



UNCTAD XIII

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

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HIGH-LEVEL EVENT

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

**Development-centred globalization:
Inclusive and gender-sensitive development paths**

23 APRIL 2012, 9 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

BACKGROUND

The depth of the recent economic and financial crisis and its close connection to high and volatile prices in food and fuel markets have raised several questions about the overall wisdom of the development path followed during the last three decades. It has pointed to the need to incorporate the objectives of poverty reduction, employment creation, social progress and gender equality within growth strategies in order to achieve a “development-centered globalization”. Incorporating the gender dimension into economic policy has, to date, been moving at a slow pace.

Across both developed and developing countries, the salary gap between equally qualified men and women is still significant. Nearly half (48.4 per cent) of the female population above the age of 15 remains economically inactive, compared to 22.3 per cent for men. In agriculture, women tend to have smaller plots and generally face market imperfections that limit their access to inputs, assets and services and reduce their productivity. Women entrepreneurs on average manage smaller businesses than do men, often in less-profitable sectors. While expanded international trade has created many new jobs, women tend to be found in temporary, seasonal, precarious occupations with little social security benefits and few opportunities for upgrading. Huge differences between men and women in responsibility for house and care works remain in almost all countries. Of the nearly 800 million illiterate adults worldwide, two thirds are women. On average, women hold less than 20 per cent of seats in parliament.

Overall, men and boys and women and girls do not enjoy the same opportunities, and do not have the same chances to either benefit from or contribute to the social and economic development of their countries. The legitimate aspiration of women to play a more critical role in the economic development of their countries is often linked to the quest for civil and political rights, as the “Arab Spring” has demonstrated.

Socio-economic development and women’s empowerment are closely related. Development is in itself a driver of gender equality and a tool for women’s empowerment. However, it is not a sufficient tool. Policy action is needed to achieve gender equality and empower women.

Over the last three decades, globalization has contributed to increased cross-border flows of goods, services, capital, technology and information. The prevailing assumption during this period has been that the lowering of economic, geographical and cultural barriers would lead to higher levels of productivity and expanded employment opportunities and this would in turn ensure sustainable livelihoods for all. Economic policies were often designed on the assumption that market forces would automatically ensure these outcomes would be realized.

With the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000, the discourse in international development has shifted emphasis to the Millennium Development Goals as an over-arching framework for development. With regards to trade, in 2001, the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations was launched with a strong emphasis on development, which contributed to putting under scrutiny the view that globalization would automatically lead to economic growth and development for all. Indeed, a key feature of last decade's economic development is a disconnection between economic growth and social development: income, social inequality and exclusion have increased even in countries that have recorded high level of economic growth and remarkable trade performance.

It is evident that economic policies impact different segments of the population, including men and women, in different ways; the assumption that economic policies are "gender neutral" has been increasingly challenged. Only if policymakers consciously take into account these horizontal differences can economic policy play a critical role in narrowing the gender gap.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Women in Development event is threefold:

- (a) To take the gender issue to a new level of political prominence;
- (b) To yield new insights into the relationship between macro-economic policies, development and gender; and
- (c) To launch a number of institutional initiatives to further the above objectives.

OUTCOME

The Event is expected to deliver concrete results:

- (a) Advocacy and awareness – A statement to be delivered to UNCTAD XIII representing key perspectives from the stakeholders participating in the Event.
- (b) Research and analysis – A detailed workshop report, including opening statements by policy-makers and high ranking officials, technical presentations and discussions. The report will bring new perspectives on socially inclusive macroeconomic policies geared to women's empowerment, and provide innovative tools and approaches.
- (c) Capacity-building/implementation – The launch of a number of institutional initiatives for mainstreaming gender in macroeconomic policy.

ORGANIZATION

The Event will revolve around a high-profile, interactive round table.

The round table will bring together multiple stakeholders ranging from policy leaders, United Nations agencies, the academia, the private sector and civil society, including the media and advocacy/grass-roots movements.

The presentations will be organized in four thematic sessions, each of which will be followed by a question and answer session. Discussions under each session (topic-driven panel) will be framed by a set of thought-provoking questions, likely to stimulate debate and generate new insights. Discussion should lead to specific and concrete recommendations and deliverables.

Following the high-level round table, the Women in Development event will conclude with the ceremony for the third UNCTAD Empretec Women in Business Award that will be delivered to three women entrepreneurs who have benefited from the business development services of Empretec and have excelled in their business activities.

AGENDA

- 9:00 – 9:30** **Opening remarks**
- 9:30 – 10:45** **Session I – Macro-economic policy: Does gender matter?**
This session will set the stage for the following thematic groups. Leading economists and high-level personalities will discuss the multiple transmission channels through which gender relations affect macroeconomic outcomes and are affected by macroeconomic policy.
- 10:45 – 12:00** **Session II – Trade, poverty and gender: New insights from a contextual, country-specific approach**
This session will critically rehearse the relationship between gender and trade, including in the light of UNCTAD's research findings.
- 12:00 – 14:00** **Lunch debate**
- 14:00 – 15:10** **Session III – Agriculture, environment, food security, intellectual property and gender considerations**
The session will yield new insights into agricultural production, intellectual property, food security and rural women's empowerment.
- 15:10 – 16:15** **Session IV – Equality of opportunity versus equality of outcome: How to translate women's educational gains into equal access to full employment and decent work**
The session will discuss concrete policy options to translate women's educational gains into equal access to full employment and decent work, particularly in export-oriented sectors.
- 16:15 – 16:30** **Session V – Concluding Remarks**

DOCUMENTS

- Inclusive and gender-sensitive development paths, Note by the UNCTAD secretariat, 2012, TD/456 (http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/td456_en.pdf)
- Who is benefitting from trade liberalization in Cape Verde? A gender perspective, 2011 UNCTAD/OSG/2011/2 (http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/osg2011d2_en.pdf)
- Who is benefitting from trade liberalization in Bhutan? A gender perspective, 2011 UNCTAD/OSG/2011/1 (http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/osg2011d1_en.pdf)
- Gender Equality and Trade Policy - A Resource paper, 2011 (http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditc_gender_2011d02.pdf)
- Applying a Gender Lens to Science, Technology and Innovation, 2011 (http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/dtlstict2011d5_en.pdf)
- Mainstreaming gender in trade policy, 2009 TD/B/C.I/EM.2/2/Rev.1, (http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ciem2d2_en.pdf)
- Mainstreaming gender in trade policy - Case studies, 2008 TD/B/C.I/EM.2/3 (http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ciem2d3_en.pdf)

For more information
www.unctadxiii.org
unctadxiii@unctad.org

Follow us on
<http://twitter.com/unctadxiii>

CONTACT:

Ms. Simonetta Zarrilli, Senior Economic Affairs Officer and Gender Focal Point,
Office of the Secretary-General (Simonetta.Zarrilli@UNCTAD.org)
Ms. Mariangela Linoci, Office of the Secretary-General (Mariangela.Linoci@UNCTAD.org)

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