

REPORT OF THE POLICY PARTNERSHIP ON WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY 2 (PPWE 2) Emmeline L Verzosa

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Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning!

The Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy met twice this year to be able to discuss and finalize its strategic plan, provide updates on projects and individual action plans and craft the Women and the Economy Statement for endorsement to this High-Level Policy Dialogue. We thank Papua New Guinea for graciously hosting the first PPWE meeting in Port Moresby last May 3-5.

The PPWE Strategic Plan 2015-2018

The PPWE Strategic Plan 2015-2018, approved in principle in Port Moresby was officially adopted the other day in Manila.

The Strategic Plan envisions a 'Strong sustainable, balanced economic growth in the APEC region that is more inclusive and enabling for women to succeed and advance. The PPWE mission is to mainstream, elevate and integrate gender responsive policies and programs focused on women's economic empowerment into APEC activities to advance gender equality. It has three objectives: 1. Strengthen the integration of gender responsive policies and program across APEC fora; 2. Advance women's economic participation through the five priority pillars – women's access to capital and assets; access to markets; capacity and skills building and health; leadership, voice and agency; and innovation and technology; and 3. Strengthen the foundation and operating structures of the PPWE and the Women and the Economy Forum.

To achieve the **first objective**, all concept notes and projects are subjected to the **Guide on the Gender Criteria for APEC Proposals** which was updated in PPWE 1.

This is a tool to assess the gender-responsiveness or gender elements of project proposals being submitted to the APEC Secretariat. It provides a range of approaches to addressing gender issues, from basic to more complex, depending on the type of project. The APEC Secretariat has designated a Gender Focal Point who facilitates the assessment of project proposals.

The APEC Secretariat reported the following updates:

- Out of a total of 42 project proposals assessed by the APEC Secretariat for Project Session 1 this year, 21 satisfactorily addressed the gender criteria in their first submission.
- Proposals that did not satisfactorily address the gender criteria were returned with feedback and constructive suggestions about how the project could be improved and become gender responsive.
- Through this iterative process between the APEC Secretariat and the project overseers, all project proposals in Project Session 1 were ultimately assessed as satisfactorily addressing the gender criteria, although in most cases there was not a high level of ambition to go beyond the basic level.
- A draft Cross-cutting Issues Map prepared by the APEC Secretariat was shared which depicts the various APEC fora that are undertaking work on gender-related issues.

Cross-fora collaboration

The PPWE targetted to collaborate with and influence at least ten APEC fora by 2018. The Meeting reported that there are already nine (9) APEC cross-fora collaboration (in various degrees) with the following working groups:

1. Anti-Corruption Working Group – includes discussion on trafficking in persons, most of women are women and children
2. Emergency Preparedness Working Group – recognizes the impact of disasters on women, children, elderly and PWDs
3. Transportation Working Group – has produced a framework for benchmarking and tracking the participation and influence of women as transportation workers, entrepreneurs, leaders and travelers and will be holding a conference on Women in Transportation in October in Cebu
4. Health Working Group – together with the HRDWG and PPWE has launched the Healthy Women, Healthy Economy Tool Kit which provides a guide to eliminate health-related barriers specific to women so they can join, remain, and rise in the work force. It contains policy recommendations and practices on 5 areas: workplace health and safety; health access and awareness; gender-based violence; sexual and reproductive health; and work/life balance.
5. Human Resource Development Working Group – implements training programs for women to create better quality jobs and increase their competitiveness
6. Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group – has included a focus on Microenterprises majority of whom are women so they can grow and create jobs and have better access to markets through gender-responsive trade promotion services.
7. Telecommunications Working Group – with a couple of ICT related projects in PPWE, this cross-cuts with the work of the TWG
8. Economic Committee -- A project on 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 ANSSR, as well as the SME and Women Development pillar, which has driven the recent activities of the Economic Committee.
9. Energy Working Group – We have information that women's involvement in renewable sources of energy are being discussed.

The PPWE recognizes the efforts of all nine working groups to integrate gender in their projects and policy statements. We look forward to stronger collaborations to achieve concrete and sustainable results that will impact the lives of women in the Asia-Pacific.

PPWE also noted the gender-responsive provisions of the **Boracay Action Agenda to Globalize MSMEs**, particularly on strengthening women-led MSMEs through the use of sex-disaggregated data in measuring the economic and social impacts on MSMEs, and an understanding of divergent constraints faced by male and female-led MSMEs.

We note that increased women's participation in the MSME and energy sectors will be encouraged in the upcoming **22nd APEC Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting in September, and 12th APEC Energy Ministers Meeting in October.**

On Objective number 2, Updates on PPWE projects and IAPs

A number of economies reported on the status of the implementation of their Individual Action Plans (IAP) and projects aligned with the Strategic Plan.

- Japan received 14 Individual Action Plans for its project on the **Individual Action Plan (IAP) to increase women's leadership in the public and private sectors,**” and that those IAPs have already been uploaded at the APEC website. It also shared its compilation of best practices on **Women’s Entrepreneurship in Local Communities in the Process of Disaster Reconstruction** and its report on **Female Entrepreneurs and Support for Market Access**.
- The United States provided updates on the “**Women’s Entrepreneurship in APEC (WE-APEC) Initiative**” which identifies existing networks of women-owned businesses in the APEC economies. The platform was launched last night.
- The Chinese-Taipei reported on its multi-year project called “**Innovation for Women and Economic Development – Facilitating Women’s Livelihood Development and Resilience with ICTs,**” which illustrates how women use ICT for business in the digital area.
- Papua New Guinea presented its project proposal entitled “**Women’s Access to Financial Services Data in the APEC Region.**” which aims to collect data on women’s access to financial services and identify barriers and recommendations. The Philippines, Peru, United States of America, and Indonesia have agreed to co-sponsor the project.
- Canada also presented its project proposal on “**Dedicated MSME Sub-fund and Policy Support Facility,**” which aims to address the lack of a dedicated funding facility for MSME-related projects within APEC.

The delegations from Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Russia, and Singapore also reported on their initiatives to advance women’s economic empowerment.

AUSTRALIA

The delegation from Australia shared updates on the following:

- Women’s increased financial literacy
- Raising women’s representation in the Board room
- Reducing gender participation gap
- Providing affordable childcare system, a tax system for working women and families, and economic security and retirement benefits for women
- Encouraging female force participation in non-traditional fields
- Addressing discrimination related to pregnancy
- Availability of a website catering to working parents

INDONESIA

The delegation from Indonesia provided updates on the following:

- Gender mainstreaming in planning, budgeting, etc.
- Capacitating women in SMEs through training and financing
- Establishment of the Academy of Entrepreneurship for capacity and skills building on marketing, product packaging, financial literacy, business mentoring, and others
- Statistics on women in decision-making positions

PHILIPPINES

The Philippine delegation reported that the **GREAT Women Project (GWP)** has now become its own brand and platform. With funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, a second phase of the GWP will run from 2015 to 2021, which will continue to strengthen convergence between economic agencies and assist 12,000 women Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) to be more competitive and sustainable. With regard to the Women and the Economy Dashboard, the Philippines committed to take part in SME trainings and incubation.

RUSSIA

The delegation from Russia shared statistics on loans and grants given to women and women entrepreneurs. Non-government organizations are also active in skills and capacity building of women.

SINGAPORE

The delegation from Singapore focuses its efforts on providing an enabling environment and investing and maximizing the potential of its people regardless of gender, race, or creed. Singapore's statistics of women participation in the civil service and Supreme Court were also reported as well as its need to increase the number of women in the Board rooms and private sectors. It also shared that it has already set up 12 Small and Medium Enterprises centers to provide assistance to capital and markets, as well as other in other areas of concern.

The APEC WE-Dashboard

Continuing the discussion on integrating a gender perspective across APEC and being able to track progress, Mr. Carlos Kuriyama of the Policy Support Unit (PSU) reported that the APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard has been finalized and will soon be available online.

The APEC WE Dashboard is an initiative that seeks to provide a snapshot of the status of women in APEC, by looking at a set of indicators to measure progress of women's participation in economic-related activities and women's inclusion in several aspects of life. The Dashboard is has almost 80 indicators, classified along the five PPWE pillars.

In the recently conducted WE-Dashboard Workshop on September 15, participating economies were able to develop a short list of indicators on health and safety, financial services, literacy, outreach and learning, competitive access for entrepreneurs, among others. The active participation of member economies and the national data they have provided made the Dashboard a robust tool for tracking, measuring, and communicating progress in reducing barriers to women's economic participation. Economies were encouraged to implement elements of the Dashboard.

We have provided reports on our Annual Workplans to the SCE as our way of meeting Objective 3 on strengthening PPWE's foundation and operating structure.

APEC Women and the Economy 2015 Fora Statement

The PPWE worked on the APEC Women and the Economy Fora Statement which contains concrete and actionable recommendations categorized along the three subthemes of the APEC WE 2015 Fora: Women and Inclusive Business, Women in the International Markets and Global Value Chains, and Women and Sustainable Development and we endorse this Statement for adoption of this Hi-level body.

Closing statement

As the PPWE Chair, I acknowledge and thank all the Economies for their hard work during the Meeting, especially on the finalization of the Strategic Plan 2015-2018 and Statement. I end this with a call not only to women, but also to men, to continue to be actively engaged to achieve gender equality, women's economic empowerment and the realization of inclusive economies to build a better world.

Thank you!