



**United Nations
Conference
on Trade and
Development**

Distr.
LIMITED

TD/B/COM.3/EM.14/L.1
21 November 2001

Original : ENGLISH

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation
and Development
Expert Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender in
Order to Promote Opportunities
Geneva, 14-16 November 2000
Agenda item 3

MAINSTREAMING OF GENDER IN ORDER TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES

Outcome of the Expert Meeting

1. Gender mainstreaming involves bringing the contribution, perspectives and priorities of both women and men to the centre of attention in the development arena in order to inform the design, implementation and outcomes of policies and programmes. It is a critical strategy not only in the pursuit of gender equality – a development goal in its own right – but also in the achievement of other development goals, including economic ones. Indeed, overlooking relevant gender factors in macroeconomic policies and institutions can undermine the successful outcome of those very same policies and institutions.

2. It was in this spirit – and in line with the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/17 of 1997, and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in 2000 – that the Expert Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender to Promote Opportunities proceeded.

3. The Expert Meeting identified the following policy options/recommendations for consideration by the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development, and requested that they also be brought to the attention of the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities and the Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Finance Issues.

(i) Mainstreaming gender in the area of commodities

Policy options/recommendations addressed to Governments

4. Governments should review laws, policies and administrative practices, including customary and traditional laws, to ensure equal access to land ownership, right to property and earnings, and credit in rural areas.

5. Governments should undertake proactive policies aimed at encouraging the creation of cooperatives and enterprises for women in order to facilitate their access to information, communication, technologies and trading networks.

6. Along with supporting gender-sensitive regular agricultural extension programmes, Governments should also initiate and support activities aimed at providing business support services, such as marketing and business planning, for women. Governments, via dialogue/guidelines/policy making, should ensure that gender aspects are included in extension services of both the public and the private sectors.

Recommendations addressed to the international community and UNCTAD

7. The international community should design and implement technical and financial assistance programmes with genuine consultations with local and national representatives of women's organizations.

8. The international community should increase efforts for adequate development assistance and

strengthen the resources of the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) to improve commodity development measures and support women in their activities.

9. UNCTAD should support women in the production and commercialization of high value added products in non-traditional export sectors such as production of fresh fruits and vegetables. In this respect, UNCTAD in cooperation with ITC should help countries organize national training workshops that will assist women producers to acquire expertise in achieving quality standards in each market segment in the importing country.

10. UNCTAD should liaise with national, regional and international organizations to promote thematic workshops of interest to women in the commodity sector across countries and other capacity building, including technical assistance programmes.

11. UNCTAD should seek ways and means to explore the potential and opportunities offered by the agro-tourism sector for rural women as a new way of doing business in rural areas.

12. UNCTAD should explore, in collaboration with relevant international organizations, the possibility for women to take advantage of biodiversity in developing countries and to have access to protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), for example with regard to forest products, methods and techniques of commodity processing and preservation, as well as other resources available.

(ii) Mainstreaming gender in trade in services

Policy options/recommendations addressed to Governments

13. Women's differentiated contribution to society and to the national and the international economy, particularly in all the service sectors, should be accounted for by better collection, classification and analysis of statistics and qualitative data to grasp the special characteristics of women's work in services, with market value or not, as well as the interlinkages generated in other sectors. This is the basis for

appropriate tools to formulate adequate policies for social and gender equity in services.

14. The competitive profile of women in terms of skills should be improved by implementing direct programmes and by encouraging voluntary targeted actions by the business community in order to promote productivity in services as well as negotiating skills.

15. In the area of multilateral and regional negotiations, particular attention needs to be paid to the service sectors where women have a demonstrated capacity to supply services through the four modes of supply, namely transborder movement of services, consumer movement, establishment and investment, and movement of natural persons (for example, in such areas as health services, education services, and cultural and recreational services).

16. The participation of women in policy and decision making should be enhanced by improving their competencies/skills in leadership related to trade in services.

17. Policy-oriented studies on gender impacts of liberalization of the services sector need to be conducted, in cooperation with UNCTAD.

Recommendations addressed to the international community and UNCTAD

18. In order to increase the quality of service provision in some sectors, as well as improve the livelihoods of women providing services, it could be necessary for trade liberalization of services to be accompanied by appropriate international standards for business and professional qualifications and conduct. This would include, for instance, adoption of various ethic codes for recruitment or recognition of professional qualifications and competencies.

19. A methodology of sex-disaggregated data identification and ensuing collection of suitable information in the services sector needs to be designed and implemented, distinguishing trade and foreign owned activities wherever possible.

20. Transparency in the area of access to information at all levels should be enhanced.

(iii) Mainstreaming gender in FDI policy

Policy options/recommendations addressed to Governments

21. With respect to promoting gender equality, Governments should:

- (a) Collect sex-disaggregated data on employment, wages, etc., which could assist policy makers in assessing the gender-differentiated impact of FDI;
- (b) Assess FDI policies as they impact on gender equality; this includes looking at education, on-the-job training facilities and transfer of knowledge and technology;
- (c) Examine gender-specific conditions in selected FDI-intensive industries and sectors;

22. With respect to promoting macro-economic and development goals, Governments should:

- (a) Screen FDI flows for consistency with macroeconomic and development goals, including gender equality;
- (b) Take into account the gender impact when designing FDI targeting programmes and strategies geared to attracting FDI into particular sectors and industries;
- (c) Assess the gender implications of an “over-dependency” on exports;
- (d) Promote gender-sensitivity and social responsibility of the private sector, in cooperation with the business community.

Recommendations addressed to the international community and UNCTAD

23. The international community and UNCTAD should:

- (a) Collect and publicize best practice examples from different industries and countries that relate to employment equality (including recruitment, training, promotion and working conditions) in TNCs, especially in export processing/free trade zones;

24. UNCTAD should:

- (a) Integrate a gender perspective into all analysis and research, as well as in the advisory services related to FDI and its impact on host economies;
- (b) Examine TNC subcontracting approaches in terms of the effects on supplier firms and the informal sector.

(iv) Mainstreaming gender in enterprise development

Policy options/recommendations addressed to Governments

25. Governments should:

- (a) Review and adapt laws and commercial regulations to enhance women's access to ownership and use of economic resources;
- (b) Ensure that domestic financial institutions reach the underserved segment of women entrepreneurs by:

- (i) Encouraging banks to report on the composition of their loan portfolios by size of enterprise and by sex;
 - (ii) Offering special credit lines for women entrepreneurs;
 - (iii) Providing both financial and non-financial services to women entrepreneurs by entering into partnerships with qualified business development service providers.
- (c) Support the creation of national networks of women entrepreneurs and business associations.

Recommendations addressed to the international community and UNCTAD

26. The international community should:

- (a) Improve women's access to finance through partnerships between international organizations, for example Women's World Banking, and women's business associations to increase the awareness of how financial innovations can remove barriers to finance;
- (b) Promote training and mentoring programmes for bank management and staff in order to sensitize them to the needs of women entrepreneurs and the potential benefits of reaching this underserved market;
- (c) Provide training through qualified business development service providers to improve the management and financial skills of women entrepreneurs so that they can effectively negotiate with creditors and investors;
- (d) Establish within the Committee of Donor Agencies for Small and Medium-sized

Enterprise Development a working group on women entrepreneurs in order to coordinate their approaches and develop best practices in their programmes serving women entrepreneurs.

27. UNCTAD, in cooperation with other international organizations, should:

- (a) Promote regional networks of women entrepreneurs and business associations;
- (b) Contribute to improving the coherence of policies and strategies, as well as other links, between enterprise development programmes of UN agencies;
- (c) Together with ITU, study the feasibility of a cybermarket for women entrepreneurs and special training in e-commerce.

(v) **Mainstreaming gender in ICT policy**

Policy options/recommendations addressed to Governments

28. Recognizing the public goods nature of knowledge and the Internet, Governments should ensure rapid, equitable and affordable access to the Internet and ICT for women by taking all appropriate measures such as:

- (a) Establishing an appropriate infrastructure (through telecentres, Internet cafes, etc.) in order to facilitate women's access to the Internet;
- (b) Providing computers and telecommunications at affordable prices to low-income families and specifically women entrepreneurs, as demonstrated by countries such as Pakistan;

- (c) Involving local governments (in addition to the national Government) in reaching out to rural communities;
 - (d) Creating broad awareness raising programmes using mass media and targeting rural areas;
 - (e) Offering computer and language skills training specifically targeted at women; focusing on distance education at home or community centres; and offering training courses to women in telecentres at low cost;
 - (f) Training women in the methods and scope of setting up e-businesses and developing e-commerce;
 - (g) Promoting the capacity of women as managers and owners of telecentres;
 - (h) Introducing the appropriate language courses in primary schools;
 - (i) Providing Internet databases in local languages;
 - (j) Creating public-private partnerships to facilitate access via the Internet to foreign markets and potential business partners for women entrepreneurs.
29. They should enhance the number of women in the IT industry by:
- (a) Increasing the enrolment of female students in ICT-related courses through specific promotion campaigns and scholarships;
 - (b) Ensuring the participation of women in the design and development of new technologies;

- (c) Ensuring the representation of women in ICT policy making bodies.

30. They should support organizations and grassroots groups involved in assisting women with access and usage of the Internet and ICT.

Recommendations addressed to the international community and UNCTAD

31. The international community and UNCTAD should as a matter of urgency:

- (a) Mainstream gender in their overall work on ICT and e-commerce;
- (b) Promote ways in which ICT and e-commerce can create new economic opportunities for women and thus contribute towards increasing the competitiveness of developing countries;
- (c) Identify gender-specific opportunities of the digital economy through analytical and case study-based work, including on such issues as: (i) the level of employment provided to women in ICT-related services sectors; (ii) the extent to which these sectors are involved in export; and (iii) the type of employment foreign firms provide in these services sectors, from a gender perspective;
- (d) Collaborate with Governments and the private sector to incorporate the findings from their analytical work into policy dialogue and decision making;
- (e) Develop programmes to facilitate women's access and use of ICT and e-commerce tools, specifically through transfer of technology and competitive scholarships;

- (f) Promote ways to facilitate women's access to information and the use of ICT in local Government development, and the establishment of information management systems.

32. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development should formulate guidelines on increasing the participation of women in IT during the course of its work on its new substantive theme: Technology development and capacity building for competitiveness in a digital economy.