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**The NEPAD Agency's Role in Empowering African Women  
through Trade and Investment**

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*The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.*

# **The NEPAD Agency's Role in Empowering African Women through Trade and Investment**

**55<sup>th</sup> Executive Session of Trade & Development Board**

**UNCTAD, Geneva**

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# Outline of Presentation

- Situational Analysis
- Why address gender inequalities in trade and investment?
- NEPAD Agency's role in addressing issues
- Results of NEPAD Agency's interventions
- Challenges, lessons learned and opportunities
- Conclusion and Way Forward



# Situational Analysis

- Trade forms the second most important source of livelihoods in Africa and women are predominant in this sector (60-74% NEPAD Agency, 2011)
- Gendered representation of African women in sub-sectors of trade (agriculture; agri-business; retail and petty trade; small and Medium Enterprises; Cross-border trade )
- Barriers to women in business: lack of access and control over productive resources and limited managerial skills



# Why address gender inequalities in trade and investment?

- Gender equality in development in general, and trade and investment in particular, is a human rights issue
- Intra-Africa trade is an increasing focus for governments , AU and development partners
- Need for trade and investment to be gender-responsive
- Address access to resources and trade capacity building for women-owned businesses
- Contribute to achievement of Millennium Development Goals (especially MDG 3 – empowerment of women)



# NEPAD Agency's Role in addressing Issues

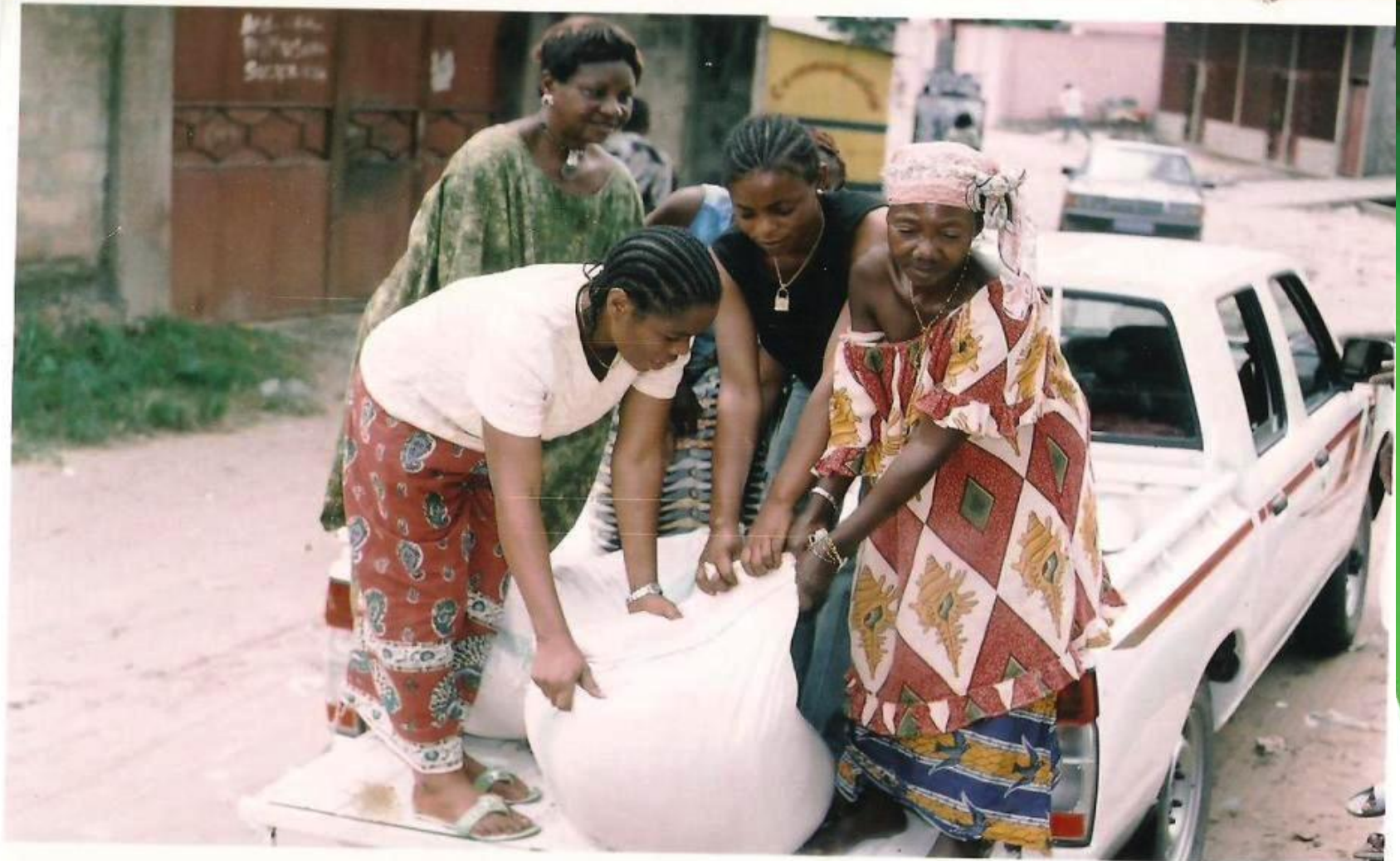
- Engagement on four levels – International dialogues, regional, national and civil society engagement
- Support to Regional Economic Communities (Business Incubators for African Women Entrepreneurs)
- Strengthening women's business associations in policy deliberations
- Capacity development and providing access to business information and opportunities
- Increasing access to productive assets – financing of small and medium enterprises



# Results of Interventions

- **Enhanced creation of income generating activities for women** through
  - a.) Support in agro-processing (145 agro-processing machines distributed to women groups in Kenya, Nigeria and Gambia)
  - b.) Sub-awards to 31 rural women groups in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burkina Faso, and Somalia for business development skills and establishment of income generating activities such as--- soap making, bakeries and cassava processing
- **Creation of employment opportunities** through public-private partnerships in Gambia and Ethiopia (2) and (3)

# Income generation - Women buying soya to process into soya milk in the Democratic Republic of Congo





# Results of Interventions

- **Business development and capacity building on trade issues (SMEs and cross-border trading)** through seminars, workshops and mentoring in Gambia, Togo and Mali (4 women's groups).
- **Application of ICT to business** (2 women's groups currently using online and telephone skills to assess market information)



# Closing ceremony of business development and management skills held in Timbouctou



# Results of Interventions

**Skills development for women leaders in business and civil society;**

- **270 women business leaders** in Mali trained in leadership and entrepreneurship skills
- **185 women leaders from civil society organizations** (women groups) in South Africa trained in leadership and management skills



# Opening ceremony of business development and management skills training held in Timbouctou at Sikasso, Mali on 29th June, 2009.



# Results of Interventions

- **Engagement with Regional Economic Communities**
  - Enhanced knowledge management on gender and trade through bilateral discussions
  - Establishment of business Incubator for women in COMESA and ECOWAS regions
  - Enhanced knowledge of governments on gender and trade issues through linkage with CAADP



# CFEMA MALI PARTICIPATING TO SIAO SMALL BUSINESS EXHIBITION, BURKINA FASO



# Results of Interventions

## Increased research on issues affecting women entrepreneurs;

- 4 Research studies carried out on challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia to inform policy and program development
- Results of feasibility studies on women and fish processing vegetable trades used to enhance trade in Senegal and Gambia



# Challenges and Lessons learned

- Many women's organizations are better positioned to support women but do not have financial resources and/or organizational capacity
- Technical nature of some interventions requires further development of partnerships
- Resource mobilization essential





# Opportunities

- NEPAD Agency has continental reach, capacity and experience in gender and trade interventions
- Establish a programme on trade and investment - NEPAD Trade & Investment Initiative
- Opportunity for increased involvement of intergovernmental and development partners in trade and investment initiatives
- Scale-up participation of civil society
- Research and analysis of gender impact of trade



# Conclusion and Way Forward

- NEPAD Agency is committed to Gender Equality in Africa
- Agency is positioned to play an important role in trade and investment issues
- Call for strengthened participation between UNCTAD and NEPAD Agency
- Strengthen the NEPAD Agency to enhance trade and investment interventions – support to RECs, countries and civil society



# NEPAD Agency

“Due to gender differences in terms of access to rights, resources and power, women and men are impacted differently by trade and investment. There is, therefore a need for gender-responsive trade and investment interventions”

Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki

CEO

NEPAD Agency



# End

Thank you very much for your attention.

