

Expert Meeting on

**TRADE AS A TOOL FOR THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF  
WOMEN**

23-24 May 2016

**Links Between Trade and Gender in the Services Sector**

By

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



**Expert Meeting on Trade as a Tool for the Economic Empowerment of Women**  
**Geneva, Switzerland**  
**23 - 24 May 2016**

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## **□ Links Between Trade and Gender in the Services Sector**

### **SERVICES DEFINED**

**Services are defined as elements of economic transactions that are intangible, invisible and non-storable as opposed to goods transactions**



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- **We define the Services Sector to comprise:**
  - **Wholesale and retail trade**
  - **Telecommunications, transportation and storage**
  - **Financial services and insurance**
  - **Education**
  - **Environmental protection**
  - **Real estate**
  - **Business services and advisory**
  - **Tourism and hospitality**
  - **Community, social, and personal services**



## **SERVICES SECTOR – FACTS & FIGURES**

- **Increasingly important as a sector in most regions of the world contributing the fastest-growing share to GDP and trade**
- **Represents the main sector for employment - In 2015, approximately 50% of global workforce was engaged in this sector**
- **In Africa, it has become the driver of economic growth, wealth and job creation**
- **Lack of an enabling policy environment and regulatory framework impedes the development of a more robust services sector in Africa**



## LINKS WITH WOMEN

- **Women's services trading activities contribute to poverty reduction, employment and wealth creation**
- **Women moving out of agriculture in developing economies and out of industry in developed economies into Services**
- **A 2012 global survey on women employment showed:**
  - **about 30% of women were employed in agriculture**
  - **16% were in industry**
  - **50% in the Services sector**



## LINKS WITH WOMEN (contd)

- In 2015 more than 50% of working women were in Services industry
- Gender-based segmentation and discrimination affect the organizational levels of engagement for women and impede advancement to leadership positions
- Women are more negatively affected by the disadvantages of trade liberalization and face more challenges tapping into opportunities that international trade offers



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**Despite playing an important role and making significant contributions to their economies, women as a group are not given attention by policy makers.**

## **Constraints to economic empowerment:**

- Gender inequalities in access to economic opportunities**
- Gender bias in education and skills development**
- Less access to capital, finance, technology, market information, business networks and other productive inputs such as land**
- Disproportional responsibilities for unpaid domestic work and family care which translates to time poverty and energy for**

**unleashing their full potentials for economic empowerment**







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## **□ Women in Tourism and the Hospitality Industry**

- **fundamental components of the Services sector**
- **important opportunities for women's employment, revenue earnings and personal realization**
- **Activity is rife with challenges and female vulnerability**
  - **incidences of sexual harassment and similar abuses are significant in the hospitality sector**
  - **need for appropriate and enforced legislation on personal protection**



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## **□ Women in Informal Small-Scale Trans-Border Trade**

- **Women informal cross-border traders make an important contribution to economic growth and government revenues in sub-Saharan Africa**
- **appreciable employment opportunities and revenue earning for the operators**

### **GAPS**

**Vulnerable to invisibility, stigmatization, violence, harassment and corruption by immigration officials, poor working conditions, data paucity, illiteracy and lack of**

**recognition of their economic contribution.**

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## **Gender-Sensitive Trade Services Legislation and Policy-Making**

- **Fiscal policies – for example, providing fiscal incentives to encourage exports from women-owned services sector businesses or reducing tariffs in services enterprises with high female employment ratios such as tourism and hospitality**
- **Access to finance and advancing financial inclusion for women – policies and regulatory framework to encourage banks and finance institutions create more innovative gender-focused products and services to help empower women in business who require capital and finance for starting and growing their businesses**



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## **Gender-Sensitive Trade Services Legislation and Policy-Making (contd)**

- **Education/Skills development and training – appropriate education policies put in place to reduce illiteracy and allow women be more qualified to take up higher level jobs in the services value chain**
- **ICT – increased access to STEM education and equitable technical training to enhance women innovation in business and entrepreneurship**
- **Creating the necessary awareness and capacity building that will make women more knowledgeable and aware of their rights to economic opportunities, products and services**



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## Gender-Sensitive Trade Services Legislation and Policy-Making (contd)

- **Policies to reduce women's time poverty by reducing and redistributing unpaid domestic and care work**
- **Labour – ensuring that women as part of the labour force are not exploited (“equal pay for equal work”) and that they acquire skills sought by services companies as they expand and trade internationally**



# AWIEF

AFRICA WOMEN INNOVATION  
& ENTREPRENEURSHIP FORUM

## □ WHY AWIEF?

AWIEF is a pan-African women's economic empowerment initiative and platform that annually assembles women across industry sectors and societal hierarchy "from grassroots to the Boardroom".



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# AWIEF

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## AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- **Raise awareness on the multi-faceted structural challenges and systemic barriers faced by the African woman in starting and growing her business, analyze such challenges, and proffer sustainable solutions**



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# AWIEF

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- **Ensure the visibility of the important role and contribution of African business women and entrepreneurs to wealth creation, poverty alleviation, employment creation and regional integration**





# AWIEF

AFRICA WOMEN INNOVATION  
& ENTREPRENEURSHIP FORUM

*(contd)*

- **Showcase and celebrate successful women entrepreneurs as inspiration for emerging, young and aspiring African business women**
- **Disseminate best practices in supporting women economic empowerment**



# AWIEF

AFRICA WOMEN INNOVATION  
& ENTREPRENEURSHIP FORUM

- *(contd)*

**Business skills development and capacity building in entrepreneurship**

**Provide a networking platform for intra-Africa trade, for meeting like-minded individuals, mentorship and sharing and learning across African borders**



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# AWIEF

AFRICA WOMEN INNOVATION  
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## □ AWIEF 2015

- Inaugural edition with theme, *“Investing in Women Entrepreneurs: Unleashing Africa’s Economic Growth”*
- Participation by over 400 delegates from across Africa and the diaspora



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□ AWIEF 2016

22 – 23 September, Lagos, Nigeria

*Theme: Accelerating Women's Economic Empowerment in Africa's Best Interest*

- Promises to be a bigger success than the 2015 edition
- Launches the Global Partnership Programme with mentorship opportunities for the selected few
- I look forward to seeing you in great numbers in Lagos for AWIEF 2016
- Required: Partnerships and Sponsorships



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*THANK YOU  
FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION*



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