

APEC Women and the Economy 2015 Fora Statement
Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Growth

- 1 We, APEC Ministers, Heads of Delegations, Senior Officials, private sector leaders, and representatives from non-governmental organizations, met in Manila, the Philippines, from 15 to 18 September 2015 for the High-Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy within the APEC Women and the Economy (WE) 2015 Fora.
- 2 We acknowledge the APEC host theme of “Building Inclusive Economies, Building a Better World” focusing on four priorities: 1) enhancing the regional economic integration agenda; 2) fostering small and medium enterprises (SMEs) participation in regional and global markets; 3) investing in human capital development; and 4) building resilient and sustainable communities.
- 3 This meeting builds on the foundation of the first APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women, also held in Manila in 1998, which paved the way for the drafting of the Framework for the Integration of Women in the APEC agenda. The Framework has guided all APEC fora in mainstreaming women in APEC processes and activities.
- 4 We welcome the recognition by the APEC Leaders of the vital contribution of women to economic development and prosperity of the Asia Pacific and beyond, as well as their commitment to take forward concrete policies and innovative measures to further enhance women’s economic empowerment, and greater inclusion of women in the regional economy, in particular, through improved access to capital and assets; access to markets; skills, capacity building, and health; women’s leadership, voice and agency; and innovation and technology. We will work to ensure women’s equal opportunities, participation, and benefits in innovative development, economic reform, and growth.
- 5 We recognize that 2015 is a landmark year as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) agreed by 189 United Nations (UN) Member States during the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, where investing in gender equality and women’s empowerment was acknowledged. The BPfA recognizes that women make significant contributions to the economy and calls for the promotion of women’s economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources, and equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.
- 6 We encourage APEC economies to take concrete steps towards addressing gender disparities in women’s labor force participation. We recognize the commitments of G20 leaders in 2014 to reduce the gender gap by 25 percent by 2025.
- 7 Recognizing that APEC presents an opportunity for international collaboration between policy makers and industry leaders, including those in the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) will work closely with ABAC to further advance women’s economic participation and develop programs that will train and promote diverse pipelines of women leaders.
- 8 We commend economy-led efforts under the PPWE to enhance women’s entrepreneurship, including in disaster reconstruction, to encourage women’s participation in the economy using smart technology and other ICT tools, and to empower women through leadership as described in Annex A.

Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Growth

- 9 The main theme of the APEC WE 2015 Fora, “Women as Prime Movers of Inclusive Growth,” reaffirms women’s crucial role in achieving economic prosperity and women’s leadership roles as imperative for competitiveness and success in the private, and public sectors. Inclusive growth is seen as growth that provides opportunities for all, including women as both drivers and beneficiaries of this development, which in turn can promote greater gender equality.

- 10 The APEC WE 2015 Fora also tackled three sub-themes: **Women and Inclusive Business**, which highlighted how women from the base-of-the-pyramid are empowered as producers, suppliers, distributors, workers, and/or consumers; **Women in the International Markets and Global Value Chains**, which discussed how women leaders use innovation as a means to breaking barriers and effectively competing in global value chains and regional economies; **Women and Sustainable Development**, which highlighted success stories and case studies on women's resilience, including health and wellness linked to productivity, family management and human capital development, and disaster preparedness and business continuity planning in the context of the changing climate and environment.
- 11 We recognize that to address issues within these sub-themes more efficiently, Senior Officials approved the holding of two PPWE meetings this year; the first of which was graciously hosted by Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby from 03 to 05 May 2015. This is to provide ample time for economies leading projects under the PPWE and across other APEC fora to ensure that gender equality and women's economic empowerment is being pushed forward for consideration by Senior Officials, Ministers, and APEC Leaders.
- 12 We welcome the outcomes of the Public Private Dialogue on Women and the Economy (PPDWE), which highlighted inspiring stories and the unique role of women as prime movers of inclusive growth. It also provided an educational and interactive forum for sharing good practices and insights into tapping women's potential through, for example, leveraging technology and e-commerce. It also emphasized that women are more than just a niche market but rather a driving force for economic change. The PPDWE called on all stakeholders to continue pursuing a women's economic empowerment agenda to create new opportunities for women, highlighting in particular the need for collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Empowered: Women and Inclusive Business

- 13 We remain committed to realizing the full potential of women as economic actors in the global economy and will continue to promote access to education, training and capacity-building programs, particularly for developing economies, and mentoring services to enable women to widen their awareness and gain access to labor markets, quality employment, and business opportunities. We commit to strengthen social protection as it impacts women's ability to fully participate in the economy.
- 14 We shall continue to foster the increase in the number of female entrepreneurs year by year by developing policies and services to assist women's business start-up and business development.
- 15 Bearing in mind the importance of enhancing women's participation in the economy particularly focusing on leadership, decision-making and management, we encourage each economy to establish and pursue measurable and aspirational voluntary goals, including women's representation in leadership and decision-making roles.
- 16 We also encourage companies, employers, and entrepreneurs, along with governments, to invest in human capital to ensure the physical and mental health, safety, and well-being of all workers, including working to address the unique health and safety challenges faced by women in the workplace.
- 17 We recognize the importance of inclusive growth and the contribution of vulnerable groups to the growth and stability of the global economy. Youth, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples experience increased levels of poverty and social exclusion, with women and girls in each of these categories experiencing even greater challenges.
- 18 We call on public and private sector stakeholders to promote and respect gender diversity at all levels of employment, and encourage both sectors to develop mechanisms to collect sex-disaggregated data, formulate policies to ensure the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, and provide public transparency regarding actions taken.
- 19 We acknowledge that building a gender-responsive world requires a social transformation of all members of society. We encourage women and girls and men and boys to take an active stand in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and advocating for mutual respect and

shared responsibility. We recognize that promoting gender equality and women's empowerment will bring benefits not only for women and girls but also men and boys through inclusive growth.

- 20 We encourage exploring the possibility of promoting fair trade programs to support more women in rural-based economies to participate in cross-border trading. We recognize that this will provide more women with access to markets for their products and generate income to sustain their livelihood.

Innovative: Women in the International Market and Global Value Chains

- 21 We emphasize that gender is an important aspect in international markets and global value chains. Therefore, it is important to integrate gender into the overall business operations and analytical frameworks, including production, sourcing, marketing, and consumption, to ensure gender is accounted for. Taking proactive measures will enable women as employees, leaders, and entrepreneurs to become more competitive and improve their ability to participate in global value chains. This will facilitate the development of competitive advantage for women's enterprises and improve their functional position in the value chain as well as coordinate the support of various enablers and service providers.
- 22 We listened to success stories of role models who exemplified the transformation of women and provided a mentoring and networking opportunity for dynamic women trailblazers. These provided lessons and recommendations for women to take ownership and propel the development process by harnessing their motivation, leadership, and decision-making skills.
- 23 We recognize the importance of innovation for women and economic development and, therefore, encourage APEC economies to work towards creating an enabling environment for women to fully and equally get access to economic resources and equal opportunities to participate in business in the global markets.

Resilient: Women and Sustainable Development

- 24 We acknowledge the strength and exceptional spirit of resilience of women and girls in the Asia Pacific and emphasize their important role in adapting to climate change, reducing and managing disaster risks, spurring economic development, and further strengthening the ties of communities.
- 25 We recognize the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030" adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015, which stipulated "Women and their participation are critical to effectively managing disaster risk and designing, resourcing and implementing gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes; and adequate capacity building measures need to be taken to empower women for preparedness as well as build their capacity for alternate livelihood means in post-disaster situations."
- 26 We encourage economies to provide women with equal opportunities to participate in decision-making roles at all levels of disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery and to enhance women's leadership capabilities and representation across the board. We also encourage women as integral members of our community, company workers, and entrepreneurs to be equipped in disaster risk mitigation and climate change adaption. During times of disasters, women have been known to take on tasks related to survival, such as administering provisions for their families and seeing to their safety and good health. Empowering women such as through entrepreneurship reinforces their roles as champions of community resilience in the face of disaster.
- 27 Women entrepreneurs should also be provided with capacity building, technical support, and access to capital to enable them to run resilient enterprises. This will ensure that devastations brought about by disasters will not permanently rob them of their income and livelihood.
- 28 We encourage efforts towards promoting business continuity programmes to support women-owned enterprises to get up on their feet after disasters and carry on re-building their lives and businesses. Reducing barriers to accessing financial capital and technical assistance as part of business continuity planning would help to ensure recovery of loss of businesses.

- 29 We welcome industries and sectors' efforts to promote sustainable development as they embrace inclusive growth and support the livelihoods of many women, in particular in those sectors where the proportion of women is increasing.
- 30 We advocate for public and private investments on "green infrastructure" and for women to be consulted on gender-inclusive spatial designs. Disaster recovery centers should also set up women-friendly spaces to ensure the safety and specific needs of women.

Integration of Gender Perspectives across APEC

- 31 We commend efforts by APEC sub-fora to integrate gender in their work, including ongoing collaborations with the PPWE (See Annex B). We call on all APEC sub-fora to continue integrating gender equality and women's empowerment in their work planning and annual reports.
- 32 We recognize the updated Guide on Gender Criteria and the APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard as useful tools to ensure mainstreaming of gender perspectives across APEC. Assessing projects using the Gender Criteria enables a conscious effort in engaging women in all aspects of APEC's work and in increasing women's participation in the region. The APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard is a tool to track, measure, and communicate progress in reducing barriers to women's economic participation across our five key priorities. We call on APEC economies to leverage the Dashboard as a tool to inform policymaking and capacity building across all APEC work streams, and to improve and expand data collection to strengthen the utility of the Dashboard.

Towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women

- 33 We, APEC ministers, heads of delegations, senior officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations and private sector leaders, affirm Women as Prime Movers for Inclusive Growth and commit to work towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women, and building a better world.

APEC Women and the Economy Fora 2016

- 34 We look forward to our next meeting in Peru for the APEC Women and the Economy Fora and other related activities in 2016.

Toward APEC Philippines 2015 Economic Leaders' Meeting in Manila

- 35 We agree to present this APEC Women and the Economy 2015 Fora Statement as our contribution to the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in November in Manila, the Philippines.

Annex A: Current PPWE Initiatives

Women's Entrepreneurship

- 1 The Women's Entrepreneurship in APEC (WE-APEC) initiative, which was launched in 2014, examined each economy's efforts across government, private sector, and business network services to promote and support women's entrepreneurship. The findings of the WE-APEC gap analysis under this initiative offered a detailed view of the landscape for women entrepreneurs in the APEC region. The economy assessments can be utilized to strengthen eco-systems that support women's entrepreneurship. The WE-APEC online platform, www.we-apec.com offers a dynamic directory of service providers for women-owned businesses across APEC and provides a way for governments, the private sector, business networks and entrepreneurs to connect to each other.
- 2 The survey on "Good Practices of Women's Entrepreneurship in Local Communities in the Process of Disaster Reconstruction" as well as the workshop held in March 2015 in Sendai, Japan, on the occasion of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction highlighted the important perspectives for women's economic empowerment. These include the need for technical skills and knowledge support; the provision of gender-sensitive services to meet individual needs; the importance of strategic partnership, access to finance and local ownership; fostering management skills including human resource management; and increasing profits, innovation and access to the market.

Women's Leadership

- 3 The "50 Leading Companies for Women in APEC" project aimed to demonstrate practices in improving women's leadership by showcasing efforts of about 50 companies in the APEC region to empower women in their workplaces. The project can inspire other companies to learn and enhance women's leadership and representation in their own respective workplaces.
- 4 The "Individual Action Plan (IAP) for the Enhancement of the Ratio of Women's Representation in Leadership" project was launched to promote women's participation in the economy at all levels, particularly on leadership, decision-making and management. The IAPs will serve as mechanisms for measurable and aspirational voluntary goals which economies could work toward by the end of 2020, with a view to assessing progress of ratio of women's representation in leadership.

Women and Innovation and Technology

- 5 The PPWE Multi-year Project "Innovation for Women and Economic Development: Facilitating Women's Livelihood Development and Resilience with ICTs" provides women entrepreneurs an opportunity to exchange views on policies and practices of using information and communications technology (ICT) tools and assist them in establishing and expanding their enterprises.
- 6 The Women's Business Smart Technology Seminar reaffirmed the potential and importance of women's active participation in the economy through smart technology and promoted the building of knowledge partnerships and formulating regional strategies on the use of smart technology.

Annex B: Partnerships with Other APEC Working Groups

- 1 The PPWE has partnered with other APEC working groups to incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment into their sector-specific public-private dialogues, ministerial meetings, and projects and programs to ensure that barriers to women's economic empowerment are addressed across sectors.

Human Resource Development Working Group (HRDWG)

- 2 The PPWE is collaborating with the HRDWG to implement training programs for developing the skills of women, fostering an enabling environment to create better quality jobs for women, and establishing capacity building centers to help women achieve competencies to meet the demands of industry, as well as enhance educational opportunities for women and girls.

HRDWG and Health Working Group (HWG)

- 3 Full participation of women in the economy is essential to achieve inclusive economic growth; however, women's ability to access economic opportunities is sometimes hindered by health concerns. Thus, the PPWE is collaborating with the HRDWG and HWG on the "Healthy Women, Healthy Economies" initiative. A Policy Toolkit was developed to address health-related barriers specific to women so they can join, remain and rise in the work force. The Policy Toolkit includes policy recommendations and practices on: workplace health and safety; health access and awareness; gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health; and work/life balance. The Policy Toolkit can serve as a guide to APEC member economies in implementing actions on a voluntary basis and choosing actions appropriate for their economy.

Transportation Working Group (TPTWG)

- 4 Women's inclusion in transportation, both as employees and users, is crucial to achieving full economic potential. In line with the directive of the Transportation Ministers, we will work with the Transportation Working Group (TPTWG) to develop and implement a framework for the collection of data and implementation of best practices that will enhance opportunities and measure progress for women in transportation. The Women in Transportation (WiT) Task Force will work with the PPWE to establish a "network of champions" from each economy to shape, coordinate, plan, and execute the proposed framework across its five pillars: education, recruitment, retention, leadership and safe use, and access to transportation systems.

Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG)

- 5 Recognizing that the Asia-Pacific is the most natural disaster-affected region, the PPWE collaborated with the EPWG to identify and address the needs and concerns of women and girls in emergency preparedness and post-disaster recovery and resilience.
- 6 The outcome of the PPWE project "Good Practices of Women Entrepreneurship in Local Communities in the Process of Local Reconstruction" has been shared with the EPWG as a valuable reference for achieving inclusive and sustainable recovery in the post-disaster phase, which can also contribute to the enhanced linkage between the two working groups.

Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group (SMEWG)

- 7 The case for increased participation of women-led SMEs in export and global markets is compelling from both a developmental and economic perspective. Recognizing that APEC economies can grow and create jobs by offering gender-responsive trade promotion services, the project "Promoting SME Development: Assisting Women-Owned SMEs Access the Global Markets" focused on strengthening trade promotion agencies to better serve women-led SMEs.

Economic Committee (EC)

- 8 The project "Capacity Building for the Reduction of Educational Gender Gaps through Structural Reforms" was launched to enhance education with equal opportunities for women in APEC

economies. With this purpose, the project focuses on improving the capacity of civil servants to adapt, design, implement and evaluate gender gap reduction policies. The project is directly related to the APEC New Strategy for Structural Reform (ANSSR), as well as the SME and Women Development pillar, which has driven the recent activities of the Economic Committee.