

Report: Capacity Building Workshop on Women and Trade

APEC Committee for Trade and Investment (CTI) – First Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM1)

Santiago, Chile – March 5th 2019

Summary

On March 5th 2019, Canada, New Zealand and Chile hosted a half-day *Capacity Building Workshop on Women and Trade* (the 'Workshop') on the margins of the first Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM1) in Santiago, Chile. The objective of this Workshop was to share policies and good practices that economies could consider in order to help facilitate the increased participation of women in trade and to help women reach their full economic potential in the global economy. More than 50 participants from 14 member economies participated in this workshop and heard presentations on what some economies have done to facilitate the participation of women in global trade. Speakers from Canada, New Zealand, Chile and the WTO shared their experiences and knowledge through their unique and complementary talks which were well received and which elicited an active and fruitful discussion following the Workshop presentations.

Workshop Participants

The Workshop was moderated by **Krasna Bobenrieth**, Director of Content for APEC Chile 2019, and opening remarks were provided by Chile's Undersecretary for Women and Gender Equality, **Carolina Cuevas**.

The five invited guest speakers included:

- **André-Francois Giroux**, Director of the Trade Agreements Secretariat at Global Affairs Canada: *Integrating women in international trade: The Canadian perspective.*
- **Marie-France Paquet**, Chief Economist of Global Affairs Canada: *Women in the Economy and Gender Responsive Trade Policy.*
- **Clare Kelly**, Divisional Manager of the Trade Negotiations Division of New Zealand's Foreign Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade: *Emerging Trade and Gender Policy in New Zealand.*
- **Angélica Romero**, Multilateral Director at the General Directorate of International Economic Relations, Chile: *Chile's experience with FTA's Gender Chapters.*
- **Anoush der Boghossian**, WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point, Economic Affairs Officer, Aid for Trade Unit - Development Division, WTO: *How Trade Rules Impact Women's Empowerment – Trends in WTO Members Trade Policy* (this talk was given via video conference).



Speakers shared information on innovative policies and approaches, including those referenced in some existing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), in order to identify and provide potential solutions to barriers that prevent women's participation in international trade and to enhance their access to global markets.



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Over the years, international trade has contributed to the lifting of millions of people out of poverty, including many women. To date, however, domestic trade policies have only given limited consideration to the unique challenges and opportunities that are associated with women and trade. There is an increasingly widespread recognition that in order to help narrow the current gender gaps in the economy and to facilitate inclusive economic growth, governments must work to reduce barriers to women's economic participation to empower women entrepreneurs. A great deal of research has been done looking at the benefits of having women actively participate in the economy with some researchers estimating that the economic cost of limiting women's participation in the workforce across the Asia-Pacific region is as much as US\$89 billion each year¹. According to research conducted by the Asian Development Bank, the Asia-Pacific region could gain as much as 70 percent in per capita income within roughly two generations by eliminating gender disparities in employment, including in the area of entrepreneurship².

In recent years, APEC Leaders and Ministers have stressed the importance of supporting the capacity building and enhancement of women's skills, innovation, entrepreneurship, access to capital and markets, and of their ability to participate in business and trade activities. Harnessing the full potential of women's contributions to the Asia-Pacific economy presents key opportunities for all APEC economies, regardless of their degree of development.

During this half-day Workshop, speakers drew on their collective experience as trade policy experts to share with the participants how domestic and trade policies have contributed to more meaningful economic, social, and environmental development, and how governments can work to ensure that all segments of society can take advantage of and benefit from the opportunities that flow from more inclusive trade and investment.

Acknowledging that gender-related barriers to trade exist, and that traditional ways of promoting trade liberalization affects men and women in different ways, the speakers suggested that domestic policies that are targeted toward gender equality and inclusive growth through a whole-of-government approach, can make real progress toward helping women to participate more fully in global trade. Incorporating a gender perspective into economic and trade policy development was suggested as a way to ensure that economies are able to undertake activities and capacity building whereby the economic benefits may be shared more broadly across all members of society.

The Workshop included (but was not limited to) the following broad topics:

- Canada's gender responsive trade policy;
- Role of women in the Canadian economy'
- Women-owned businesses and their role in trade;
- Impact of trade agreements on gender;

¹ Progress of World's Women: Access to Justice, 2011-12, UN Women

² <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/459551/women-entrepreneurship-lessons-asia-pacific.pdf>

- How trade rules impact women’s empowerment;
- Recent trends in WTO members’ trade policy;
- Chile’s experience with free trade agreements and gender chapters’
- The process under way in New Zealand to develop a trade and gender policy, including through efforts to promote the inclusion of gender issues in trade agreements and the Inclusive Trade Action Group;
- The current global trading environment and implications for addressing gender issues;
- How to best engage with stakeholders and sensitize them to gender issues;
- Lessons learned and challenges overcome.

For a more comprehensive review of the material covered during the Workshop, please review the individual presentations which can be found on the [APEC Meeting Document Database](#).

Gender Breakdown of Workshop Participants

Participant	Female	Male
Moderator	1	0
Opening Remarks	1	0
Speakers	4	1
Attendees	29 (58%)	21 (42%)

The Workshop was attended by approximately 50 APEC delegates representing 14 member economies.

Conclusions

This workshop focused on a mix of policy and practical elements aimed at improving the capacity of APEC member economies to design and implement domestic policies to advance women’s participation in trade in support of inclusive economic growth. Speakers shared information on how statistical data and other metrics can be used to measure the participation of women in the economy, their ownership of businesses and their access to capital, knowledge, skills and supply chains – information that is critical to evaluating the success of any newly instituted public policies.

The Workshop was designed to enhance knowledge and to provide the information necessary for government officials to build their capacity to be able to implement programs and policies that enhance women’s economic empowerment and participation in international trade. This Workshop also served as an opportunity to contribute to discussions by other APEC fora in support of Chile’s APEC 2019 priority of “Women, SMEs and Inclusive Growth”, and helped to lay the groundwork for subsequent discussions that are expected to be held in SOM2 and subsequent meetings.

This Workshop also supported the 2010 APEC Leaders' Growth Strategy and the goal to promote balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth; the 2014 Accord on Innovation, Development, Economic Reform and Growth; Chile's APEC host priority of "Women, SMEs and Inclusive Growth"; and the implementation of the APEC Agenda on Advancing Economic, Financial and Social Inclusion. It also supported the commitments by APEC Economic Leaders and Ministers to advance women's economic empowerment, including specifically the 2018 Chair's Era Kone Statement which reiterated APEC's commitment to inclusive growth which emphasized the importance of the economic empowerment of women and girls.

Canada was very pleased to have been able to convene this Capacity Building Workshop on Women and Trade along with our co-sponsors New Zealand and Chile for whom we are very grateful their support and assistance. By identifying and addressing issues that prevent the participation of women in trade, it is hoped that economies can build their capacity to implement new policies that will contribute to the economic growth throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

It is hoped that the information that was presented will be useful in spurring discussions as to how to build capacity in member economies to facilitate the participation of women in the economy. By understanding how some economies have tried to address these issues, it is hoped that others may be able to incorporate effective ways to manage some of the ideas and issues raised when realizing their own economic development.

As one speaker who quoted Christine Lagarde, Managing Director for the International Monetary Fund, suggested: *"Equal pay and better economic opportunities for women boost economic growth—creating a bigger pie for everyone to share, women and men alike. Better opportunities for women also promote diversity and reduce economic inequality around the world ... an economic no-brainer."*³

While this Workshop provided an opportunity to advance discussions on women and trade and to contribute to Chile's Women and Inclusive Growth Roadmap – a key deliverable for their APEC 2019 host year and a main theme of their 'Women, SMEs and Inclusive Growth' pillar, it is also hoped that the policy discussions that took place at this Workshop will help to enhance the capacity of member economies to enact domestic policies in support of women's economic participation in international trade and to provide for them greater access to global markets.

This report and all presentation documents of the workshop will be uploaded to [APEC Meeting Document Database](#) on the APEC website.

³ The International Monetary Fund, November 14, 2016