



**United Nations Conference  
on Trade and Development**

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**Trade and Development Board**  
**Trade and Development Commission**  
**Expert Meeting on Trade as a Tool for the Economic Empowerment of Women**  
Geneva, 23–24 May 2016  
Item 2 of the provisional agenda  
**Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

**Provisional agenda and annotations**

**I. Provisional agenda**

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Trade as a tool for the economic empowerment of women
4. Adoption of the report of the meeting



## II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

### Item 1

#### Election of officers

1. It is recommended that the expert meeting elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

### Item 2

#### Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda for the meeting is reproduced in chapter I above. A detailed programme will be available one week before the meeting.

#### *Documentation*

TD/B/C.I/EM.8/1      Provisional agenda and annotations

### Item 3

#### Trade as a tool for the economic empowerment of women

3. The effects of trade policies on economic and social activities tend to be different across genders. This is due to a combination of cultural and social as well as economic factors. Women and men may have different skills, face diverse challenges and have different access to productive resources. Trade liberalization does not have an unambiguously positive effect on women's economic empowerment and well-being. Its impact can be double-edged. Women may simultaneously gain and lose from enhanced trade. They may access stable wage employment but have limited opportunities for skill development. They may gain as consumers if tariffs are reduced on products that represent an important portion of their consumption basket, but may be penalized when their produce compete with cheap imported goods.

4. Women are not a homogeneous group. A change in trade policy may have a diverse impact on different subgroups of women, depending on social factors, economic roles, demographics and geographic location. Gender-blind trade and other macroeconomic policies tend to exacerbate existing gender inequalities. The new development frameworks – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda – may prove useful to reverse this trend. But trade policy is not enough. Policy coherence is needed across different areas. Trade, agriculture, labour, infrastructure and social policies need to be coordinated. Moreover, gender-based production and trade patterns reflect deeply entrenched social norms that limit women's mobility and access to productive assets and services and assign them the bulk of household tasks, significantly reducing the time they can devote to productive activities. A comprehensive approach is needed to address these gender-specific constraints.

5. The objective of the expert meeting is to discuss policies and measures needed for trade and trade policy to fully contribute to women's well-being and their economic empowerment and be socially inclusive. The meeting is expected to:

- (a) Promote among participants a better understanding of the links between trade and gender, namely the impact of trade and trade policy on women's well-being and

economic empowerment and the impact of gender inequality on countries' competitiveness and export performance;

(b) Discuss how to ensure coherence between trade and other policies;

(c) Analyse how to trade off interests between different constituencies and sectors, for example subsistence- and export-oriented agricultural production;

(d) Cast light on ways to design and implement the "transformative actions" for gender equality and women's economic empowerment expected under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

6. To facilitate discussions, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared an issues note on "Trade as a tool for the economic empowerment of women". In addition, experts are encouraged to prepare brief papers on the subject under discussion.

*Documentation*

TD/B/C.I/EM.8/2 Trade as a tool for the economic empowerment of women

#### **Item 4**

#### **Adoption of the report of the meeting**

7. The report of the expert meeting will be submitted to the Trade and Development Commission at its next session.

#### **Inputs from experts**

Experts nominated by member States are encouraged to submit brief papers (approximately five pages) as contributions to the work of the meeting. The papers will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received. They should be submitted to the UNCTAD secretariat in advance of the meeting and addressed to:

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