

TRADE, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: A PATH TO INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT



GLOBAL CONTEXT

Economic growth, as well as inclusive sustainable development, requires women's empowerment. Some 70 per cent of the people living in extreme poverty are women. Globalization through increased trade and investment has been associated with rising employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for women. In some cases, though, it has exacerbated existing gender inequalities and worsened women's economic and social status. One key reason for this is that trade policies, as well as economic policies more generally, have long been gender-blind – they do not factor in the effects of different policies on women as a distinct and often disadvantaged group in the economy.

Mainstreaming gender into trade policy involves assessing the impacts of trade policies on the well-being of women and men. Such an assessment will help in (a) better understanding the specific challenges and opportunities that women face from markets; (b) designing and implementing complementary policies aimed at maximizing opportunities for women; and (c) facilitating women's access to more competitive markets.

UNCTAD has been conducting analytical work on gender and trade policy since the early 2000s. This extensive experience in accompanying and monitoring the gender dimension of trade led to the establishment in 2010 of a dedicated work programme on mainstreaming gender in trade policy. The programme conducts country studies and training activities, specifically designed to address the persistent lack of awareness, data, analysis, representation and action on women's empowerment in trade and trade policy.

WHAT ARE SOME STEPS TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING GENDER?

Programme activities are aimed at building the human and institutional capacities of key national stakeholders – policymakers and trade practitioners – to mainstream gender in trade policies. Activities encompass country studies and a teaching package. UNCTAD also actively advocated for women's economic empowerment to be fully included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Country studies contain an analysis of the country's trade flows that identifies sectors that have been positively or negatively affected by trade and market opening, their repercussions on women and the existing scope for using trade policy – and complementary policies – as a tool for gender equality and women's empowerment. The studies also consider the

PROGRAMME FACTS AND FIGURES

Trade, Gender and Development
programme scope: all regions

Programme start date: 2010

Reviews per year: 2 (average)

Number of country studies
to date: 7

Programme website:
unctad.org/gender



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bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements to which a country is a party. Country studies are initiated at the request of Governments. The counterpart ministry or agency is involved throughout the process and takes ownership of the policy recommendations.

The teaching package on trade and gender is targeted at strengthening understanding on the links between trade and gender and the capacities to formulate gender-sensitive trade policies. It consists of a training manual and an online course. The package targets academics policymakers and representatives of civil society involved in research, teaching, policy formulation and implementation or in field work on trade and gender. The course contains three modules and spans 8 weeks.

RESULTS AND IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- The UNCTAD programme on trade, gender and development has been under way for some five years. There are thus now indications of enhanced capacity at the national level to include gender considerations in the formulation of trade policy in Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Rwanda and Uruguay. For example, in Rwanda, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion stated: “The recommendations of the study will inform national policies and strategies to better empower Rwandan women.”
- Sixty-six participants from 40 countries successfully completed the first edition of UNCTAD’s online course on trade and gender, held from 19 January to 8 March 2015. All participants indicated that the course had met or exceeded their expectations and enhanced their knowledge of the links between trade and gender. One participant from the Democratic Republic of the Congo noted in particular that trade and gender had subsequently been incorporated into overall work programmes.

DONORS/ FUNDING SOURCE

Current: United Nations Development Account, Finland, Norway

Past: United Nations Development Account

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