

INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO TRADE INTERNATIONALLY

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KENYA

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Trade has historically been an important driver of growth, productivity gains, development and job creation globally and in developing countries in particular.
- ▶ Women-led businesses, particularly the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMES) account for most jobs.
- ▶ When they are able to connect to international markets the development gains are disproportionately large and are definitely shared across a wider section of the population.

KENYA'S PERSPECTIVE

- ▶ Traditional ideas about the roles of women restricted their contributions to Kenya's economic development agenda. These ideas held women back from contributing to important development goals; especially in the areas of economic growth, nutrition and food security.
- ▶ Women in Kenya were under-represented in decision-making positions, less access to education, land, and employment.
- ▶ Those living in rural areas spent long hours collecting water and firewood; these chores interfering with school attendance which left them with little time to earn money or engage in other productive activities.

INITIATIVES BY KENYA

1. GENDER EQUALITY FRAMEWORK

- ▶ The Country's New Constitution promulgated in 2010 provides a powerful framework for addressing gender equality.
- ▶ The Government of Kenya is committed to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality and women empowerment .
- ▶ This marked a new beginning for women's rights in Kenya; seeking to remedy the traditional exclusion of women and promote their full involvement in every aspect of growth and development.

2. WOMEN ENTERPRISE FUND

- ▶ This is a semi-autonomous government agency established in August 2007 whose key aim is "provision of subsidized credit to women entrepreneurs for economic development.
- ▶ The Fund provides accessible and affordable credit to support women to start and/or expand business for wealth and employment creation.
- ▶ In addition, the fund provides training for women and their groups and, where possible, facilitates the marketing of their products and services, which may include introducing them to large companies.

Available Support Networks

- ▶ The Export Promotion Council, the country's premier institution for promoting International Trade has come up some programmes that support women who wish to enter the export trade arena;
- ▶ They include support product design and development; access to international trade data network through the Centre for Business Information in Kenya; exposure to international markets experience through fairs and exhibitions;
- ▶ Provision of infrastructure (shelters and sanitation facilities) at key boarder posts for Women in Cross Border Trade.

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- ▶ With the 2018 launch of the Integrated National Export Development and Promotion Strategy, an all government approach is being taken to come up with more initiatives targeting to increase participation of women;
- ▶ Some of the programmes being looked into include setting up of an export guarantee scheme, and an Export Finance scheme, considering that most women lack the collateral to access funding from mainstream Financial Intermediaries to expand their operations.
- ▶ Specific training programmes to cater for the entrepreneurial training needs of women in International Trade which will be delivered by the SDT's training arm - Kenya Institute of Business Training are being developed with the assistance of JICA and UNCTAD.

Thank you

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