

SheTrades Outlook Roundtable and Pilot Workshop in Ghana



International
Trade
Centre



National Board for
Small Scale Industries

Hosted by International Trade Centre, Ministry of Trade and Industry of Ghana, and National Board of Small Scale Industries

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Introduction

On March 25th, the International Trade Centre (ITC), in partnership with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the National Board of Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) co-hosted a stakeholder roundtable discussion on the topic of increased women's participation in international trade. The purpose of the workshop was to launch the pilot of ITC's SheTrades Outlook in Ghana and discuss the possibility of creating a national SheTrades Chapter in Ghana. In total, 60 participants, ranging from government officials, business associations, cooperatives, and entrepreneurs attended participated.

Opening Ceremony

Mrs. Kosi Aryee, Executive Director, NBSSI, opened the workshop and introduced speakers to deliver opening and introductory remarks. She stressed the importance of creating interventions aiming at enhancing the participation of women entrepreneurs, who represent about 46 percent of total entrepreneurs in the country.



Mr. Sampson Abankwa, Principal Commercial Officer, Ministry of Trade and Industry, welcomed guests and expressed the Ministry's commitment towards creating gender-sensitive policies. He invited all participants to exchange ideas and provide examples of good practices in their institutions.

Session 1: Introducing SheTrades Outlook

Ms. Judith Fessehaie, Policy Lead, SheTrades Initiative, ITC, provided background on ITC activities and the SheTrades in the Commonwealth project as well as the objectives for the session including presenting the Outlook pillars and creating a national chapter in the country. In addition, an introduction of in-country activities carried out by SheTrades.



Ms. Jacqueline Salguero Huaman, International Consultant, Trade and Market Intelligence, ITC, discussed the need and rationale for the SheTrades Outlook. SheTrades Outlook, a key output of the UK-

DFID funded SheTrades in the Commonwealth project, is an innovative assessment tool to monitor, and improve the ecosystem for women in trade. The tool supports evidence-based policy-making by collecting and analysing data, identifying gaps between commitment and implementation actions, and enabling dialogues and consensus on high impact policy measures. The tool takes into account different dimensions, contexts, and geographies and is based largely on new data to be collected through surveys with government institutions and private sector organisations. The pillars in focus include Trade Policy, Business Environment, Access to Finance, Legal and Regulatory Issues, Access to Skills, and Culture issues.

Participants provided feedback and raised any issues of relevance and difficulties in collecting data in the context of Ghana. Questions and comments from participants included clarifications on “gender budgeting.”. Concerning the Business Environment Pillar, women entrepreneurs and business associations raised the relevance in including existing information about export procedures as part of the indicators to facilitate their business operations. One participant suggested expanding the scope of the project to include other vulnerable groups such as disabled and indigenous people. Government officials shared in the workshop examples of business facilitation activities in place to support SMEs such as the establishment of information desks and in particular an SME desk. Participants as well highlighted the importance of putting in place a monitoring mechanism of trade policies. One participant mentioned, “After the policy negotiation process, not much is known about the implementation and monitoring process”. In addition, participants agreed that access to finance, despite government increasing support, continue to be one of the main challenges that women entrepreneurs face in particular due to lack of collaterals. The discussion around access to skills and culture issues focused on targeted measures implemented to increase the number of female graduates in STEMs fields, and in existing patriarchy norms that continue to prevail in the Northern regions of the country.

Session 2: Discussing Jamaica’s Policy Priorities

Ms. Valentina Sam, Ministry of Trade and Industry, started the session by stating the importance of empowering women through policy. She mentioned that “when you empower women, they add a lot of value, not only to their businesses but also to the entire economy.” She mentioned Ghana’s support for the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women’s Economic Empowerment and presented two trade-related policies with a focus on inclusion: the Ghana Trade Policy (2006), which aims to contribute to accelerated and sustainable economic growth as well as increased incomes and well-paid formal



jobs for all Ghanaians and the Ghana Industrial Policy (2009), which aims to increase competitiveness, productivity, and prosperity of Ghanaian firms to promote better quality products for domestic and international markets. The Ghana Trade Policy helped to identify the necessary intervention to support SMEs and has a focus on women. The Industrialization policy encompasses ten strategic pillars including a National Revitalization Programme, Strategic Anchor Industries, Industrial Parks, Special Economic Zones, SME Development, Sub-Contracting and Partnership Exchange, Export Diversification, Retail Trade and Promoting, Business Regulatory and Legislative Reform, among others. The second was vital in determining the main challenges faced by companies in terms of access to credit, education and training, and the provision of essential business development services. After, she gave a brief introduction of the National MSME Draft Policy which included gender concerns such as continuing to develop target training for female entrepreneurs and encouraging the introduction of pro-gender policies within the MSME sector and across the country.

Ms. Habiba Sumani, Director, Women Entrepreneurship Development, National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) reiterated the mandate of NBSSI to contribute

substantially to the reduction of high unemployment and the growth of the economy through MSMEs. She started the session by presenting the national definition of micro, small, medium and large enterprises which is based on the number of employees, turnover, and assets. Afterwards, she followed with a brief introduction of her institution and the number of activities that have been carried out including business advisory centres at the national level. NBSSI focuses on providing business development support, facilitating access to finance, mentoring and coaching, and providing technical support and skills, with about 60% women beneficiaries. She explained many of the challenges faced by Ghanaian women-owned MSMEs - including access to market, achieving product quality according to national standards, adapting to innovation changes, and access to finance. In Ghana, women tend to congregate at lower positions within organizations and own smaller businesses. Only 65% of economically active women have their own bank account, and women are sometimes limited to buying specific equipment and machinery. In addition, women participation in associations and networks is still low. To counter these challenges, NBSSI has capacity-building initiatives, provides professional services at subsidized rates, facilitates market access support to MSMEs, creates mentorship programmes for start-ups and young entrepreneurs, and improves technology use through equipment support for start-ups and existing business.

Ms. Lucia Quachey, CEO, Ghana Association of Women Entrepreneurs she started by stating that advocacy to support women entrepreneurs should continue by monitoring law enforcement and provision of tailored measures. She mentioned that the industrialization policy has not yet brought real changes on the ground, despite being in place for more than 70 years. As part of the women that have not been benefitting from these measures, she put as an example women cross border traders who are requested to pay extra costs when moving their products although the ECOWAS agreement stipulates free movement of good and people. Finally, she thanked the organization for their effort through the in-country projects to provide women with the necessary skills to upgrade to high-value-added segment and as well for the SheTrades Outlook.

Session 3: Brainstorming on Outlook use and identifying good practices

During the following session, participants split into groups to discuss the Outlook pillars in detail and identify good practices. Each group was assigned the following questions to discuss and report back to the group:

1. Is the framework and rationale of the Outlook clear to everyone?
2. What might be the advantages and disadvantages of using the Outlook in the work you do?
3. Please identify one good practice for the pillar in question.



The questions were chosen to validate the framework of Outlook in the context of Ghana. Participants mentioned that overall the Pillars and areas analysed are relevant. Depending on the institution they were representing each group described the relevance of the tool. Policymakers see the significance in having a better understanding of existing gender-

disaggregated data; business associations see it as a way to lobby and push for better-tailored programmes, while entrepreneurs and farmers saw it as a source of information to learn from existing national programmes in their country and in other countries.

The fruitful discussion in groups brought interesting information. Participants stressed that gender practices should be mainstream in all trade policies and regulations in place. The Outlook will serve them as a knowledge transfer tool where they will learn from their country and others. A participant mention that “data availability is an issue and the Outlook will help them to get the information about existing financing opportunities from commercial banks but also other sources such as venture capital”. An example provided of a good practice aiming at supporting women’s participation in trade and the economy included the revised Inheritance Law. Finally, participants shared with ITC team information about national institutions that should be contacted.

Conclusion and Next Steps

ITC will take into consideration feedback from discussions on the SheTrades Outlook, including suggestions on the six Pillar and survey questions as well as good practices. In addition, ITC will continue to carry out surveys, with support from national consultants, in the four pilot countries with a view of conducting a roll out in 20 additional countries by the end of 2019. From the discussion, several organizations have identified areas for action and collaboration as well as the role for ITC to support them.

For any additional questions on the SheTrades Outlook, please do not hesitate to contact womenandtrade@intracen.org.

The SheTrades in the Commonwealth project is supported by:



ITC’s SheTrades Initiative is supported by:

