

# SheTrades Outlook Roundtable and Pilot Workshop in Jamaica

## OUTCOME DOCUMENT



Hosted by International Trade Centre, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, and Jamaica Business Development Corporation

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## Introduction

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, the International Trade Centre (ITC), in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica (MFAFT) and the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) 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 Jamaica and discuss the possibility of creating a national SheTrades Chapter in Jamaica.

## Opening Ceremony

**Mrs. Marie Casserly-Rademacher, Project Development and Implementation Specialist, Office of the CEO, Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC),** opened the workshop and introduced speakers to deliver opening and introductory remarks

**Ms. Valerie Veira, CEO, JBDC,** welcomed guests and expressed JBDC's commitment to making sure that goods and services are ready for markets by providing services and assistance to exporters as well as engaging in important conversations like the SheTrades Outlook Workshop.



**Ms. Diane Edwards, President, JAMPRO,** touched on the relationship between JBDC and JAMPRO, stating that JAMPRO focuses on working with companies that have reached a certain level of development and assisting them to reach the next stage and expand operations. She also provided some context about the situation in Jamaica where the issue of empowering women remains at the top of many national agendas.

**Mr. Nicholas Schlaepfer, Senior Adviser, SheTrades Initiative, ITC,** provided background on the SheTrades in the Commonwealth project as well as the objectives for the workshop including presenting the Outlook pillars and creating a national chapter in the country.

## Session 1: Introducing SheTrades Outlook

**Ms. Anahita Vasudevan, Associate Programme Officer, SheTrades Initiative, ITC,** presented on the overall SheTrades Initiative, including the goal of connecting 3 million women-owned businesses to international markets by 2021 as well as the 7 global actions, the SheTrades digital platform, partnerships with key private sector corporations and local institutions, and overview of the in-country and global project work.

**Ms. Jacqueline Salguero Human, 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 a policy tool to assess, monitor, and improve the ecosystem for women in trade. The tool

supports evidence-based policy-making by collecting and analysing data, identifying gaps, 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, Skills, and Culture.

Participants provided feedback on SheTrades Outlook indicators and raised issues of relevance to data collection in the context of Jamaica. On Trade Policy, key questions included underlying cultural issues that impact women's participation in trade, ranging from the definition of a women-owned vs. women-led businesses, to gender-budgeting, to tendency of companies to be passed down to sons, rather than daughters, to the issue of employers providing women with short-term contracts without maternity leave. With respect to the business environment, participants suggested ITC collects data on women in addition to a broader set of data in order to contextualize the information. On access to finance, it was noted that women tend to score higher than men with banks on issues of risk but often lack the collateral to obtain loans. Participants mentioned that, for the most part, Jamaica has a legal and regulatory framework covering most of the topics of interest to SheTrades Outlook; however, the main issue is ensuring that the implementation and enforcement of such laws are gender-neutral. The discussion around skills and culture focused on the importance of mentoring and networks, emphasizing that women are excluded from the "old boys club" in which business deals are made. Finally, the goal is to ensure that women are being seen, heard, and taken seriously.

## Session 2: Discussing Jamaica's Policy Priorities

**H.E. Ambassador Marcia Gilbert-Roberts, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica**, started the session by setting the scene in terms of international and national development agendas. She stressed the importance of the link between trade and gender as well as women's empowerment as cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed to bring about change. These issues should be taken into consideration in national policies on gender equality, the national export strategy, and the national foreign trade policy. H.E. Ambassador Gilbert-Roberts reiterated Jamaica's commitment to addressing sex-disaggregated data gaps and measuring women's participation in the economy, including through work with the CARICOM Secretariat to improve data collection. The goal for Jamaica is to allow men and women to take equal advantage of the benefits of trade and integrate women in the global trading environment.

**Mr. Harold Davis, Deputy CEO, JBDC**, presented on the organization's focus on enterprise development and support to the entrepreneurial ecosystem through "mass-customized" support, including mentoring and advisory services. Mr. Davis mentioned that JBDC offers an online portal, so that clients can undertake self-assessments, and works through Small Business Development Centres adapted to the Jamaican context. The need for JBDC's support is reflected in the statistic that approximately 60% of youth is either moderately or entirely disengaged. JBDC also holds an annual conference to promote the Micro-, Small- and Medium-sized Enterprise (MSME) sector in Jamaica, which consists of broad representation from the Creative Industry sub-sector, a key area for potential growth in the country.



**Ms. Diane Edwards, President, JAMPRO,** discussed JBDC’s relationship with the government of Jamaica as a trade and investment promotion agency. Part of JAMPRO’s mandate includes business advocacy and creation of a conducive business environment. Ms. Edwards explained that through the three-year Export Max III program, JAMPRO invites importers and distributors to be matched with export-ready firms. JAMPRO also provides capacity-building

and support to participate in trade fairs. Although the program is not gender-specific, approximately 40% of the participants are women-owned or partially women-owned businesses.

### 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. Are the framework and rationale of the SheTrades Outlook useful?
2. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the Outlook?
3. Please indicate names of some of the institutions that would be useful to contact in relation to the pillar in question.
4. Are there any cultural practices that prevent women from participating in international trade in equal terms as their male counterparts?
5. Please identify one good practice for the pillar in question.

The questions were chosen to validate the framework of the Outlook in the context of Jamaica. In order for the ITC team to gauge potential uses of the Outlook and any issues that might prevent its use, the participants were asked to think about the advantages and disadvantages. Participants mentioned that the overall approach and indicators of Outlook are relevant for Jamaica, encouraged systematic sex-disaggregated data collection, and allowed stakeholders to identify gaps that need to be addressed. A point was raised to make sure the tool takes into account representation of rural women.

Throughout the discussion, participants brought up underlying cultural issues that need to be addressed in order to further women’s participation in trade, which prompted additional discussion during this session to flesh out and capture nuances. Key points were the need for official mechanisms to promote women’s participation in consultations, lack of maternity leave for many workers, lack of access to inheritance despite no legal basis for excluding, prevalent social and gender norms, inequalities in education, lack of opportunities for socio-economic mobility, among others.



The groups were able to identify key institutions and existing best practices for the ITC team to be able to follow-up and interview for more information. Best practices mentioned during the session included Jamaica’s MSME policy, the DBJ IGNITE program, programs under Women Innovators Network of the Caribbean and the Women Entrepreneurs Network of the Caribbean, JBDC’s Accelerator program, and JAMPRO’s Export Max initiative.

### Session 4: Setting up a SheTrades Chapter in Jamaica

During the final session, ITC provided an overview of the SheTrades 7 Global Actions as well as the benefits and process of creating a national SheTrades Chapter in Jamaica.



The SheTrades Initiative uses both project and partnership models and is currently present in 25 countries with 10 national chapters. Chapters serve as a decentralized platform of the SheTrades Initiative, led by a host institution, which allow countries to adapt the SheTrades framework to their local contexts. Working closely with policy makers, business support organizations, women-owned businesses, and market partners, the chapter aligns with local policy priorities to find areas of collaboration. The number of women-owned businesses the chapter can support and the activities carried out depend on the resources of the host institution and any additional funding provided by donors.

