMESA Federation of National Associations of Women in Business);

5.7. Four types of trade policies to support women-owned firms: (i) trade facilitating reforms that induce trade costs and simplify and automate procedures at the border; (ii) transparency in regulation; (iii) lower trade barriers, especially in services where most women are pursuing their entrepreneurship activities (this can also increase female workers' participation in trade firms and increase wages that can contribute to mitigating existing gender inequalities); and (iv) regulatory frameworks that contribute to low Internet access costs. The gender divide in digitalization is still high globally and non-OECD countries have greater proportion of women studying in ICT (OECD);

5.8. Programmes promoting access to finance and MSMEs and to support women's access to finance and women in MSMEs (Australia):

- a. Support to the "Women's World Banking" Programme to roll out innovative financial products and services for poor women. For example, Indonesian women are supported to access and use government COVID-19 social protection payments to improve their financial capability and resilience;
- b. The "Emerging Markets Impact Investing Fund" invests in women's SMEs and businesses that supply products or services that benefit women, adopt workplace gender equality practices, or promote gender equality through their supply chains;
- c. Supporting the world's first listed gender-lens bonds series: the "IIX Women's Livelihood Bond". These bonds have, since 2017, supported the livelihoods of almost 500,000 underserved women and their communities across Southeast Asia and generated three times in social value for every one dollar invested by bondholders;
- d. Financially supporting the "PacificRise" pilot that provides a specific example of where, taking a gender lens to adopt traditional finance models, expanded opportunities for

investment with a positive impact on women and girls. This programme has finished and will not be continued;

- e. Support to the "Menstrual Health Trade Finance Vehicle" launched in 2020 to bring together multiple menstrual health enterprises in the Pacific to help address finance and supply chain challenges in a sector with smaller and informal market actors. This initiative has assisted a social women-led enterprise in Solomon Island (Kaleko Steifree). This enterprise produces reusable sanitary pads for women and girls and addresses production constraints through bulk purchases of raw materials and tailored contracting to enhance the distribution of the pads to small Pacific businesses. In addition to creating employment for women, it reduces girls school absenteeism and enhances environmental sustainability.

#### 5.9. SheTrades Programmes:

- a. SheTrades Global: global business event connecting women entrepreneurs with buyers, investors and partners. A series of panel discussions, webinars and online courses are set to help entrepreneurs do business, get inspired and forge business partnerships. Women entrepreneurs have the opportunity to showcase their products in the SheTrades Global exhibition during the event (ITC);
- b. SheTrades West Africa: improving women's livelihood through inclusive value chains". The objective is to improve women's livelihoods working in cashews, shea, and cassava value chains in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The expected outcome of this 2019-2023 project is capacity building for women farmers in production and business management. This includes providing training and basic equipment tools to enable women farmers with limited resources in West Africa to work on product diversification (Korea and ITC);
- c. SheTrades Morocco: the general objective is to increase the participation of 25 women-owned SMEs in the processed food sector export-oriented value chains by enhancing their competitiveness and their capacity to access local, regional and international markets. This initiative is expected to allow 25 women-owned SMEs in the processed food sectors to benefit from higher incomes to strengthen and grow their businesses and a better livelihood for the community in general (ITC, IsDB, ITFC and Trade Facilitation Office Canada);
- d. SheTrades Egypt: the general objective is to mainstream gender and economically empower women in Egypt, in line with the new Egyptian constitution. Fifty businesswomen in the handicraft sector were selected to support them in sustaining and growing their business and participating actively in the development and welfare of their families. This initiative is expected to allow 50 businesswomen in the handicraft sector to benefit from higher incomes to strengthen and grow their businesses (ITC, IsDB and ITFC);
- e. SheTrades Uruguay: provides training and connects women-led businesses in their pathway to internationalization by way of information (ITC, Uruguay and the Exporter Union - a private Uruguayan institution);
- f. SheTrades Outlook: is an analytical framework with 83 indicators across six policy areas. These indicators track policies that affect women's participation in business and trade. The general objective is to help unlock markets for women by identifying and eliminating obstacles in the policy ecosystem. Based on this data, ITC has developed three guides to help countries to developed gender-responsive trade policies focusing on mainstreaming gender in free trade agreements, making public procurement work for women and trade policy (ITC).

5.10. "The Sembrando Initiative" assists women entrepreneurs and improves their export capacity or develop in the local market. It has helped 2,400 entrepreneurs. This initiative is funded by donations from the private sector and donor countries (Uruguay - Initiative led by Uruguay's first lady);

5.11. Awareness-raising activities in the promotion of equal opportunities and women entrepreneurship in the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) with the aim to strengthen the skills and abilities of key national partners to mainstream gender equality priorities into cross-border trade policies in the Arab regions. The expected impact of this project is to enhance awareness of women entrepreneurship and women's participation in the policymaking process for Arab economic integration (ITFC, UNDP and the AMU);

5.12. E-commerce in support of women entrepreneurs:

- a. Promoting women's export in the Central American region and access the European Union market through e-commerce by providing training at the institutional level to build the capacity of local experts on business management and e-commerce to allow them to share knowledge and mentor women entrepreneurs. This programme offered 50 hours of individual specialized training for each participating company in 2019. Through the programme women entrepreneurs had a diagnosis of the digital situation to place their products on an e-commerce marketplace platform or their website. These women were able to develop skills to manage their websites and social networks and receive training on taking quality photographs for online sales (El Salvador, PROESA and ITC);
- b. A three-step programme to make e-commerce work for women: (i) analytical work to identify challenges, opportunities, e-commerce readiness and incorporate a gender dimension to governments' strategies; (ii) the e-commerce policy and strategy formulation and gender mainstreaming and using guidelines on gender mainstreaming in trade and sector strategies; and (iii) the capacity building of institutions and businesses (EIF, ITC and UNCTAD);
- c. Capacity building on e-commerce for South Asian MSME women entrepreneurs to enhance the knowledge and capacity of women entrepreneurs in the application of e-commerce platforms to expand their business exports and participate in local, regional, and global supply chains. National training programmes with government, policymakers, civil society and women entrepreneurs were first organized to identify specific skills and experience and guide the process of acquiring basic IT knowledge. In a second stage, an e-learning course on e-commerce and digital marketing were held for women entrepreneurs (EIF and UNESCAP);
- d. "SheTrades Connect" provides technical training on digital skills and networks to female entrepreneurs in Africa (Japan and ITC);
- e. Programme of capacity building in e-commerce and digital trade: the "E-Commerce Aid-for-Trade Fund" (USD 5.5 million) builds the e-commerce capabilities of developing countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. This fund addresses deficits in access to ICT and finance, policy and regulatory frameworks, skills and safe and reliable e-payment platforms and trade facilitation and logistics. It is a collaborative programme that includes partner governments, the private sector and other development partners on a range of activities (Australia).

## **6. FOSTERING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY**

6.1. Through gender equality policy guidelines; gender equality laws, national human rights strategy, wage equality laws and action plans to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all areas of society and to support the incorporation of a gender perspective in all laws and policies (Chinese Taipei, Viet Nam, and Ukraine);

6.2. Combining a range of policies and laws to promote female employment and women's economic empowerment:

- a. By prohibiting sexual harassment (especially in the workplace), gender discrimination in accessing financial services and in employment and remuneration; by eliminating

restrictions on women's employment in industrial jobs (such as mining, construction, and manufacturing); by imposing quotas to factory owners to employ a minimum percentage of female workers and employees (at least a third of total employees in the production process); by providing financial incentives to the private sector to hire women; by imposing the establishment of childcare facilities and nurseries in companies that hire more than 50 women (and with ten children or more); by training women in new technologies (network systems management, the Internet of Things, smart cities, robotics technology and artificial intelligence); by supporting women's mobility and extending the retirement age; by reforming social and political life in favour of women's rights (Saudi Arabia);

- b. By providing extended paid parental leaves and providing a non-transferable five-month parental leave allocated to fathers to foster women's careers and contributing to a better share of household and childcare duties, affecting both men and women's working hours; by including quotas of women on company boards for all state-owned enterprises and private companies with more than 50 employees (at least 40% of women); by adopting and making the "Equal Pay Certification" mandatory for companies of over 25 employees and by implementing this policy through an Equal Wage Management Standard to assess the gender pay gap among the employees (Iceland);

6.3. National policy on women's economic security: by repairing and rebuilding women's workforce participation and closing the gender pay gap providing choice and flexibility for families to manage work and care, supporting women as leaders and positive role models; by responding to the diverse needs of women and supporting women to be safe at work and home. All these factors play a critical role in enabling women to achieve economic security, resilience and empowerment, including women's participation in international trade. To implement this policy, an investment of over AUD 240 million from 2020 to 2025 is made to create new jobs, support workforce participation, expand opportunities for business and build the skills capability (Australia).

## **7. COMBATING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN**

7.1. Through financial support for family care (Korea); e-commerce and social media trainings to strengthen women entrepreneur marketing strategies for using online platforms (Mauritius); projects and funds to support women-owned SMEs affected by the COVID-19 and national banks loans restructuring for women-owned SMEs (Viet Nam cooperates with the Asian Development Bank);

7.2. Aid for post-COVID-19 recovery in Indo-Pacific: international development response to COVID-19 identified gender equality as a cross-cutting objective and seeks to target better the needs of women and girls in the Indo-Pacific. Various programmes are also developed to support women's economic empowerment, leadership, ending violence against women and girls, and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights: (i) the "Investing in Women" Programme (AUD 102 million, 2016-2023) supports women-owned SMEs in South-East Asia to adapt their businesses, to continue operating and contributing to local economic resilience while managing the impacts of COVID-19. This programme has leveraged nearly five times additional private capital to support 41 women-owned SMEs in Southeast Asia and enable 40 of these SMEs to survive the COVID-19 crisis; (ii) the "Pacific Women Lead" Programme (AUD 170 million); and (iii) the "Partnerships for Recovery" Strategy to address the challenges of COVID-19 in the Indo-Pacific (Australia);

7.3. Recommendations of how to mitigate the COVID-19 impact on women in Latin America: international trade should be reoriented towards the transformative social economic recovery with gender equality. In the short term, actions should be taken to ensure women's access to mechanisms of employment support and financing for economic recovery. In the long term, a gender perspective should be included in trade policy tools to ensure that men and women have equal access to trade opportunities. In addition, policies should include gender equality as part of their objectives for sustainability (ECLAC);

7.4. Regional COVID-19 relief activities – the example of the Pacific Alliance: a webinar entitled "Economic empowerment of women in the Pacific Alliance" was held to outline the challenges in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic towards inclusive recovery" and to encourage dialogue between

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women entrepreneurs and representatives of the Pacific Alliance and analyse the main challenges identified by women entrepreneurs in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Peru).

## **8. FEMALE LEADERSHIP**

8.1. It has been recognized that the lack of female leadership in many areas of economic and political life contributes to gender inequalities (Nigeria);

8.2. The Government of Japan hosted the World Assembly for Women (WAW!) and invited female leaders worldwide to discuss challenges and opportunities for achieving gender equality and promoting women's empowerment (Japan).

## **9. GENDER CHAPTERS AND PROVISIONS IN FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS AND REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS**

9.1. Trade agreements that include gender provisions recognize the importance of enhancing the opportunities for women to participate in the domestic and global economy; provide for cooperative activities aimed at enhancing the ability of women to benefit from the opportunities created by the agreement such as: providing advice and training, and exchanging information and experience on programmes aimed at improving women's access to market technology and financing; or the development of women's leadership networks (Japan, United Kingdom - Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement; Korea, European Union - FTA; CPTPP);

9.2. In December 2018, the Economic Complementation Number 73 came into force as part of the Latin American Integration Association between Uruguay and Chile. This Agreement provides for the creation of a gender committee that seeks to bring together the competent authorities on gender in the joint implementation of shared policies, particularly in carrying out actions that allow the private sector to benefit from the clauses in the agreement. The committee meets once a year and is accountable and have to report to the Commission that manages the Agreement (Uruguay and Chile);

9.3. Mainstreaming gender into the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus): an analysis was conducted to understand the link between gender equality, women's economic empowerment, and transparency in trade laws, policies and practice in the context of PACER Plus. Results highlight specific barriers to trade information for women traders and identifies how they could benefit from the implementation of the PACER Plus transparency commitments. These findings have enabled PACER Plus to implement training and technical support, such as the creation of trade portals that integrate gender aspects into access to information, the type of information provided, and gender training for trade contact points. This work also led to the first export manual for Pacific women traders to help them understand the non-tariff measures applied in the Australian and New Zealand markets for their products - laying the foundation for gender mainstreaming in the implementation of PACER Plus project (launched by Australia and conducted by UNCTAD);

9.4. Dedicated development cooperation to assist the nine Pacific Island country signatories, to adjust to PACER Plus and take up its opportunities (New Zealand and Australia - as part of the PACER Plus Agreement);

9.5. Objectives of trade and gender chapters and areas of cooperation: (i) promote and facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices between the parties in order to improve the capacity and conditions of women entrepreneurs, and to encourage their greater participation in international trade; (ii) contribute to the fulfilment of the international commitments signed by parties in matters of gender equality, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); (iii) cooperation activities with special focus on the different needs faced by women throughout their export process. Areas of cooperation are: (i) develop programmes to promote women's full participation; (ii) promote financial inclusion and education, promote women entrepreneurship; (iii) conduct gender-based analysis, promote gender equality within enterprises, advance care policies and programmes; and (iv) develop women's networks, collection of sex-disaggregated data and improve women's access to STEM, among others (Chile);

9.6. Integrating gender chapters in all FTAs, a standard strategy with trade partners: integrating gender chapters in on-going and future negotiations. In those agreements without a gender chapter, gender considerations will be included into the work of committees under other chapters (Canada);

9.7. The generalized scheme of preferences (GSP) requires all countries to respect the principles of Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and beneficiaries of the GSP must sign a binding undertaking to ratify and effectively implement the Convention (European Union GSP+ Arrangement);

9.8. Gender equality is integrated in trade agreements through provisions of non-discrimination in employment and ILO Conventions 100 and 111 (European Union);

9.9. Continuing to include dedicated provisions on trade and gender, a commitment made in the new gender equality strategy as well as in the new gender action plan for external action (European Union);

9.10. A new type of agreement: the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement (GTAGA) addresses some of the challenges faced by women-owned businesses through a range of provisions, such as non-discrimination on the basis of gender for licensing and certification in the services sector; and also, by developing cooperation activities which will be designed to share knowledge and best practices, in different topics, including the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation. The Arrangement is not linked to a specific trade agreement and therefore is open to interested economies to join (Canada, Chile and New Zealand in 2020);

9.11. La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth by placing women and girls at the centre of economic recovery efforts: it contains concrete actions and targets to promote the economic empowerment of women in the Asia Pacific region by 2030 (APEC);

9.12. The 2020 Roadmap for the autonomy and economic empowerment of women in the Pacific Alliance (PA), which identifies areas of action in terms of economic empowerment and guide the work of the PA in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies and initiatives to promote the economic and social development of the women of the region. This work is particularly important in the context of COVID-19. For example, in New Zealand, 63% of the people who lost their jobs in the second quarter of 2020 were women, and this trend has repeated itself across the region (Pacific Alliance).

## **10. APPLYING GENDER LENS TO TRADE AND WTO**

10.1. An inclusive approach to trade policy and FTAs and trade export programs and services: the aim is to ensure that the benefits and opportunities that flow from trade are more widely shared, including with under-represented groups such as women, SMEs, and youth. This implies a fourfold method: (i) and (ii) conducting an ex-ante assessment and a post-ante assessment to look at the impacts on unemployment by gender before and after new trade deals are implemented; (iii) examining how women as entrepreneurs and exporters experience the new policy; and (iv) looking at the impacts of policies and programmes on women and diverse groups through their experiences with these policies and programmes (Canada);

10.2. Applying a gender lens to all finance programmes (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade);

10.3. The "Commitment of Santiago de Chile" seeks to apply a gender perspective in the implementation of policies to increase production and international trade (Peru, Latin American and Caribbean states);

10.4. Applying a gender lens to trade policies:

- a. By employing techniques to ensure that investment is consistent with gender equality, by trying to measure the gender sensitivity of venture capitalists, and to exclude gender bias during the selection process to protect female entrepreneurs (Korea);

- b. By adopting a regulation to integrate gender approach analysis in the public policymaking process, in alignment with the strategy for ensuring equal opportunities for women and men and fostering sustainable economic development. The launch of a gender-auditing process with the support of the ILO and UN Women supported this approach. It aims to assess the equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the labour market, as well as to raise awareness of equal working conditions among employees (Ukraine);
- c. By adopting a framework that demonstrates a government's commitments to advancing gender equality through significant investments in key programmes, policies, and initiatives. Under such a framework, a government has identified six key areas where change is required to advance gender equality: (1) education and skills development; (2) economic participation and prosperity; (3) Leadership and democratic participation; (4) gender-based violence and access to justice; (5) poverty reduction, health and well-being; and (6) gender equality around the world. Indicators are attached to these areas. For instance: regarding women's economic participation and prosperity, one of the government's objectives is to increase women's labour market opportunities, especially for women in under-represented groups. In addition, the government is looking at the wage gap, employment status, parenting roles and family responsibility, and the quality of the jobs held by women. Regarding women's leadership, indicators address the proportion of board members who are women by the type of board (sector of industry and private or public corporations) and the proportion of women in politics (Canada);

10.5. A new 2021-2022 project: the gender lens analytical framework for the work of the WTO. It aims at developing a gender lens framework for the work of the WTO and maximize opportunities for trade agreements to promote women's economic empowerment and participation in trade-related activities and ensure that trade agreements do not inadvertently undermine national gender-equality commitments. It would cover the negotiation process; the WTO agreements and joint statement initiatives; the implementation, enforcement and review mechanism; and the laws, policies and programmes at the national and regional level. The methodology will include textual analysis and desk review from trade experts, and consultations with delegates and experts. A summary report with key findings and recommendations that should be available in Spring 2022 (European Union and ITC);

10.6. As a member of the Southern Common Market, Uruguay maintains its advocacy for the inclusion of the gender agenda in all discussions (Uruguay);

10.7. The Pacific Alliance gender lens experience: within the framework of the Pacific Alliance, the implementation of the gender approach is being carried out throughout all the working groups of the integration mechanism. These groups address various topics, such as the digital agenda, public procurement, education, global value chains, SMEs, and tourism. Part of the work to include the gender approach in the Pacific Alliance consists of learning how to develop projects especially aimed at women and how to collect data disaggregated by sex (Peru);

10.8. Applying gender lens to trade facilitation: the "South Asia Regional Trade Facilitation Programme" (SARTFP) seeks to integrate women's economic empowerment and inclusive trade outcomes into trade facilitation policy, and measures and transport connectivity across Bhutan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal (Australia and World Bank);

10.9. Applying gender lens to women's working conditions in the export sector: The "Better Work Programme" aims at improving the working conditions of women employed in the garment industry in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Viet Nam. It addresses wages, working hours, leaves and safety, and sexual harassment (Australia and ILO);

10.10. All policy evaluations related to trade include dedicated gender analysis, i.e. ex-ante and ex-post evaluations (European Union).

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## 11. DEVELOPMENT AID AND AID FOR TRADE TARGETING WOMEN

11.1. An assessment of how gender has been integrated in Aid for Trade: gender had been an element of the Aid-for-Trade Initiative since its inception. Donors and partner countries have been gradually and continuously integrating gender into their Aid-for-Trade objectives. By 2019 about 84% of donors' Aid-for-Trade strategy and 85% of partner countries' national or regional development strategy sought to promote women's economic empowerment. However, a disconnection exists between Aid-for-Trade objectives, priorities and programming with regards to gender. Between 2006 and 2017, only USD 3.4 billion were disbursed to gender-specific programmes/projects (about 1% of overall disbursements) and USD 45 billion was spent on programmes/projects where gender is one of the objectives (12% of overall disbursements). Aid for Trade can help foster women's economic empowerment if gender is the principal objective and priority of the projects. However, there are needs for a more systemic approach in evaluating Aid for Trade's impact on women's economic empowerment. Tools and indicators for assessing the differential impact of Aid for Trade on men and women quantitatively and qualitatively are currently being developed (WTO);

11.2. Support to improve financial inclusiveness by promoting digital financial services targeting low-income women in Viet Nam (Japan);

11.3. A 20% allocation of official development assistance towards Aid-for-Trade activities to improve income generation opportunities for women-owned businesses and women workers or strengthen the gender dimension of public policy (New Zealand in the Pacific, the Pacific leaders Gender Equality Declaration 2012);

11.4. Increasing a devoted total budget to gender projects from 10% to 22.5% between 2007 and 2019. Over the past 30 years, the scope of the projects on gender progressed. In the 1990s, projects focused on maternal and child health education. In the 2010s, projects moved towards the institutional framework and capacity building. Since 2018, projects focus on a sectoral strategy based on a transformative approach to enable women to become "agents of change" (Korea);

11.5. Specific regional activities focusing on women's social and economic empowerment, including increasing agricultural productivity and focuses on agricultural value chains, human resources cultivation and vocational training in Africa. Activities also include research on Aid for Trade in Africa, highlighting the need to have mid- to long-term Aid-for-Trade projects with a three years' minimum duration. These projects must also integrate cross-cutting issues and be aligned with the countries' national policy objectives. (Korea);

11.6. Current project of developing indicators on gender-related trade projects to enable donors to assess the progress and the benefits for women. For example, in the case of the SheTrades West Africa Project, the indicators should include the number of policymakers and institutions trained and the number of women farmers that benefited from the training (Korea);

11.7. Monitoring and evaluation of Aid-for-Trade programmes using a monitoring performance framework for aid programmes to assess if gender issues are effectively integrated. For example, a monitoring and evaluation framework in projects with partners in the Indo-Pacific region has been set up by Australia. Also, each of its "E-Commerce Aid-for-Trade Fund" project is underpinned by a monitoring and evaluation framework including gender equality and inclusion indicators. 78% of Australia's Aid-for-Trade investments in 2019-2020 effectively addressed gender (Australia);

11.8. Mainstreaming gender across development and cooperation assistance programmes, primarily through the gender equality fund, which involves partnering with other organizations to provide targeted and gender-sensitive development assistance (Australia);

11.9. Integrating gender into Aid for Trade: Women's empowerment should be a cross-cutting priority for all development programming. Gender should be integrated into consultations with partner countries from the very beginning of programme design. Practical tools and guidance should be developed to promote women's economic empowerment and advance gender equality, ensuring robust M&E to measure the outcomes and build the evidence base. Efforts should be made to increase sex- and gender-disaggregated data to create a baseline and provide indicators to monitor progress, adapt interventions, and evaluate outcomes. Investment in gender and trade expertise

should be promoted to provide the required, in-depth analysis of the constraints, opportunities, and risks and strengthen the partners' capacities to conduct this analysis (Australia);

11.10. The Aid-for-Trade Initiative for Arab States (AFTIAS): the second phase, AFTIAS 2.0 (USD 40 million) was launched in 2019 with the general objective to create an environment for international trade in the Arab region more efficient and inclusive, with employment opportunities and that contributes to sustainable development. Twenty-two Arab countries are beneficiaries of this programme, including six LDCs. This programme specifically aims to increase the level of intra-regional trade, increase Arab integration in the global value chain and make international trade inclusive for women, youth and the poor. Hence, to achieve these objectives, the AFTIAS 2.0 is based on three pillars: (i) improving the market access; (ii) removing supply-side constraints; and (iii) enhancing inclusivity of trade for disadvantaged groups. The AFTIAS operates in five financing facilities regarding, among others, issues related to the removal of non-tariff barriers, enterprise innovations, technological readiness for business, access to trade finance or support for women to increase their participation in value chains and international trade. The AFTIAS 2.0 will cover a wide spectrum of different types of innovative interventions encouraging greater inclusivity of trade (e.g. support exporting sectors and value chains that favour higher women's employment; or development of women's skills to provide greater flexibility and power to negotiate wages and better working conditions). AFTIAS 2.0 actions responding to COVID-19 also have a focus on women. For instance, they identify and support the removal of legal, regulatory, financial, institutional and other barriers to the involvement of women in key intra-regional value chains particularly affected by the pandemic. AFTIAS 2.0 interventions will prioritize actions supporting women. For example, in the project selection criteria, a focus on women's support carrying the weighting of 30% in the total (IsDB and ITFC);

11.11. Gender equality is mainstreamed into all Aid-for-Trade programming (European Union).

## **12. STANDARDS AND GENDER**

12.1. ISO International Workshop Agreement 34: a new standardized definitions of the terms 'women-owned business' and 'women-led business'. These definitions are contained in the ISO International Workshop Agreement 34 (IWA 34) launched in 2021. The IWA 34 enables governments, organizations, and enterprises to better support efforts to build consistent and internationally compatible data regarding female entrepreneurship and identify women entrepreneurial gaps and facilitate knowledge sharing. Technical assistance is provided to stakeholders to help implement the IWA 34 (ISO, the Swedish Institute of Standards and ITC);

12.2. Action plan on sharing information, collaboration and enabling global cooperation on gender and standards issues. As part of the standard making body, setting up an Informal Gender Coordination Group to raise awareness. Overview of gender-related actions and discussion are carrying out (EU-CEN-CENELEC);

12.3. Including gender issues in standard development: A minimum of 30% of participation of women is necessary to avoid marginalization and to improve performance of standards development (Canada);

12.4. Three key areas of work on gender and standards: (i) gender representation; (ii) gender-responsiveness and outreach; and (iii) advocacy. An example of standards taking into account the gender perspective: women's work-wear referring to dimensions specific to women (South Africa);

12.5. SheTrades, standards and gender: supports women-owned businesses' compliance to standards and supporting women's participation in trade policy design and implementation. Challenges faced by women in complying with standards include limited awareness of knowledge in selecting the right standards, lack of finance, technical capacity, language and human resources, lack of a universally agreed-upon definition(s) of women-owned or women-led businesses (ITC);

12.6. The Gender Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI) aims to strengthen the use of standards and technical regulations as powerful tools to attain SDG 5 integrate a gender lens in the development of both standards and technical regulations, and elaborate gender indicators and criteria that could be used in standards development. To do so, the Initiative developed the

Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards whereby signatories (which consist mainly of standards bodies) pledge to create and implement gender action plans in order to support more gender-balanced and inclusive standards development processes, and to strengthen the gender-responsiveness of standards themselves. In the future, the Initiative has a few projects in the pipeline including launching an e-learning training platform, mapping standards to SDG 5, establishing standards body gender focal points, and providing gender-responsivity trainings (UNECE).

### **13. CAPACITY BUILDING**

13.1. A capacity-building programme in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East to improve the legal environment for business worldwide. It assists governments to develop and implement commercial legal reforms that support their economic development and remove obstacles to trade and investment. It also supports women's economic empowerment through digital trade, contract enforcement, public procurement and trade and technology. The programme also focuses on corporate governance to increase transparent by-laws, women's representation on board, strengthen intellectual property rights and train women to register trademarks, copyrights and patents. It promotes contract enforcement, by building women's capacity to negotiate contracts, understand commercial contracts and use the judicial system to enforce contracts. Women are also trained to negotiate licensing contacts. For example, this programme was developed in Tunisia to specifically improve market access for women in handicrafts, and they assist to improve online platforms. It also launched the Central Asian women's group, which serves as a networking platform for women entrepreneurs and women business leaders from the Central Asian region. This platform fosters experience-sharing related to trade among businesswomen (United States - the Commercial Law Development Programme);

13.2. Dedicated technical support to Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, Uganda and Zambia to mainstream gender into their national AfCFTA implementation strategies, public procurement acts, policies and regulations, national export strategies, MSME policies and COVID-19 stimulus packages (ITC);

13.3. Courses on trade and gender organized by international organizations:

- a. Three types of online courses developed by UNCTAD: the three-module standard course, the geographical course with an additional module on trade and gender issues in a specific region and group of countries (e.g. COMESA, MERCOSUR and LDCs) and the thematic course on the gender impact of technological upgrading in agriculture. About 1,500 participants attended the courses (40% men, 60% women) from 154 countries. Their evaluation of the courses is positive and participants have stated to use the knowledge in their work to include a gender perspective. UNCTAD also developed a capacity-building programme aimed at boosting women entrepreneurship skills;
- b. WTO Technical assistance on trade and gender: the WTO training module on trade and gender was launched in March 2019. Between 2019 and 2020, 13 courses were provided, as well as online chats and webinars. The WTO Secretariat has developed the new training strategy for 2021-2026 to support WTO government officials in their work on trade and gender. The training will continue to raise awareness on the links between trade and gender and give a new perspective on how trade can impact women's economic empowerment. It will help officials understand why and how trade rules are not gender neutral, and how WTO trade agreements can be implemented with a gender lens for a positive impact on women. It will support them in integrating gender into their trade policies through a set of seven different concrete trade and gender policy tools. The new training programme will be delivered in four units: (1) WTO trade and gender regular course; (2) training for Geneva delegates; (3) e-learning training on specific issues; and (4) national activities. In addition, a network of trainees will be created to foster information and experience sharing on mainstreaming gender into trade policies;

13.4. Capacity building for women entrepreneur by women entrepreneurs – the Women Entrepreneurs International Trade and Technology Centre (WE ITTC): first of its kind, WE ITTC is an initiative that combined many trade-related services for women entrepreneurs. The project will create an exhibition and marketing centre to support women entrepreneurs in trade. It will provide

women entrepreneurs to display and sale their products combined with various services including testing facilities for standards and certification requirements, a centre for packaging and labelling as well as insurance and customs clearance service providers. These services will be delegated to specialized support agencies. In addition, the centre will provide women entrepreneurs with trainings on import/export proceedings. The centre will be open only to women entrepreneurs from the South Asian and South-East Asian regions. Exchanges will be established between countries and regions with similar centres. WE ITTC will provide a support system for women entrepreneurs to develop innovative products that can find a place on the regional and international market, often building on women's traditional knowledge of plants and medicine (such as the ground black apple in Bhutan, lapsi in Nepal and edible seaweed in the Maldives). Through WE ITTC, a regional e-commerce platform will also be set up covering South Asia and South-East Asia. In the last year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many logistics companies and online payment systems have developed in India and in the region. The platform will build on this new trend to attract partners to work with women entrepreneurs. Also, a last mile delivery system will be integrated in the platform, with available evaluations from customers, to offer the best choice of partner to women entrepreneurs. Lastly the project will include a two-year training programme for young female graduates in international trade or economics to become professional trade consultants and work with other women entrepreneurs (The Association of Lady Entrepreneurs of India (ALEAP) and the South Asian Women Development Forum (SAWDF)).

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