



CONCEPT NOTE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD) 2024 - "Inspire Inclusion: Accelerating Progress for Women in Africa through Education, Technology, and Business,"

This webinar concept note is jointly prepared by Commonwealth Business Women- Africa (CBW-Africa) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Digital Centre of Excellence, with the aim of advancing the 2024 IWD theme among its members, networks and the broader women population of Africa.

I. Introduction

The IWD celebration on March 8th aligns with principles, focusing on honoring women's remarkable achievements across various sectors—STEAM, social, economic, cultural, and political. The central theme for 2024, "Invest in Women: Accelerate progress," is further amplified by the campaign theme, "Inspire Inclusion," aiming to foster a profound sense of belonging and empowerment.

This year's continental engagement theme emphasizes education and capacity development for building a resilient population. Aligned with the 37th African Union theme, "Educate an African fit for the 21st Century," advocating for resilient education systems and increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning. The Africa Business Forum further supports this cause by promoting "Boosting Africa's transformation through education, science, technology, and innovation." In line with these objectives, the ECA Digital Centre of Excellence actively works towards inclusive and sustainable development through technical assistance, capacity building, and leveraging cutting-edge technologies and innovation. CBW-Africa, emphasizing women's empowerment in Africa through training, mentorship programs, networking, and educational workshops, joins ECA in the organization of a webinar to highlight and recognize women contributing to Africa's transformation.

Under the theme "Inspire Inclusion: Accelerating Progress for Women in Africa through Education, Technology, and Business," this engaging event will feature keynote speakers, panel discussions, and initiative highlights, focusing on empowering women in STEAM, business, and innovation.

II. Objective

The primary objective is to inspire inclusion by taking a holistic approach in areas such as STEAM education and business upskilling initiatives encompassing inclusive efforts and innovative solutions through technology and finance.

The specific objective is to equip women and inspire inclusion in the following areas:

1. To empower women through inclusion and diversity so that they realize their full



potential and explore limitations in areas such as technology, finance and business capabilities. This involves removing gender biases and socio-economic barriers to ensure equal access to business opportunities, information, and markets.

2. To raise awareness about the challenges women face e.g. inequality in pay, representation in leadership, and gender based violence. This aims to address these issues and remove barriers hindering women's growth in higher business levels.
3. To promote gender equality by actively promoting the rights of women at decision-making tables. Inspire and facilitate women's representation in key decision-making processes to ensure their effective participation and influence.
4. To support programs and initiatives aimed at supporting and nurturing women leaders in both public and private sectors. By providing mentorship, training, and opportunities, empower women to become role models, encouraging younger generations to believe in and pursue their dreams.
5. To close the global gap among individual women and communities, ensuring that every child in Africa has an equal playing field with those in developed countries. This involves addressing disparities in access to education, technology, and economic opportunities.
6. To create impact measures and initiatives that result in tangible and positive change for women and girls across all socio-economic levels. This involves addressing systemic issues, promoting inclusivity, and fostering an environment that supports the holistic development of women and girls.

III. The Program

A comprehensive webinar with keynote speakers will address women with a tailored agenda to meet the inclusion theme. Inspiring inclusion for women and girls involves fostering an enabling environment where they feel valued, respected, and empowered to participate fully. There is a need to understand what inclusion means to diverse sets of women in different countries and communities. Possible areas of inclusion are but not limited to - **access to education, digital skills & business acceleration training, sharing experiences for mentorship and apprenticeship and top level representation.**

- **Target Audience**

The target audience includes women in academia, business, entrepreneurship, STEAM, professionals, students, female leaders, and advocates for gender diversity and inclusion in education, technology, and finance.

- **Webinar Format**

- a) Opening session
- b) Initiative highlights



- c) Panel discussion
- d) Q&A session
- e) Key takeaways and closing

- **Webinar detail:**

Date: March 8 2024

Time: 14h30 – 15h30 EAT

Registration link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dtTYTrW0S4mwcOMho2-5-Q

- **Discussion Areas**

- a. **Technical Education:** Advocate for technical skills educational programs emphasizing inclusion from a young age by ensuring equal access. By integrating technical skills education into early learning environments, we pave the way for a more diverse and inclusive future workforce. These educational programs should not only impart technical skills but also instill values of equality and diversity, preparing young minds for a globalized and interconnected world.
- b. **Leverage on Technology:** Promote training and inclusion in emerging technology, capacity building programs, digital trade, e-learning platforms, and innovative solutions in various sectors.
- c. **Business, Role Models and Mentorship:** Create ongoing mentorship programs with successful women serving as role models, sharing experiences and providing guidance.
- d. **Community Engagement/Open day** - Organize community events celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion, including innovation fairs, creative festivals, and tournaments etc.
- e. **Panel Discussions and Talks:** Organize panel discussions with diverse voices, including women from different backgrounds and sectors, to share their experiences and insights on the importance of inclusion. Workplace diversity, business women together.
- f. **Policy representation** – Advocate for policies and laws that eliminate barriers and promote equal access, inclusion and address the unique needs of children and women. Engage in strategic partnerships to amplify the advocacy for policy change and affirmative action. Collaborating with key stakeholders, including governmental bodies, non-profit organizations, and industry leaders, can significantly enhance the impact of policy representation efforts.



V. Sustainability

- a. Establish post webinar deliverables.
- b. Create support strategies e.g. Funding for existing training and awareness for more women to access knowledge at all levels.
- c. Continuously assess impact through success stories and empowerment testimonials and inclusion in education, technology, finance access etc.
- d. Capture feedback to understand trends and areas of collaboration with strategic partners for growth and impact



Webinar Agenda

| Time | Agenda Item |
|---------|---|
| 2:30 pm | Welcome and Introduction of Webinar, Objectives and Expectations (5 min) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brief overview of the International Women's Day (IWD) theme for 2024: "Invest in Women: Accelerate progress" and the campaign theme, "Inspire Inclusion" ● Webinar Theme: "Inspire Inclusion: Accelerating Progress for Women in Africa through Education, Technology, and Business," <p>Moderator - Mrs. Belinda Blick, Country Director CBW-Africa, Uganda Chapter</p> |
| 2:35 pm | Opening Remarks (6 min) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keynote speaker addressing the significance of women's empowerment and inclusion in the context of Africa's transformation through education, technology and business. <p>Speakers Mrs. Dobrina Stoyanova Poirier, Economics Affairs Officer, ECA- Digital Centre of Excellence Mrs. Ngozi Oyewole, President, Commonwealth Business Women Africa</p> |
| 2:41 pm | Video Highlights of Initiatives ECA - Connected African Girls Coding Camp & Tech Africa Women/ CBW-Africa (6 min) |
| 2:47 pm | Panel Introduction and Discussion Brief introduction of panelists representing diverse backgrounds in academia, business, innovation, and finance (25 min) |
| | <p>Discussion Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Women's Inclusion and Diversity in Education, Technology, and Business <p><i>Discussion on the overall experience and challenges of women in these sectors and strategies they adopt to overcome challenges including breaking gender stereotypes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Innovative Approaches and Emerging Trends <p>Explore innovative approaches fostering inclusion in education and business, especially in STEAM and Finance fields. Dive into emerging trends, discussing creative practices leveraging technology and creativity, including the role of women in shaping the technological future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Celebrating Women-Led Businesses/Role Models <p>Explore unique strategies emphasizing the importance of diversity in entrepreneurship, the achievements and social impact.</p> |



- **Real-Time Solutions Tailored for Women**

Discuss practical insights and personal stories, providing actionable takeaways for women in education, technology, finance and business.

Panelists:

- ***Dr. Hilda Mwakatumbula, Digital Development Expert & Senior Researcher- ECA***
- ***Ms. Lidya Berhanu, Environmental Engineering Student at AAU***
- ***Elizabeth Mleli – Executive Secretary, CBW- Africa – Tanzania***
- ***Pauline Warui - Chairperson, CBW- Africa - Kenya.***
- ***Fatou Diarra - Managing Director of the company PAYCARD SA.***

3: 12 pm

Q&A Session

Audience engaging poll

(10 min)

3:22 pm

Closing - Takeaways by Moderator

Closing Remark

Mrs Nana Wanaju, Vice President of Commonwealth Business Women – Africa



Speakers Profile



Mrs. Dobrina Poirier, Economics Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) - Digital Centre of Excellence, Technology and Innovation Section. Prior to ECA, Dobrina was a Program Manager for Africa at the Center for International Private Enterprise, where she managed a portfolio of grants for private sector beneficiaries in Nigeria and Ethiopia. Prior to joining CIPE, Dobrina worked for the World Bank's Chief Economist Office and Governance Global Practice on issues spanning economic policy, economic governance, private sector development, and trade. Dobrina holds an MPA in Economic Policy Management from Columbia University and is a research fellow in E-governance at Maastricht University.



Mrs Ngozi Oyewole, President, Commonwealth Business Women Africa, is a highly accomplished entrepreneur and leader with over 20 years of experience in business management and strategic planning. She is the founder of Noxie Limited, specializing in furniture production and personal protective equipment, she has a background in Business Administration and is a certified Interior Designer. An alumna of SAID Business School and University of Oxford, UK. She is a passionate advocate for women's inclusion in business and holds the position of President at Commonwealth Business Women Africa (CBW-Africa). Her global recognitions stem from her work in women's leadership, business sustainability, and energy transition. Her achievements encapsulates various strata of human endeavour and notable mention will be made of a few of them

- 1) The Board Chair/President and Founder of Strategic Women and Youth Institute (SWYI)
- 2) Council Member of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN)
- 3) Current Chairperson of the Wood & Wood Products/Furniture Sectoral Group of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN)
- 4) The former Vice Chairperson of Commonwealth Business Women Network (CBWN), Nigeria
- 5) A 2019 award recipient of an Exceptional Leader of Excellence from the Women Economic Forum (WEF) and All Ladies League.
- 6) One of the 32 Women Amplifying the Voices of African Leadership -2022
- 7) Nominated in 2015 by Forbes Magazine as one of the leading entrepreneurs in Africa Championing Business Sustainability and Women Inclusion
- 8) Business Woman of the year Nigeria from Women in Management, Top 50 Global Awards, Sri Lanka – 2022
- 9) A Vital Voices Fellow

Beyond her professional pursuits, she is dedicated to philanthropy, supports widows, empowers



young women, and is involved in initiatives for the less privileged.



Dr. Hilda Jacob Mwakatumbula, a Digital Transformation expert, with over a decade of experience in Digital Economy & Policy. She previously serves as a Digital Transformation consultant, at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), she supported countries in implementing the AU Digital Transformation Strategy 2020-2030, focusing on governance of emerging technologies. Additionally, she contributed as a Digital Development Consultant to the World Bank for the Digital Tanzania Project. Throughout her career, she has prioritized aiding developing nations in leveraging digital technologies to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Ms. Lidya Berhanu, Environmental Engineering Student at Addis Ababa University. I'm a 4th year environmental engineering student at Addis Ababa science and Technology University majoring on climate finance and E-waste, also a member of generation connect, ITU youth envoy program that ensures youth in Tech and infrastructure policy making.



Belinda Blick, Country Director CBW-Uganda Chapter, Health Systems|Supply Chain Expert with more than 15 Years in Global and Development Health, Advocate for Women and Youth Empowerment , MBA & BA Social Sciences. Belinda Blick is a Country Director for the CBW-Uganda Chapter, with over 15 years of experience in global and development health as a Health Systems and Supply Chain Expert. She is passionate and committed to advocating for the future of women, youth, and communities, working tirelessly to empower and uplift these groups. Belinda's dedication to her work has made her a respected figure in the field, and she continues to be a driving force for positive change in her community.



Elizabeth Mleli: Executive Secretary, Commonwealth Business Women



Africa – Tanzania, Championing Inclusive Leadership and optimal social impact, is a dynamic leader at the forefront of Commonwealth Business Women Africa - Tanzania, driving inclusive leadership and empowerment initiatives across the region.

Her strong commitment to quality education and social entrepreneurship has ensured that Elizabeth emerges as a leading advocate for inclusive communities and equitable opportunities.

Drawing upon over two decades of experience in international development, education, and capacity building, Elizabeth brings a wealth of expertise to her role. Armed with a Master's degree in Social Science in Economics of Social Studies from the University of Wales, Swansea, U.K., and a Post Graduate Diploma in Leadership from Aalto University, Finland, in partnership with Uongozi Institute, Tanzania, Elizabeth has cultivated a deep understanding of the intersection between education, economics, and leadership. Throughout her career, Elizabeth has held various impactful positions, including Senior Consultant at Deloitte Consulting Ltd in Tanzania, where she spearheaded capacity-building initiatives for TUNAJALI projects, a USAID-PEPFAR funded program. Her diverse professional journey also includes roles such as ChangeUp Coordinator and Social Inclusion Programme Manager for East and West Sussex counties in the UK, as well as experience in the banking sector with Lloyds TSB Bank. Elizabeth's contributions have not gone unnoticed. She is a Vital Voices Global Partnership Fellow, a recipient of the Top 50 Women in Management Africa award, and has been honoured with the African Entrepreneurship Mentor appreciation award. In her current capacity as the Continental Head of Quality Inclusive Education, Continental Project Deputy Head, and Executive Secretary of Commonwealth Business Women in Tanzania, Elizabeth is driving forward-thinking initiatives aimed at fostering gender and disability inclusive education systems. With a passion for inclusive leadership and a track record of impactful change, Elizabeth Mleli stands as a beacon of inspiration and empowerment within the Tanzanian business community and beyond.



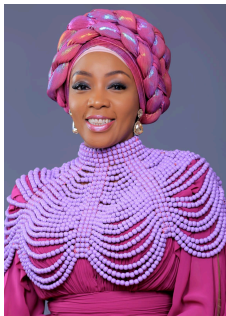
Pauline Warui - Chairperson, Commonwealth Business Women Africa - Kenya. *Transforming Customer Experiences and Shaping Business Leadership*, a distinguished business leader and the visionary founder of East Africa Customer Care Centre Ltd, a company established in January 2016 with the mission of enhancing the training and execution of customer experience in businesses across Africa. With a remarkable career spanning over 20 years, Pauline has been instrumental in shaping commercial and customer experience teams within prominent Kenyan and global companies. Her expertise extends across leading telecommunications organisations, the oil industry, and the insurance sector. Notable positions held include roles at Capital Pagers, Kencell Telecommunications, Chevron Global, and as Director of Customer Care at Safaricom. At Safaricom, she played a pivotal role in establishing the company's contact centre, the largest of its kind in East and Central Africa supporting products like telephony, data and the world renown mobile money platform M-Pesa. She is a Hons Graduate from The University of Nairobi and a leadership training alumni of the Strathmore University. In addition to her impactful contributions to the business world, Pauline serves as the Continental Head of Trade and Country Head of Commonwealth Business Women in Kenya, a role she took on after previously serving as Vice Chair. Her commitment to fostering economic empowerment and collaboration among women entrepreneurs is reflected in her leadership within this esteemed organization. Pauline Warui's influence extends to the insurance sector, where she serves as a Director at Kline Insurance Agency, overseeing the commercial portfolio. Furthermore, she dedicates her expertise as an Executive Board Member of Muruguru Girls Secondary School, a notable institution located in the rural county of Nyeri, Kenya. Pauline's



wealth of experience in leadership, training, and consultancy, continues to leave an indelible mark on the business landscape, contributing significantly to the enhancement of customer experiences, women empowerment and the development of emerging leaders in East Africa.



Fatou DIARRA, a Guinean nationality, born in Mozambique, is currently General Director of the company PAYCARD SA., a company which operates in the sector of issuance and distribution of electronic money. After a bachelor in social sciences in Conakry, Guinea, she completed her higher studies in Houston, Texas where she obtained a Bachelor of Art in Economics (University of Houston). At the end of her studies, in 2003, she joined the Retail Finance department of Bank of America, in Houston, then Corporate finance, Business Banking and Investment Banking. In 2008, she joined the subsidiary Ecobank Guinea, within the treasury where she worked as sales officer and head of sales. In 2010, she joined the UBA group in Guinea as Head of Treasury and in 2013, the NSIA Bank group. In 2015, she participated in the creation of the PAYCARD company where she was appointed General Director in 2016. Workaholic, mother of a boy, passionate about sport, she finds refuge in reading and music. Behind her daily actions as General Director, Fatou Diarra works for organizations helping orphans, deprived children and women's causes.



Nana Wanjau, is the 2022 Woman With a Mission Recognition and Achievement Award winner. She is the Global Women in Leadership Awards 2022 winner, She is East Africa Woman Leadership Award 2019 winner. She is the 8th of All African Business Leaders Award (AABLA) winner, she is the Philanthropist of the year EA Award winner and she is the Harmony Institute Philanthropy Award winner.

Nana is an impact Pan African Leader. She is the Vice President of Commonwealth Business Women – Africa. The Pan African Chamber of Commerce recently appointed Nana Wanjau to head the Chief Gender Office for Africa. Her role will involve mainstreaming gender in the Pan African Chamber of Commerce programs and operations. She is instrumental in the establishment of the Women Entrepreneurship Centres across Africa. Nana is passionate about women empowerment through social and economic advancement; She is the Founder of PowerWoman International; they build homes for Ostracized Widows. No woman should lose her dignity nor rights because she lost her husband. Widows are supported through four pillars; Shelter, Counselling, Economic Empowerment and Education for children.

She is the founder and CEO of Saltaway Investments Ltd a real estate company with interests in Nairobi and Mombasa (Kenya), Nana sits on numerous board, including the Advisory Board of the Centre for Research on African Digital Policies and Innovations (CRADPI); headquarters in Pretoria, South Africa. Nana is a long term mentor in the Global Give Back Circle mentoring the next leaders from the Mastercard Foundation Program. She is also a mentor at various universities; locally and internationally. Nana Wanjau is the Past President of the Rotary Club of



Nairobi East.

@ she is a much sought after speaker on the international stage.

@ She is an Alumni of the Strathmore Business School and Lagos Business School.

@ She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Executive Education Program: Harvard Leadership Principles/Strategy Execution and Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies with a focus on Africa.

LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/nana-wanjau-a-pan-african-leader-99a26037/recent-activity/all/>