



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2016/HLPD-WE/003

Agenda Item: 3

Introductory Remarks by APEC Secretariat

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: APEC Secretariat



**High Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the
Economy
Lima, Peru
30 June 2016**

**High Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy
Lima, 30 June 2016**

Introductory Remarks

Ms Irene Sim
Chief of Staff, APEC Secretariat

Madam Chair of the 2016 High Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy, Minister Honourable Marcela Huaita

Excellencies Ministers and Heads of Delegation

APEC 2016 SOM Chair, Ambassador Luis Quesada,

Honorable Fumiko Hayashi, Mayor of Yokohama City

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. The APEC Secretariat congratulates and thanks Peru for successfully hosting the the range of **APEC Women and the Economy 2016 fora**, that culminate in today's **APEC High Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy**. Your genuine, generous and thoughtful welcome is indeed heart-warming and memorable.
2. This year, with Peru as Chair, APEC as a whole is pursuing "**Quality Growth and Human Development**". In line with that overarching theme, the 2016 APEC Women and Economy Forum has come together to explore how to **break barriers for the economic integration of women in the global market**.
3. During the last few days, I have enjoyed hearing analysis, discussions, and success stories about a) care systems that allow economic inclusion of women; b) the cost of gender-based violence; c) mechanisms to internationalise micro, small, and medium enterprises led by women; d) financial literacy for capital access; and e) digital literacy for economic integration.
4. Once again, I have felt rejuvenated and inspired by the energy, optimism, courage, perseverance and leadership - combined with deep knowledge, experience, wisdom and hard-nosed determination to make things better.
5. I thank all participants for their inspiration. A line that particularly resonated with me was this – "Caring is the work that makes other work possible". Yet that work — like much of what is seen as "women's work" — is more often than not, undervalued.

6. Discussions also reinforced for me that gender-based violence is an intractable and insidious burden on us all – the personal and economic cost has inter-generational dimensions - and regardless of our level of economic development, none of our economies have yet overcome this.
7. I look forward to Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) taking up the challenge of developing concrete policy action in response to these - and the range of other - pressing issues.
8. The PPWE was established in 2011 at the second APEC Senior Officials' Meeting held in Montana, United States. Since then, APEC Leaders have recognized the crucial role of women in the development and prosperity of the Asia Pacific - and have emphasised the importance of women's economic empowerment - in their annual APEC leaders' Declaration.
9. In Arequipa just last month, the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade, also recognized the role of women in the economic prosperity of the region and reaffirmed their commitment to take concrete policies to further enhance women's economic empowerment.
10. Speaking of concrete actions, I'd like to commend the progress made by individual economies to deliver on the 5 priority pillars of the PPWE Strategic Plan 2015-2018. Thank you for your updates on the progress on your individual action plans, including your on projects that build capacity through sharing best practices. Your progress is impressive and encouraging to us all.
11. Recognising the cross-cutting nature of gender issues -- and recognising that PPWE is part of the broader ecosystem of APEC -- a key feature of the Strategic Plan is about mainstreaming the women agenda, including by working in collaboration with other APEC fora. I applaud cross-fora-collaborations between PPWE and the Economic Committee, the SME Working Group, Health Working Group, Transportation Working Group, Human Resources Development Working Group – and note with pleasure, upcoming collaboration with the Tourism Working Group. Still, there are around 85 fora and sub-fora across APEC suggesting that there remains much scope for further collaboration.
12. The APEC Secretariat will continue to support efforts by PPWE to promote cross-fora collaboration to advance gender integration and gender equality. For example, the Secretariat will continue to update the map on gender cross-cutting issues to identify the various cross-fora collaborations – and by doing so, highlight further collaboration prospects. Also, the Secretariat's Program Directors will continue to integrate gender issues into their presentations to the various APEC fora they are supporting.

13. In terms of projects, I am pleased to announce that three PPWE projects have received in-principle approval for funding at APEC project funding session 1 of 2016. PPWE projects have so far largely been self-funded by economies. This is the first time that APEC funding has been allocated to more than one PPWE project in a single project funding session. With this and the recent establishment of two APEC Support Funds that explicitly require or give preference to projects that support APEC gender objectives, the APEC Secretariat is cautiously optimistic that this signals the start of a trend towards an increasing number of PPWE projects being funded by APEC. This, of course, represents progress on mainstreaming gender across APEC.
14. Also pointing to progress on the mainstreaming agenda, I draw your attention to the report of the APEC Secretariat that for APEC project funding Session 2 of 2015, 76 percent of all projects proposals for the session satisfactorily addressed the gender criteria in their first submission. This is an improvement from 50 percent in the previous project session.
15. In addition, during the same project session, eight of the approved projects were particularly ambitious in their integration of gender into project activities. Better still, these projects are to be conducted under several different APEC fora including the Committee on Trade and Investment; Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance; Emergency Preparedness Working Group; Oceans and Fisheries Working Group; Telecommunications Working Group; Tourism Working Group and Transportation Working Group. This is yet another sign of progress on gender mainstreaming.
16. All this progress is encouraging and certainly worthy of celebration. I know this success will provide continued impetus for much more that PPWE can achieve

Conclusion

17. In closing, I look forward to yet another engaging Dialogue today as we take on the challenge and continue the leadership and positive energy that has gathered thus far – to **break barriers to economic integration of women in the global market.**
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