OUTCOME DOCUMENT / SESSION REPORT

Publication Release Event

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through ICTs: A Practical Guide

Wednesday, 11 June 2014, 13h15-14h15, Room K1

UNCTAD

"This publication contributes greatly to the body of knowledge, fills a need and provides a useful tool for awareness-raising, assessment and to chart a course for action. It's impressive in that it addresses many dimensions as laid out in the WED Framework including the social, cultural, institutional barriers, capacity building needs, the broader enabling economic environment, the particulars of entrepreneurship, and then links all of that very concretely to ICTs. This guide provides much needed practical steps to take us closer to realizing our goals of women's digital empowerment and economic empowerment … we will certainly promote this guide and the assessment tool within it."

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Jennifer Breslin, **UNWomen**

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Summary and main issues discussed

UNCTAD in collaboration with the ILO launched a new publication, "Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Information and Communications Technologies: A Practical Guide". The event highlighted key issues addressed in the publication and featured statements and presentations from UNCTAD and the ILO. UNWomen provided a commentary on the publication. A video on women entrepreneurs and ICTs was also screened. Comments from UNWomen and the delegates attending the event conveyed that the publication offered a valuable resource to support the formulation of evidence-based policies empowering women entrepreneurs in developing countries through ICTs. They also reiterated the publication's usefulness and timeliness in light of the importance of harnessing ICTs to empower women entrepreneurs.

The publication examines the ICT dimension of the ILO's Framework for assessing the environment for women entrepreneurship development (WED) and serves as a resource and primer for policymakers, development practitioners and people wanting to become familiar with the issue of ICTs and women's entrepreneurship.

Discussion during the event highlighted that information and communications technologies (ICTs) offer women entrepreneurs new opportunities to strengthen their businesses. Through mobile phones, electronic platforms, radio, TV, blogs and the Internet, women entrepreneurs are reaching out to customers and building their businesses in ways they could not do before. Effective use of ICTs is helping women entrepreneurs to overcome several barriers. However, factors such as lack of knowledge, education and skills, time poverty, socio-cultural constraints, limited access as well as other factors continue to hinder many women entrepreneurs in developing countries from benefitting from ICTs. How ICTs can be used in areas such as strengthening women's access to finance and to methodologically increase the competitiveness of women's businesses also needs to be researched and examined more in-depth and are areas for further future work.

Programme of speakers

1. Welcome remarks, **Torbjorn Fredriksson, UNCTAD**

2. ILO's new framework for assessing the environment for women's entrepreneurship, **Virginia Rose Losada, ILO**

3. Presentation of the publication

    - Video "Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through ICTs: Voices from Africa"

    - Introduction, **Marie Sicat, UNCTAD**

    - Comments by **Jennifer Breslin, UNWomen**

The event webpage and information on the publication can be accessed at:
www.unctad.org/ict4d