



## United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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### Thirteenth session

Doha, Qatar  
21–26 April 2012

## UNCTAD Women in Business Awards

### UNCTAD XIII special event

Held at the Qatar National Convention Centre, Doha, on 23 April 2012

### Summary prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat

1. Melissa De León, founder of Panama Gourmet, a company that produces gluten-free foods, won the 2012 UNCTAD Empretec Women in Business Award. She received the prize from Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari, Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage of Qatar, and President of UNCTAD XIII.
2. Second place went to Patricia Paz Silva Giordani of Brazil, who established Moura e Paz – Soluções Ambientais. The firm provides safe transport and treatment of dangerous industrial and medical waste for business clients in one of the poorest states of Brazil. Tarja Kaarina Halonen, former President of Finland and current Co-Chair of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability, presented the award.
3. Rahda Kurdi of Jordan placed third in the competition. Aisha Alfardan, Vice Chairwoman of the Qatari Business Women's Association, Head of the Qatar hub of the Middle East and North Africa Businesswomen's Association and Personal Advisor to the Chairman of Alfardan Group Holding, bestowed the award. Ms. Kurdi's company, Advanced Pharmaceutical Services, is an association that helps small pharmaceutical businesses capitalize on economies of scale so that they can compete with the large chains in the Jordanian pharmacy sector.
4. The finalists are graduates of the Empretec programme, which offers training in entrepreneurship through centres in 33 countries. Besides providing training to women entrepreneurs, the programme also reaches out to youth and promising entrepreneurs in all sectors of the economy, including in rural areas. The potential of women entrepreneurs – such as the 10 finalists – for building successful companies and creating jobs in developing countries is increasingly being recognized by governments. The Entrepreneurship Policy Framework, launched at the World Investment Forum, helps developing country

policymakers design policies aimed at facilitating start-ups and unleashing entrepreneurial capacities.

5. During the dinner, the master of ceremonies, Laila Al Shahili from Al-Jazeera, encouraged the formation of business partnerships and networking. Two European firms offered support. The German company Vecoplan, which converts waste to energy, offered study trips to two finalists, and Pikolinos, from the footwear sector, offered corporate gifts to all finalists.

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