



**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
AFRICAN TRADE POLICY CENTRE**

**Inception Workshop on
Mainstreaming Gender into Trade Policy**

Concept Note

21- 22 April 2009

I. Objective

An inception workshop on “Mainstreaming Gender into Trade Policy” will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 21 to 22 April 2009. The main objective of the workshop is to strengthen the capacity of African countries and African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to formulate more gender responsive trade policies. By increasing the capacities of African countries to mainstream gender analysis into trade policy, they will be in a better position to exploit the potential opportunities for both African men and women within the international trading system, and derive the benefits from unlocking the potential derived particularly from women as both producers and cross border traders in Africa. They will also be more successful in ensuring coherence between trade policy and the empowerment of African women, part of the national development policies of all African countries.

II. Background

The African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) as part of the UN Economic Commission for Africa in collaboration with other institutions and networks, decided to organize an inception workshop to have the voice of women better heard in order to assist African trade policy makers to take women’s contributions and needs more into consideration in future trade policy formulation and practices since gender is a cross cutting issue in ATPC phase II. The workshop will bring together leaders in gender networks addressing trade issues, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) representatives in gender and trade, civil society advocates, businesswomen and selected African trade policymakers. Together they will examine the important role that women currently contribute to African trade patterns and explore ways in which the promotion of women as legitimate partners in trade can be enhanced and integral to the success of future African growth in trade. It will identify the current factors limiting women’s ability to take more advantage of new trade policies being put in place across Africa through regional economic integration measures. It will brainstorm how to have their voices heard and their needs better addressed in the formulation of future trade policies to enable them to take more advantage of opportunities being created in the Multilateral Trading System (MTS). More specifically, the workshop will provide a forum for African gender advocates, researchers, and academics to make recommendations directly to African trade policy makers about the better utilization of gender issues and analysis in trade by:

- Examining important role that African women traders and producers currently play and the potential growth that could be reaped from more effective integration of gender into trade policies and regional economic integration strategies across Africa;

- Assessing to what extent current trade practices at global and regional levels impact upon women, both positively and negatively and how these could be amended in future trade policies;
- Examining case studies and experiences of the important role women play in cross border trade in Africa, drawing on the current limitations they face and brainstorming ways to enact more gender sensitive responses from Trade policy/practitioners.
- Drawing lessons from the experiences of selected African regions to assess how gender mainstreaming in future trade policies and practices could be effectively addressed to unlock the potential of African women traders to Pan-African growth and yield concrete benefits to all African countries; and
- Discussing future strategies on how enhanced coordination could be achieved among policy makers and gender advocates in trade for making businesswomen, civil society advocates, academia and gender and trade networks more effective stakeholders and contribute a more active role in the trade policymaking process in Africa.

III. Participation

The proposed workshop is to be organized by the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC). The ACGSD; Regional Economic Communities (RECS), as well as women traders/businesswomen, academic and civil society advocates and networks involved in gender and trade issues in Africa are expected to participate in various capacities.

IV. Format of the Workshop

The workshop will have five sessions based on the following sub-themes: The case for mainstreaming gender in trade; Gendered impacts of trade; the Female Face of Africa's trade; Current African experiences with mainstreaming gender in trade; and Recommendations for The Way forward.

*** The Case for Mainstreaming Gender in Trade in Africa: Why Women, Why Trade? –An Overview of the Issues**

This sub theme will focus on the key arguments or case for mainstreaming gender in trade policies in Africa. It will concentrate on three key aspects: Women as the basis for trade in rural and urban markets throughout Africa as well as in cross border trade. One reason for Africa's poor economic performance is the neglect given to the potential of Africa's current women traders to scale up from informal activities and become legitimate partners as trade formalizes in Africa through a range of regional economic integration strategies. Where are women's voices in these new trade paradigms being developed?. Recent studies showing that Africa may not derive significant gains from the trading system due in part to supply- side constraints. Women trading in the informal sector form a huge part of these supply- side constraints. But with better access to credit, capital, inputs, and know- how, they could be much more active contributors to formal trade patterns and future growth in trade in Africa.

□ **Suggested Presentation**

- On Overview of the issues of gender and trade for Africa

*** Concepts and Approaches to Gender Mainstreaming in Trade: Its “gendered” impacts on women producers and workers through current Trade Agreements**

Under this sub theme the gendered impacts of trade agreements currently being negotiated or completed will be examined. Recent and emerging studies have challenged the positive impacts of these trade agreements on African women particularly in the dominant role they play as agricultural producers, (70% of domestic food production; 40% of cash crops for export markets, and the bulk of agro- processing). Female dominated industries in garment making and footwear's are the first to be downsized in trade liberalization tariff reduction impacts. Similar vulnerability can be traced in TRIPS, NAMA and other agreements. It has been argued that trade liberalization has winners and losers. This session looks at how can women be made winners, not losers after trade liberalization.

Suggested presentations

- The Multilateral Trading System and WTO Agreements
- EPAs and their impacts on African Women
- Regional Trade Agreements: Lessons Learned from RECs (and possibly SROs)

*** Realities on- the-Ground: The Female Face of Intra- African Trade: Gender in Cross Border Trade**

This sub theme will focus on case studies of the experiences of cross border trade patterns in selected African countries. The objective here is to draw lessons for Africa from the reality-on-the-ground that women currently play in forming the backbone of intra African Trade and how their participation should be encouraged on future trade strategies, not ignored. The voices of women in trade need to be better heard around the negotiating tables preparing trade policy responses.

□ Suggested Presentation

- Case Study: Gender in Cross Border Trade

*** Regional Experiences from the RECS**

The Regional Economic Communities are actively engaged in regional economic integration plans. This ranges from support to infrastructure investments to policy enactments that will free up the regulatory systems for enhanced intra-African trade. Benefits to infrastructure will supply trade corridors providing new transport and communications systems, and new trade mechanisms from trade unions, to free trade areas to customs unions will liberalize the current business and trade regulatory systems that act as barriers to freer trade. But who looks at the role that women currently play and how they may benefit more from these enhanced regional economic integration plans? Women currently carry on their heads more than two thirds of the overall loads currently transported by lorries, planes and boats. Will they be left behind in these new trade mechanisms or will their roles be made more integrated? Regional experiences will examine how women can be made more integral to these Regional Economic Integration plans.

Suggested Presentations

- Experiences from EAC
- Experiences from ECOWAS
- Experiences from the SADC region

*** Recommendations to African Policy-Makers for The Way Forward**

This sub theme will focus on the recommendations of the workshop and suggestions for future research and papers that need to be developed. In particular,

based on the outcomes of the presentations in the previous sections, an attempt will be made to highlight policies and actions that are needed for the gender mainstreaming in trade efforts in order to increase the likelihood of success. Models of successful integration of women's needs into new trade paradigms will be examined. Lessons learned for other parts of Africa will lead to set of recommendations that can be further fleshed out through future studies and suggested activities that need to be taken and identify the most appropriate ways of their enactment.

□ **Suggested Presentation**

- A Model for Policy makers

V. Expected Outcome of the Workshop

At the end of the workshop ATPC intends to publish a report and recommendations of the workshop which will be sent to the RECs and also made available on our website for others to use. This document will form the basis for advisory services to African countries by ATPC. This is also expected to lead to:

- Better awareness and understanding by African trade policy makers of the relationship and linkages between gender, trade, growth and poverty reduction;
- Enhanced national and regional capacities to integrate gender into trade policies in development growth and poverty reduction efforts;
- Increased understanding by African trade policy makers on the benefits of enhancing gender responsive strategies into trade policies and practices.

VI. Language

The workshop will be conducted in English and French.

VII. Date & Venue

The workshop will be held from 21 to 22 April 2009 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa.

VIII. Contact Details

Requests for information regarding this workshop should be addressed to:

Ms. Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi, Regional Advisor, Tel: +251-11- 5445326, Email: aelbeshbishi@uneca.org and Mr. Robert Lisinge, Programme Management Officer, Tel: +251-11-5443443, Fax: +251-11-5513038, Email: tlisinge@uneca.org