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Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender

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**SECOND PROGRESS REPORT ON WTO MEMBERS<sup>1</sup> AND OBSERVERS  
TECHNICAL WORK ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT  
2022-2023**

DRAFT

**1 ADVANCING ON WORK PILLAR 1: SHARING EXPERIENCE ON GENDER-RESPONSIVE  
TRADE POLICY (LED BY PANAMA)**

**a. A deep dive into gender-disaggregated data collection**

Gender-disaggregated data collection is one of the IWG's key trade policy issue of focus as it aims at informing gender-responsive trade policy making. Following up on the first workshop held in 2018 on the topic<sup>2</sup>, Members have been building on the work carried out since<sup>3</sup>.

In 2023, Members have taken a deeper dive into this issue and focussed on methodologies and data sources currently used to collect gender differentiated data and evidence.

In particular Members have investigated the following approaches:

Organisation	Approaches and methodologies
OECD's data sources/sets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trade in value added, combined with employment data by gender. This gives throughout the value chain the share of women and men working in trade.</li><li>• Using the 2021 framework of analysis, the OECD combined firm level data with employee data e.g. employer/employee data combined with custom's trade data. This methodology was used to conduct a review of New Zealand.</li><li>• Survey data that the OECD and World Bank conducted with Facebook (Facebook-OECD-World Bank Future of Business Survey from March 2022). Survey of firms with online presence. Use of the Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition methodology. The survey also included a qualitative aspect.</li><li>• Trade policy settings: use of data on trade policies to better understand how they can impact different types of women businesses or women themselves.</li></ul>
UNCTAD's approach to on gender and trade statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The approach is derived from the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality.</li><li>• The aim of the developed framework is to help national statistical offices to review what data already exist for the measurement of gender and trade. UNCTAD's approach is based on reusing existing statistical data and building the capacity of national statistical systems to link their data, allowing for new insights on gender equality in international trade.</li><li>• List of statistical data resources that can be useful in this exercise:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Statistics on international trade in goods and services</li><li>– Foreign affiliates trade statistics (FATS)</li><li>– Statistical business register</li><li>– Tax administration records</li></ul></li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Members of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender (IWG)

<sup>2</sup> Workshop on Gender Based Analysis and Trade, held at the WTO on 16 March 2018. More information is available on the [WTO website](#).

<sup>3</sup> Progress Report on WTO Members and Observers Technical Work on Women's Economic Empowerment, 9 November 2021, INF/TGE/R/1.

Organisation	Approaches and methodologies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enterprise surveys (for structural business statistics)</li> <li>- Structure of earnings surveys</li> <li>- Labour force surveys</li> <li>- International databases on trade policy measures</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once identified, this data need to be linked across datasets held by different agencies.</li> <li>• Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data confidentiality</li> <li>- Lack of common survey populations across statistical domains</li> <li>- Legal frameworks</li> <li>- IT infrastructure limitations</li> <li>- Capacity gaps</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Developing key gender and trade indicators: mains indicators needed as a basis to capture where trade may have gender differentiated impacts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share of women's and men's employment in export-intensive industries by education, occupation and industry;</li> <li>- Women-to men wage ratios by education, occupation and industry in export-intensive industries;</li> <li>- Export wage premium by sex and education level;</li> <li>- Gender wage gap in exports;</li> <li>- Share of female and male entrepreneurs and their participation in international trade;</li> <li>- Female and male entrepreneurs' productivity by trade status.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
ITC's approach on business surveys as source of gender-disaggregated data (and inspiration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business surveys provide unique evidence on women's participation in trade and on barriers encountered (including if/how they differ from men)</li> <li>• Since 2010, ITC implements large-scale surveys of exporters and importers to understand trade obstacles related to non-tariff measures and (since 2018) services trade regulations.</li> <li>• Key characteristics of the ITC business surveys on NTMs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on comprehensive business registers (usually built as part of the survey projects): --&gt; "population"</li> <li>- Representative sample by export sector</li> <li>- Interviewer-led survey</li> <li>- Key research questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you face trade obstacles related to NTMs?</li> <li>- If so: Details of the trade obstacles encountered, by product/service, partner country, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- "By-product" of the surveys: unprecedented data on the characteristics of trading firms in surveyed countries, including on women ownership, management and female employment in firms</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key characteristics of the ITC business surveys on NTMs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on comprehensive business registers (usually built as part of the survey projects) --&gt; "population"</li> <li>- Representative sample by export sector</li> <li>- Interviewer-led survey</li> <li>- Key research questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you face trade obstacles related to NTMs?</li> <li>- If so: Details of the trade obstacles encountered, by product/service, partner country, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- "By-product" of the surveys: unprecedented data on the characteristics of trading firms in surveyed countries, including on women ownership, management and female employment in firms</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

WTO Members have also developed dedicated data collection initiatives, approaches and methodologies. In particular, Canada has elaborated the Gender-based Analysis Plus Methodology, Chile has improved its gender-disaggregated data conducting its 6<sup>th</sup> Radiography of Women in Trade, and New Zealand used the analytical framework developed by the OECD to review its gender disaggregated data. Interestingly, New Zealand's data collection exercise revealed that a larger gender wage gaps existed in exporting firms compared to non-exporting companies, leading the government to adopt its new equal pay law, allowing employees and unions to issue a complaint with the employer in case of systemic gender discrimination.

### **Case story from Chile: Improving Gender-disaggregated data: 6th Radiography of Women in Trade**

The radiography provided evidence through disaggregated data on female participation in foreign trade.

Under the umbrella of the Undersecretariat of International Economic Relations and in collaboration with the Directorate for Export Promotion (ProChile), customs and the Internal Revenue Service, Chile has collected gender disaggregated data on women's participation in trade, analysing exporting companies by gender leadership, by economic sector, gender gaps by destination and geographical region and products traded.

Results show that: only 27.9% of exporting companies are led by women, with a gender gap that stands at 44.17%. However, 37.5% of the country's export value is generated by companies led by women. Women participate in exports within the same sectors as companies led by men, but to a much lesser extent. Out of 195 export destinations economies, the value of shipments from companies led by women is higher than the returns of companies led by men in only 40 of them.

Links with trade policy: a positive relationship in the trade relations of companies led by women from countries with a favourable policy for their inclusion in trade has been established following the radiography.

*Note: Chile's data collection process started after the adoption of the FTA with Uruguay in 2016, that contained a gender chapter, followed by one year later the 1<sup>st</sup> women-led companies forum of the Pacific Alliance.*

### **Case story from Canada: an inclusive approach to trade and Gender-based Analysis Plus**

*Canada's approach:* i) extensive collection and analysis of gender disaggregated data; ii) extensive consultations and engagement with under-represented groups; iii) Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) methodology supports quantitative and qualitative analysis and helps identify areas for potential new gender responsive and inclusive trade provisions.

*GBA Plus in a nutshell:* Canada's assessment process considers how diverse groups of women and men experience policies, programmes and initiatives. The "Plus" means that the analysis goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences to consider overlapping identity factors.

*Objective of GBA Plus:* changing the way Canada develops its trade policy

*A Two-Pronged Approach of GBA Plus:* i) quantitative analysis: office of Chief Economist conducts an expanded economic impact assessment with a new labour market module and it expands on the traditional Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model. It takes into account gender, age, and the distribution of Canadian workers across eight different occupational groups and 65 sectors of the economy. The data sources used for modelling from Statistics Canada such as Census, Labour Force Survey among others. ii) qualitative analysis: lead trade negotiators conduct GBA Plus on each chapter before negotiations begin and throughout the negotiations, findings inform approach to negotiations and regular updates are conducted before each negotiating round.

*Benefits of the GBA Plus Process:* i) richer understanding of the impacts and effects of FTAs; ii) supports continuous strengthening and innovating of FTA chapters and implementation of inclusive activities; iii) helps identify new opportunities for mainstreaming new inclusivity and gender responsive provisions in FTAs and committee work; iv) allows for tabling of new provisions in real time at negotiating table; v) identifies gaps in knowledge and areas for more strategic data collection and analysis.

*Note: Canada's data collection has focussed on women entrepreneurs and has used two broad types of data sets: i) administrative data: hard data capturing the universe of businesses; ii) survey based data: qualitative aspect of the data collection. One key advantage of Canada is the fact that all the data is housed by one agency.*

## **b. A special focus on female entrepreneurs (a priority topic of the IWG Co-Chairs)**

Members have focussed on this specific target group of women to enhance their knowledge of female entrepreneurship and enrich their discussions in the Informal Working Group, to better integrate gender issues in their work at the WTO as well as in national trade policies and agreements.

### ***Key findings of Members' work on women entrepreneurs***

- Many more women than men run very small businesses with one to five employees.
- Women entrepreneurs are challenged when it comes to navigating foreign regulations and acquiring the necessary skills to start exporting.
- The promising opportunities for women are digital trade and the fact that countries have increasingly begun pursuing policies that support women exporters.
- Trade facilitation measures have the potential to reduce high trade costs weighing on small-sized firms.
- Digital tools help women to operate a business more effectively and efficiently and enable them to establish their business in a foreign market.
- Hidden costs exist in e-commerce operations such as trading in different currencies which requires specific financial skills. Additional costs include: electronic and online payment systems; shipping and safe packaging costs; website maintenance; and data protection costs. "Trading vast amounts of goods that require palletizing and containers raises compliance issues with various export markets, for instance regarding packaging regulations".
- The role of large companies play an important role in prioritizing the inclusion of women entrepreneurs within their supply chains and the need to improve digital trade facilitation. However, working with large corporations proved more difficult on supply chains diversity as it is challenging to find enough women entrepreneurs who are ready to meet the standards and demands in terms of volume, price, and quality. Dedicated programmes exist supporting women entrepreneurs access to GVCs, such as the UPS ITC Women Exporters Program (WEP) which supported between 2018 and 2022, more than 38,000 women entrepreneurs and small business owners worldwide to navigate the export process enabling them to expand their reach, grow their revenues, hire more employees and invest in their families and local communities.
- Women exporters face major difficulties in accessing trade finance
- Women's employment growth in services outshines that of men over the last 20-30 years. However, women-owned services firms export much less than men-owned firms, as women entrepreneurs mostly operate in the least-traded services sectors such as education, health and social work activities. The outlook is however positive as technical barriers to services trade are coming down rapidly, especially in sectors that employ more women, notably thanks to digitalization.
- Women entrepreneurs have suffered a triple financial shock during the COVID-19 pandemic, whose impacts still persist today. Existing regional trade agreements provide several policy solutions to these barriers, such as positive discrimination-based measures in favour of women businesses, provisions enhancing women's access to finance, and those seeking to increase women's access to digital learning and e-commerce. However, most gender provisions do not address women as cross-border traders or informal vendors, and are drafted with soft, permissive language. Moreover, most of these agreements do not identify specific institutions, procedure, or funding mechanism to implement commitments.

### **Trade policy case stories from New Zealand, Argentina, El Salvador and ITC**

#### **Case story from New Zealand: a Gender Investment Gap**

Women-owned start-ups accounted for between 7% and 11% of the investments; when pitching the same startup venture, men received 60% more investment than women; those women-owned ventures that do receive investment generate more for every dollar invested; startups with at least one female founder outperformed all-male teams by 63%. This led the report authors to conclude that: the Gender Investment Gap represents a \$32 billion opportunity for economic growth in New Zealand if women were able to secure investment at the same rate as men.

*Source: The [Gender Investment Gap Report](#) and Workshop on "Gender Related Issues in Trade Policies", held at the WTO on 25 October 2023.*

#### **Case story from New Zealand: Women in Export Trade**

In 2023, government agencies from New Zealand commissioned a report to research barriers women face in the exporting sector, conducted by Business and Economic Research Ltd.

*Main barriers identified:* i) socio-cultural factors, including conscious and unconscious bias, and vertical and horizontal occupational segregation; ii) access to networks within an industry, or in the export sector. iii) access to finance and capital. iv) lack of experience in leadership. v) access up to date information on foreign markets, regulatory changes, and export requirements.

*Main recommendations:* i) targeted support and advice for female-owned and led firms; ii) facilitating networking events; iii) Access to finance; iv) knowledge sharing for exporters; v) shining a light on successful leaders and businesses; vi) more targeted support for Māori and Pasifika women.

*Initiatives undertaken by New Zealand:* based on these findings and recommendations, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise has developed specific programmes for women in export: i) a dedicated "Women in Export" lead available to talk "one-on-one" with women-led businesses; ii) a programme of "Women in Export" events has been developed; iii) a network for women in export business leaders has been established (Women in Export LinkedIn); iv) regular nationwide networking events to create opportunities for women and highlight successful female founders; v) sector-specific cohort learning groups to target early-stage SMEs to support their growth and investment readiness; vi) New Zealand Trade and Enterprise running "InvestHer" investment showcases to help female-founded companies gain investment; vii) an inaugural all-women trade mission organized during the FIFA Women's World Cup aimed to empower women in export

*Results:* the women in export work has resulted in a lift in the number of female founders by 2% and a reduction in the number of companies with no senior female leaders by 2%.

#### **Case story from Argentina: Argentinas al Mundo**

This programme promotes women's leadership and equal participation in international business. It is intended for companies, SMEs, entrepreneurs and cooperatives led by women who want to export, or who already export and seek to acquire new tools to improve their performance in international trade. It specifically targets female partners who own, at least, 50% of the company's shares, women in managerial positions (a single individual, chairperson, general manager or similar position) with, at least, one year' seniority and/or 51% of executive, managerial or decision-making positions are held by women. The benefits are: i) business training: aimed at developing professional skills and competencies; ii) information for decision-making on strategic international markets and potential buyers identification; iii) "Argentinas al Mundo" seal, on the ExportArgentina digital exportable offer platform. iv) recognition in the specific category "Argentinas al Mundo" in the Export Award; v) investments: priority to enter the Federal Technical Assistance Program in the formulation of "Argentina Proyecta" private investment projects.

### **Case story from El Salvador: Integrating gender equality in trade policies, in a cross-cutting manner**

The Government of El Salvador works for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Through the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women ISDEMU, the National Equality Plan 2021-2025 was presented, which contains the guidelines of government policy and the general strategy on equality and combating discrimination. In this plan, eight areas of action were defined, one of them being the economic autonomy of women. Additionally, El Salvador promotes the implementation of the Salvadoran Technical Standard for a Gender Equality Management System in the workplace, which is expected to provide principles and practices that will allow the integration and incorporation of the gender perspective in the organization of companies and public sector institutions, this supporting El Salvador's efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 5, 8 and 10.

On the other hand, in conjunction with the ITC and the cooperation of the European Union, a project was concluded to contribute to the digitalization of small Central American companies, led by women. The objective was to improve the export performance of small businesses in Central America to sell their products in the European market, through electronic commerce. As a result, some of the beneficiaries are already exporting their products to new destinations, such as: Switzerland, the United States and Canada.

Likewise, El Salvador's participation in the SheTrades Outlook project, which aims to promote equal opportunities and greater participation of women in trade.

It should be noted that within the framework of the National Trade Facilitation Committee, the majority of representatives of the business sector are women. Since 2023, this Committee has had a National Trade Facilitation Strategy (2023-2027), with one of its guiding principles being inclusion. This is so that the actions for the execution of the six axes that make up this strategy promote the integration of women and MSMEs in foreign trade.

### **Case story from ITC: Shetradex Hub**

The SheTrades Hubs are initiatives set up with host institutions in countries and regions throughout the world. The first Hub kicked off in 2018, and today 18 Hubs have been set up across Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa. Co-implemented by ITC SheTrades and national and regional institutions, SheTrades Hubs serve as resource centres for women-led businesses, policymakers, business support organizations and private-sector partners to improve the business support ecosystem and foster a community of partners to enable women's success in trade. These resource centres support women entrepreneurs' access to trainings on key topics, market and investment opportunities; institutions to access to a community of partners from a network.

## **c. A special focus on trade agreements and foreign feminist policies**

### ***The expansion of the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement***

In May 2023, Ecuador (INF/TGE/COM/5) and Costa Rica (INF/TGE/COM/6) joined the Global Trade Arrangement on Trade and Gender (GTAGA)<sup>4</sup>.

Ecuador emphasized the fundamental and growing role of women in trade and the relevance of transforming this role into a more inclusive reality by boosting women's personal and economic empowerment and actively seeking the elimination of inequality gaps. One of Ecuador's intentions, as a member of the GTAGA, is to design and implement mechanisms and measures that support the activities of female entrepreneurs, businesswomen, women producers and farmers, and all those involved in trade processes, so as to enable them to achieve their professional, economic and social goals.

Costa Rica considers that such instruments as the GTAGA are consistent with its vision of development and encourage trade policies to be more inclusive so that the benefits of trade and

<sup>4</sup> Other Members are: Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, New Zealand and Peru.

investment are distributed more equitably. Costa Rica's active participation in the GTAGA is a further step towards more inclusive trade and enables more women to become involved, remain and fully develop in the international market.

### ***Analysis the impact of Regional Trade Agreements on women***

Canada and New Zealand released their CPTPP<sup>5</sup> Three-Year Review conducted under the Inclusive Trade Action Group and examining the implementation of CPTPP through an inclusive and sustainable trade lens.

The table below outlines the key results of these reviews:

Country	Review results
New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than half a million New Zealanders are employed in firms that export goods to CPTPP.</li> <li>• Employment representation of women in these firms is slightly higher than in other firms (45%, compared with 43% in other exporters). Moreover, employment in CPTPP exporters has grown, including for women (up 14%) and Māori (up 4%), in the period 2018-2020.</li> <li>• Median wages for women and Māori also tend to be higher in these firms than in other exporting firms, with women's earnings 4% higher on average and those of Māori employed in CPTPP exporting firms 2% higher.</li> <li>• Review limitations: availability of data (for example, coverage was confined to goods and did not include services, and only covered an initial period – 2018-2020 – during which the agreement was not fully in force). Therefore, this first review only provide early preliminary indications.</li> <li>• The review helped to develop an initial dataset and benchmarks against which to assess future progress, as well as to identify areas for improvement in analysis.</li> </ul>
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CPTPP has delivered clear trade benefits in Canada, including for SMEs and workers, including women workers.</li> <li>• SMEs represent 94% of all Canadian exporters to CPTPP markets with which Canada did not have a prior FTA. Their dutiable exports to the new CPTPP markets increased by over 12% (\$241 million) in the first year the CPTPP was implemented.</li> <li>• Canadian firms that significantly increased their exports to CPTPP markets increased total employment in the first year by 23.8%, while female employment increased by 11.4%.</li> <li>• From an environmental and sustainable development point of view, Canadian firms also increased their exports of environmental goods by 14.6% during the first year and continued to increase environmental goods exports during 2021.</li> <li>• Canada has called for stakeholders' feedback on this Review.</li> </ul>

### ***The trade aspect of Feminist Foreign Policy: examples from Chile and Peru***

Feminist foreign policies are instruments that seek to establish the principle of gender equality as a guiding axis in the work of foreign ministries.

The table below reviews the specificities of the Feminist Foreign Policies from Chile and Peru:

Country	Key elements of the Feminist Foreign Policy
Chile	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chile's Feminist Foreign Policy is based on the following premises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognizes that gender gaps are an obstacle to the full exercise of fundamental rights; what is the participation of women in the construction of more representative democracies; furthermore, these gaps are limiting for the sustainable development and well-being of the country.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

<sup>5</sup> Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Country	Key elements of the Feminist Foreign Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understands that moving towards gender equality is a legal obligation emanating from international treaties signed by our country; and it is also a commitment derived from multilateral instruments that reflect Chile's consistent international trajectory to achieve this objective.</li> <li>• seeks to influence multilateral and bilateral bodies with the purpose of strengthening global and regional governance that ensures the protection and promotion of the dignity and autonomy of women and girls in all their diversity.</li> <li>• aligns with national policies and priorities regarding gender equality.</li> <li>• highlights gender equality as a democratic value and a principle that reinforces the image, status and international recognition of Chile; and</li> <li>• establishes gender equality as a strategic objective and a transversal axis of the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.</li> </ul> <p>2. The eight priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• human rights and strengthening of democracy with a focus on gender equality;</li> <li>• promote the eradication and elimination of gender violence;</li> <li>• empowerment and greater representation of women;</li> <li>• Women, Peace and Security Agenda;</li> <li>• climate change and gender;</li> <li>• digital agenda, science, technology and innovation;</li> <li>• comprehensive care system; and</li> <li>• international economic relations and gender.</li> </ul> <p>3. Within the trade axes of its feminist foreign policy, Chile intends to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generate more spaces for women in international trade through the permanent incorporation and/or deepening of gender and trade provisions;</li> <li>• promote the exchange of experiences and good practices in the implementation of policies that promote the incorporation of women in international trade;</li> <li>• develop cooperation activities that facilitate access to the benefits of the integrated economy;</li> <li>• address the analysis of the impacts that gender agreements produce; as well as the identification of new gaps to address;</li> <li>• promote actions that allow the development of collaborative forms of work in different areas of commerce with the transversal perspective that inclusivity proposes;</li> <li>• analyse the role of women as exporters; but also in their role as workers and consumers of sectors and goods related to international trade;</li> <li>• propose to incorporate in its future investment negotiations the gender dimension in investor-State arbitration and review the gender representation in the lists of arbitrators of our trade agreements and other bodies such as the International Center for Settlement of Disputes related to Investments (ICSID).</li> </ul> <p>4. Through its Feminist Foreign Policy, Chile will deepen the work it has undertaken on trade and gender and will continue delivering tangible and positive impact on the insertion of women in international trade.</p> <p>5. In particular, and in terms of collaborative work at the regional and international level, Chile will also continue its work within the GTAGA and the WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender. It will also focus on the implementation of the La Serena Roadmap for Women; Chile will also continue its work in relation with the Inclusive Growth in the APEC forum and on the advancement of the Roadmap for the Autonomy and Economic Empowerment of Women of the Pacific Alliance.</p> <p>6. At the national level, Chile will continue carry out gender equality initiatives as part of its Export Promotion activities (General Directorate of Export Promotion). In particular, ProChile coordinates and implements the Mujer Exporta Programme, which seeks to steadily increase the percentage of export companies led by women.</p>



Country	Key elements of the Feminist Foreign Policy
Peru	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peru is currently considering the development of a Feminist Foreign Policy, through the Directorate of Studies and Strategies of the Foreign Ministry.</li> <li>2. Peru adopted a regulatory framework and public policies on gender equality, parity and alternation, as well as the eradication of gender-based violence, all of this also taking into account the greater vulnerability of indigenous women, who constitute 50.2% of the total indigenous population of the country.</li> <li>3. The objective is to advocate for a gender approach in the treatment of all global issues and their diversity of issues, such as security, climate change, health, science and technology issues, and trade sphere.</li> <li>4. Trade implications: the feminist foreign policy that is being designed will include guidelines that take into account the gender approach in international trade and promote the economic empowerment of women, considering that the multilateral regulatory frameworks that regulate different aspects of international trade also have an impact on your situation.</li> <li>5. The field of action in the trade axis of the feminist foreign policy sphere seeks to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• intensify international cooperation for the development of studies and diagnoses of the problems faced by women in international trade, identifying the most pressing obstacles and lines of action to overcome them.</li> <li>• consider the inputs of the diversity of agents not only from the commercial sector, but from producer associations, academic entities, cooperation networks, among others, for the treatment of trade issues in the bilateral and multilateral spheres.</li> <li>• emphasize specific issues such as access to digitalization, financial inclusion or professional training in specific sectors, comparing realities and complementing efforts, which are possible through multilateral spaces such as the WTO.</li> <li>• promote a timely evaluation from a gender perspective of the various proposals put forward by the delegations for the numerous topics discussed at the WTO, so that the progress and consensus sought contribute to the progress of society as a whole.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

#### d. Reporting gender-responsive trade policies in TPRs

##### **Key reporting statistics through the Trade Policy Review Mechanism**

In 2022 and 2023, 90% of WTO Members under trade policy review reported on at least one measure supporting gender equality in trade as well as employment and business-related statistics by gender.

##### **Key trends in 2022-2023 as reported in Members' trade policy review reports<sup>6</sup>**

- *Gender equality at the centre of national trade policies:* WTO Members have been increasingly including gender equality as part their development plans and trade policies, recognising that women's economic empowerment improves poverty reduction and contributes to their development as well as achieving SDGs (SDG 5 in particular). Some WTO Members also recognize the link between gender equality and their integration in the multilateral trading system, therefore confirming that women's economic empowerment supports their trade expansion and export growth.
- *Supporting women entrepreneurs' exports:* most national trade policies target women entrepreneurs and establish dedicated support programmes for small scale businesswomen to develop their trading capacity, their access to finance and to government procurement markets. In particular, export promotion programmes include measures to assist entrepreneurs in exporting for the first time or to further expand their presence on international markets. Other measures focus on carving dedicated

<sup>6</sup> See also WTO Secretariat report WT/TPR/OV/26, page 67

quotas for small scale female entrepreneurs (often between 5% and 10%) to have access to government procurement markets. Access to finance and credits with advantageous conditions, is also a key focus of trade policies, which for example provide female entrepreneurs with medium- and long-term indirect credit lines or guarantees for their loans. Also, some Members provide such financial support targeting the green sector. To give an advantage on foreign markets and in accessing all their support schemes for businesswomen, some governments also provide them with a certification (based on specific eligibility criteria) confirming their status as a female entrepreneur. Lastly, as part of their trade policy review, some members are starting to report on the measures they took in favour of female entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic, mostly focusing on financial support.

- *Supporting women in agriculture:* trade policies also target female farmers, often smallholders. Some governments use their domestic support and their green box subsidies for this purpose. Such support measures can include access to productive resources such as farming and processing equipment as well as input subsidies. They also focus on providing women access to training (building their trade capacity) or agricultural land. They also provide female farmers with financial support by for example creating dedicated funds providing grants to smallholders with a quota for women, often in specific agricultural sectors.
- *Access to the labour force:* some Members have conducted analysis or data collection exercises on wage discrimination in their export sectors, mobility issues and discrimination on access to public transport, therefore exploring female employment in export-led sectors. The purpose is to better target their policies in support of women, as many measures found in trade policies aim at fostering women's access to the job market and the labour force in internationalised sectors. Such measures can for example provide tax incentives to the private sector, with specific conditions. Interestingly, one Member (European Union) has created a facility with one key objective to foster women's integration in the labour market and limit gender discrimination in employment.
- *Assessing the impact of trade and trade policies on women:* some WTO Members have started to integrate impact assessments as part of their policy implementation processes. Some have developed specific "sustainability impact assessments", that include a gender perspective.
- Others have included an estimation of the impact of their policy initiatives that also incorporates a performance and achievement monitoring exercise. Sometimes such assessment processes are coordinated at the highest level of government or focus on a specific issue such as income generation. Also, it is interesting to note that one government's policy aimed at protecting women from the adverse effects of trade. Also, impact assessments of gender provisions are increasingly being negotiated in new free trade agreements. Lastly, it is interesting to note that one government (Djibouti) has set up a regular monitoring of the female beneficiaries of government-led programmes targeting women entrepreneurs and has created a centralized database managed and hosted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs.
- *Making gender responsive trade policies:* in the policy making process, some governments organize internal consultations involving various ministerial actors including the officials responsible for women's affairs, allowing for gender issues to be integrated in trade policies in a cross-cutting manner. Also, remarkably, one government (Malaysia) has embarked in gender budgeting to ensure that the gender-responsive measures included in its national policies are supported financially.
- *Challenges in policy making:* the key challenge highlighted by WTO Members in gender-responsive trade policy making is the lack of sex-disaggregated data in trade and the technical difficulty to collecting such evidence.

## 2 ADVANCING ON WORK PILLAR 2: CONDUCTING AND REVIEWING RESEARCH (LEAD TBC)

### a. Intellectual property, women in tourism and trade agreements: key research topics presented by WTO Members

#### ***Intellectual Property Rights can Empowering Women and People with Disabilities***

- *Intellectual property rights when used correctly can advance entrepreneurship by enabling women* who develop innovative ideas and products to secure financing, signal their innovation, and negotiate access to the IP rights held by others.
- *Patents* can help women inventors, secure funding, which can aid in commercializing an invention to bring it to market. Similarly, inventions designed for women, by any gender inventor, can empower women by making their lives easier or better. In addition, in some cases, holding a patent is a sign of professional success, and can help a woman advance in her field, get a promotion, or a higher-paying job. This may be particularly helpful for women in male-dominated career fields.
- *Trademarks* help women-owned businesses identify their goods and services. This can help establish a "brand" which consumers recognize and seek out. Once consumers begin to recognize a brand, they may develop loyalty to it, which may lead to more sales of a product or service. It can also lead to licensing agreements and other such partnerships with sellers, as we'll see in an example later on.
- *Copyright* can help women artists protect and obtain compensation for their music and other artwork.
- *Some recommendations:* there still exists a significant gender gap with respect to women's participation in the IP system. Improving women's participation in IP would improve not only their own earnings but also economic growth. Many countries, along with the World Intellectual Property Organization, are seeking to promote women's participation in innovation and science and technology. Increasing awareness of the benefits to women of using the IP system is an important factor in increasing this participation.

#### ***Women in community - involved tourism enterprises: Experiences in Philippines***

- The Asian Institute of Management in the Philippines developed a participation-empowerment model to analyse women's contribution to the tourism sector, understand their role and level of economic involvement in the and measure the level of women's empowerment in and through the tourism sector.
- The model looks at four pillars of empowerment:
  - Psychological empowerment: Self-perception: attitude, well-being, confidence, etc.
  - Social empowerment: Community relations, social standing, etc.
  - Political empowerment: Leadership position, voice in decision-making, etc.
  - Economic empowerment: Access to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, ability to control economic finances, etc.
- Key findings of the research and the analysis of women's experience in the tourism sector
  - Women needed to work because of financial constraints.
  - Women's participation in economic activities became an expectation rather than an exception
  - Tourism offers a unique space for women to be involved and be seen
  - Women are more engaged in tourism than their male counterparts (men have other jobs such as fishing, construction work, etc.)

- Activities that are extensions of women's domestic role (i.e., relationship building, communications, administrative work, food preparation, souvenir making, etc.)
- Gradually taking up jobs that are traditionally for men (Boat guide, forest rangers, etc.)
- More involved in conservation work (i.e., effective policy enforcers, educators of the young, guardians of cultural knowledge, etc.)

#### **b. Supporting research-related work by the WTO Trade and Gender Office**

***The WTO Trade and Gender Office has supported the research work pillar with some additional work, through the WTO Gender Research Hub.***

In December 2022, the WTO Secretariat jointly with the WTO Gender Research Hub and WTO Members, organized the *World Trade Congress on Gender* to which 14 WTO Members from Africa, Europe, the Pacific, Asia the Caribbean, Latin and North America contributed on the various research discussions on gender-responsive trade agreements, solutions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on women, or how to facilitate trade for women and female entrepreneurs. The World Trade Congress on Gender is the first international research conference on trade and gender<sup>7</sup>.

The Congress generated two major research outcomes: a new WTO publication entitled "Making trade work for women: key findings from the World Trade Congress on Gender" and the Youth Trade Summit on Gender.

- The *key findings from the World Trade Congress on Gender*<sup>8</sup> were released in September 2023 in a new WTO publication which looks at how to help women entrepreneurs reap the benefits from international trade. New research and analysis explores gender inequalities across a range of areas. It also explores how trade policies can be used as a model for future trade negotiations and how tariff liberalization and trade policy reform can tackle gender issues and reduce gender wage gaps.
- *The Youth Trade Summit on Gender* was held at the WTO in November 2023 and organized in partnership with the objective to promoting the next generation of experts and researchers. The Summit was organized in partnership with Spain, which held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from June to December 2023. The event brought together 51 young researchers and professionals nominated by academic institutions or governments from Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe and North America and with 17 WTO Members from Africa, Latin America, Europe, the Caribbean and Asia also contributed to the Summit's discussions. The aim of the Summit was also to deepen the knowledge of young researchers and professionals through a technical assistance conference on trade and gender, which covered topics such as gender-based research data, a gender-based perspective on e-commerce, gender aspects of trade finance, as well as linkages among gender, non-tariff measures and trade in services. The Summit, which sought to act as a "talent incubator", also highlighted young people's perspectives on how to make trade work for women. The WTO introduced for the first time its Gender Equality Pioneer Awards to celebrate the contribution of two trade and gender equality pioneers.

#### ***The WTO Trade and Gender Office research publications in 2023***

- Gender Social Norms: New Trade Barriers Addressed through Trade Policy.<sup>9</sup>
- Trade and Gender: Addressing Barriers to Women's Decent Work through Trade Policy.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The second edition of the World Trade Congress on Gender will be held on 2-5 December 2025 at the WTO.

<sup>8</sup> Making Trade Work for Women: Key findings from the 2022 World Trade Congress on Gender, WTO Publication, September 2023. Available of the WTO website [here](#)

<sup>9</sup> der Boghossian, A. Chapter 23: "Gender Social Norms: New Trade Barriers Addressed through Trade Policy". In The Elgar Companion to the World Trade Organization, edited by Julien Chaisse and Cristian Rodríguez-Chiffelle. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. (December 2023) <https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/the-elgar-companion-to-the-world-trade-organization-9781800882850.html> Available at the WTO library

<sup>10</sup> der Boghossian, A. "Trade and Gender: Addressing barriers to women's Decent Work through Trade Policy". In Integrating Trade and Decent Work, [Volume II. The potential of trade and investment policies to address labour market issues in supply chains](#), ILO publication, 2023.

- Finding Feet on Trade Agreements: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Amidst a Pandemic.<sup>11</sup>
- Gender-Responsive WTO: Making Trade Rules and Policies Work for Women.<sup>12</sup>

### 3 ADVANCING ON WORK PILLAR 3: GENDER LENS APPLIED TO WTO (LED BY THE EU)

#### a. A gender lens on trade policy: perspectives from Latin America<sup>13</sup>

##### ***How to build a gender-responsive trade policy***

Closing, the gender gaps could increase GDP by USD 1 trillion in Latin-America alone (Inter-American Development Bank). Therefore an inclusive trade policy can contribute to reduce gender gaps.

Several tools exist at country level and at the WTO to make a trade policy gender-responsive, such as: i) data on trade and gender; ii) impact assessment of trade on women (Canada and European Union developed methodologies); iii) mainstream a gender focus into trade disciplines; iv) gender responsive trade facilitation and aid for trade; and v) support for women traders.

##### ***A specific focus on trade agreements***

In recent years, gender provisions in trade agreements have contributed to position gender on the trade agenda. The WTO has identified 257 agreements between 1990 and 2020 which include and implicit or explicit gender provision. Agreements in different regions (e.g. AfCFTA) and plurilateral initiatives such as the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement (GTGA) are addressing gender as a core issue. Increasingly, countries have included stand-alone gender chapters in their trade agreements, which focus on joint commitments on the promotion of gender equality through cooperation. More than addressing specific trade disciplines, the focus of these chapters is on women's economic empowerment and women's rights.

An additional step is to mainstream gender provisions into trade disciplines. This would be a direct means to address gender gaps and inequalities within the trade agreements.

##### ***Modalities to mainstream gender provisions in trade disciplines***

- *Provisions that do not allow for gender discrimination:* i) non-discrimination between men and women; and ii) not fail to enforce laws that protect the equality of opportunities for men and women in order to encourage trade or investment;
- *Affirmative action to accelerate equality between men and women:* i) provisions to further women's empowerment and equal opportunities; and ii) transitory provisions to promote women in trade;
- *Reservations for non-conforming measures* to protect national legislation and policies that further women's rights and equal opportunities;
- *Affirmative action:* differential treatment between men and women that is reasonable and objective and aims to achieve a legitimate purpose. Such treatment could establish temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women and would not be considered discrimination for the purposes of this provision. An example if such provision is included in the WTO, Joint Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation. Reference Paper on Services Domestic Regulation (INF/SDR/1).

<sup>11</sup> der Boghossian A., Bahri A. 2023. [Legal Issues of Economic Integration. Volume 50, Issue 1](#) (2023) pp. 13 – 40. January 2023.

<sup>12</sup> der Boghossian A. Chapter 2: "Gender-Responsive WTO: Making Trade Rules and Policies Work for Women" in [Handbook on Trade Policy and Gender Equality](#), edited by Amrita Bahri, Dorotea López and Jan Yves Remy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Presentation made by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) at the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender on 22 September 2022. INF/TGE/CN/10/Rev.1

### ***Sustainable Development in the WTO Reform Agenda***

Trade is an implementing means to achieve the SDGs. SDG 5 (Gender Equality) is a core goal of the Agenda and also a cross-cutting issue within the other SDGs. This needs to be addressed in the WTO reform process.

#### **b. The Gender Lens Framework to the WTO**

To examine how trade and gender considerations interact, in January 2022, the European Union and the ITC launched a project on a Gender-Lens Framework for the work of the WTO, focusing on four topics: i) trade facilitation; ii) e-commerce; iii) government procurement; and iv) investment facilitation for development<sup>14</sup>. Argentina, Australia, Chile, Ecuador and the United States also contributed to this work which outlined a few themes. The framework paper to guide WTO Members' action in promoting women's economic empowerment includes suggestions on how gender considerations can be integrated into the current structure of the WTO and into Members' domestic policies following six steps:

- assessing gender effects of agreements and negotiations
- ensuring consistency between WTO rules and national gender equality commitments
- promoting substantive representation of women's interests
- gender-sensitive monitoring
- making Aid for Trade more gender-responsive
- strengthening gender statistics.

Despite being WTO-centered, this work indicates that the process of developing a gender lens for certain aspects of trade can and must go beyond the WTO. In fact, findings highlight the importance and complementarity of public policies was underscored, for instance, in extending digital access to rural areas, improving access to financial services, training and capacity building to help women-owned or women-led businesses, improving data collection and definitions, educational policies, and other measures.

#### **4 ADVANCING ON WORK PILLAR 4: AID FOR TRADE (LED BY AUSTRALIA)**

Members have been building on the experiences shared at the thematic discussions on aid for trade in 2021<sup>15</sup> and have conducted deeper discussions on gender dimensions in development programming. In 2023, Members' objective was to take stock of lessons learned and identify concrete workstreams to take forward – both at the national level and in the WTO, including the agreed 2023-2024 Aid for Trade Work Programme. Members also looked at some cross-cutting themes relevant to gender mainstreaming in development programming, especially examining the work done by the World Bank, the WTO Trade and Gender Office and the private sector as well as monitoring and evaluation specialists in this area.

Members also recalled and stressed the continued relevance of the Busan Principles, including country ownership, focus on results, and mutual accountability.

In particular, the IWG work focussed on e-commerce and trade facilitation development programmes in the Pacific region. Members provided valuable insights into the impact of gender perspectives and development programmes in the Pacific.

<sup>14</sup> In October and November 2023, the ITC organized four webinars on these topics based on papers written by independent academics. The work accomplished fed into a fifth paper called "Gender Analytical Framework to Guide WTO Action to Promote Women's Economic Empowerment".. All reports are available online at the ITC SheTrades Outlook website ([www.shetrades.com/outlook](http://www.shetrades.com/outlook)).

<sup>15</sup> Progress Report on WTO Members and Observers Technical Work on Women's Economic Empowerment, 9 November 2021, INF/TGE/R/1.

**A case story from Australia: E-Commerce Aid for Trade Fund**

This specific development programme run by the Australian Government which mainstreamed gender into programme design and implementation. Australia highlighted the significance of gender equality and women's economic empowerment and outlined it includes a gender equality objective in all of its investments over AUD 3,000,000. The completion of the E-commerce Aid-for-Trade Programme worth AUD 5.6 million, supported 11 projects, trained over 700 staff, helped over 800 MSMEs improve their capacity, and saw approximately 50% female participation.

**A case story from Australia: Regulation Capacity Building for Female Lawyers in the Pacific**

The programme of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade resulted in the development of national ecommerce frameworks for targeted Pacific countries. The programme had helped build the skills of generalist lawyers to develop these frameworks, including close to 50% female participation. The legal "eagles", as these selected women were referred to, were now generally recognized as the top ecommerce legal experts in their country. Some lessons had been learned in the process, including the need to measure the impact of social media outreach, integrate chapters or sections on ecommerce and gender in the national ecommerce strategies, and plan for integrating gender into legal and regulatory outcomes more properly.

***Three key takeaways on Aid for Trade***

- The widespread and systematic lack of data, lack of international standards to properly compare data and lack of granularity around metrics specific to female traders (e.g. trade costs, access to finance, etc.).
- Trade-related measures are not necessarily gender-neutral and can significantly disadvantage female traders without tailored interventions. The World Bank's on-the-ground work on trade facilitation in the Pacific region provided some apt examples.
- The need for programme design to be gender-inclusive from inception and throughout the programme lifecycle, assisted by harnessing female perspectives throughout the process, training on gender issues including for men and ensuring monitoring and evaluation specifically consider the gender perspective. The WTO Trade and Gender Office outlined gender-related development programming indicators in its work on assisting Members in this effort.

Future work was highlighted by members to focus on exploring other regions and other kinds of development programming to improve understanding of these issues.

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