

Panel Chair



Nigest Haile

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Nigest is an activist in the promotion of women entrepreneurs, with particular focus to women exporters. She has 23 years experience working in the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry, at different capacities. In 2004, she founded **CAWEE**, a pioneer trade promotion organization working in the country, providing promotional and capacity building support service targeting women exporters.

In facilitating export market, in bring buyers to Ethiopia as well as taking trade missions of women entrepreneurs to different counties, Nigest has played crucial role, where in the past few years, she was able to organize trade missions to over 18 countries.

Nigest received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology (major) and Sociology (minor) from the Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia and her Post Graduate Diploma in Globalization and Development, from the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, Netherlands. She also was able to get trained in women's entrepreneurship development and other relevant areas of enterprise development and export promotion in different countries and has different diplomas and certificates.

Nigest is actively involved in conducting different kinds of action oriented researches, focusing on women in business and was able to publish a book compiling the findings of five different researches on 'Challenges Affecting Women in Business'. In the research 'Strengthening Women-to-Women Business Market Linkages: Lessons from Experience' which this time is at its dissemination stage, Nigest is leading the research team.

Nigest received awards & recognitions from the Department of State, USA, in recognition of her extraordinary contributions to the development of women-led businesses, she was also selected by The International Alliance for Women (TIAW), Canada, as a TIAW Award Winner for the Year 2012, for all the great works she does to economically empower women. Nigest also received a Pan-African Award, by the UN Women and ILO, in recognition of her participation and support of Women's Entrepreneurship Development in the African continent. Nigest received the "Enabler of Vision" award from the Center for Economic and Leadership Development; Nigest received the "Women Stop Hunger Award", in Paris, France and Global Woman Leadership Award in Jabalpur, India, to mention some.

Nigest is one of the promoters and founders of the first women's commercial bank, named as "ENAT Bank" in Ethiopia and currently serving as the board member of the bank, her third term serving at the Bank Board. Nigest is also member of different boards, jury (Ex: jury member at the Sub-Saharan Africa Jury of the Cartier Women's Initiate Awards: 2010 - 2017), platforms and networks, both locally, regionally and internationally.

Panel member

Comfort Aku Adjahoe-Jennings

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Comfort Aku Adjahoe-Jennings is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of **Ele Agbe Company Ltd**, a Shea butter and local beads Jewelry production and export company in Ghana. Ele Agbe produces a variety of body creams, soaps, lotion bars, body oils and lip balms from Shea butter that are exported to the US, UK, Canadian and Japanese markets.

Adjahoe-Jennings has run Ele Agbe for 23 years. During this time she has participated in several trade shows in the US and Japan. She has also organized rural Ghanaian women into cooperatives to enable them to produce and supply products to her company. Mrs. Adjahoe-Jennings has built Ele Agbe into a high quality Shea butter cosmetics company that exports internationally but still works with a network of women Shea nut pickers and processors in northern Ghana.

Ele Agbe produces variety of body creams, soaps, lotion bars, body oils and lip balms from Shea butter that are exported to the US and Japanese markets. Comfort has participated in several trade shows in the US and Japan. She has also organized rural Ghanaian women into cooperatives to enable them to produce and supply products to her company.

As to her experiences and expertise, Adjahoe-Jennings has rich expertise in livelihoods (responsible supply chains and sustainability) and in markets, on women's and girls' education and youth employment skills.

Mrs. Adjahoe-Jennings is the co-founder of the Godhead Foundation that currently focuses on the health and education of women and young children. She is the founding member and past President of the Africa Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) Ghana Chapter. This time, she is the President of AWEP West Africa Region, which consists of 13 countries (Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Senegal, Niger, Cote D'voire, Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone). Adjahoe-Jennings is a very committed leader and fully engaged to economically empower women and young girls in her country Ghana, in the West African Region as well as in the Continent.

Panel member



ZOHRA A. BARAKA

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Zohra Baraka is Founder and Managing Director of **Mohazo Ex Impo Ltd**, a Kenyan company which, since the late 80s, has achieved several milestones in successful trading of authentic handicrafts in local and global markets. Zohra's company has given Kenya and Africa, a platform to showcase the rich ethnic culture that the continent has to offer to the global marketplace. With timely and much-needed technical assistance from International Finance Corporation (IFC), Mohazo has re-branded and documented its systems and procedures in pursuit of ISO 9001-2008 certification, which will go a long way in improving access to markets for Mohazo products.

Zohra manages several producer groups and micro enterprises at the grassroots level which her company mobilizes to facilitate the process of selecting products suitable for the marketplace. Currently, the company's products are both decorative and fashionable and can be found in renown chain stores in the US and Europe. It is Zohra's vision that women entrepreneurs, like herself, gain access to local and international markets in order to grow their businesses and ultimately improve their living standards, that of their families, communities and generations to come.

Beyond managing Mohazo, Zohra serves on boards of various organizations that promote gender equality, women's leadership and cross-cultural exchange in education and micro enterprise development. She also promotes progressive dialogue between communities in conflict. Zohra sits on the Board of the Kenya Micro and Small Enterprise Authority (MSEA) as an appointed Director, NEVA-cooperation between Colorado State University and USIU, and Kenya's National Committee on AGOA.

In her educational background, Zohra has MA in Social Enterprise Development and her BA in Business Administration. Zohra was able to get different awards and recognitions within Kenya as well as abroad winning different international awards, like: in 2011, nominated as African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) Ambassador for Kenya and currently serving on the board of AWEP Kenya Chapter as Chairperson; recognized and appreciated by the then Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, for supplying high quality and standardized products to global markets; nominated by the UK Based organization for International Register 'Achievements-2019, TOP-100, Excellence in Quality and Management' register and much more.

Zohra is member of different organizations, like: Chair Person of AWEP Kenya Chapter, member of Export Promotion Council Kenya, member of Kenya Association of Women Business Owners and member of the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Kenya.

Panel member



Bea Hackula, South Africa

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Bea Hackula, founder and President of **Africa for Africa Women Empowerment NPC**, founder of Women Building our Africa (WBoA) Primary Cooperative Financial Services, Founder of ASSERT media and co-founder and Chair of Women of Africa Arise Forum which unites women's organizations and professionals across Africa. She is a globally respected leader, strategist and public speaker especially; on leadership and women empowerment related topics. Bea has extensive executive leadership experience from both Public and Private Sectors.

She is a transformational leader in action, and a champion of women and youth empowerment- a life coach and a mentor to many. In recognition of her transformational leadership Bea became the first recipient of the prestigious BWASA Business Women of the Year Award in Government Category in 2014 as HOD of Social Development Department in the Eastern Cape and in 2019 alone, Bea was awarded the Women Super Achievers Award at the 26th World HRD Congress in India as a thought leader and a contributor of value on Women in Leadership, the Inspiring Woman Leadership Award at the Africa Economy Builders Forum in Abidjan, Cote' D'Ivoire and Inspired Leader Award by Enspire Magazine in South Africa.

Bea is a Harvard alumnus and studied in various Universities in South Africa including the famous African Leaders University, Fort Hare. She is certified John Maxwell Coach and accredited European Foundation Quality Model (EFQM) Facilitator and Assessor, and an Independent training consultant to the National School of Government in South Africa, specializing in Executive Leadership Development programme for both political and administration leadership training.

Panel member



Gloria Kamanzi Uwizera

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Gloria Kamanzi Uwizera is the founder and C.E.O of **Glo creations ltd**. Uwizera is a textile designer and artist, she has been working on textile design and textile printing for more than 10 years in Rwanda.

Tapping into the growing global interest in African design, Gloria Kamanzi Uwizera is building an award-winning company, Glo Creations, celebrating traditional batik printing techniques with a contemporary twist.

Glo Creations is a Rwandan based textile design and printing company, specializing in creating African inspired quality patterns for garments and home interiors. The company's work is to design, print on textile with hand techniques.

The major portion of the Glo Creations product range is textile-based and includes printed fabrics, ready-to-wear garments, home interior fabrics and products. Gloria is the President of AWEP Rwanda.

Uwizera as a passionate designer and entrepreneur, she has a creative eye, combined with a strong aptitude for business, has a real passion, dedication and determination for traditional printing techniques but brought up to date with a contemporary edge.

Gloria KAMANZI UWIZERA is part of a network of women entrepreneur across the African continent known as the "African Women Entrepreneurship Program" AWEP, she is the Chairperson of AWEP Rwanda Chapter.