

2006 APEC – Hanoi, Viet Nam
11th Women’s Leaders Network Meeting

**“Towards a Dynamic Community: Enhancing the Competitiveness of Women’s
Business for Sustainable Development and Prosperity”**

Statement/Recommendations

We, the Women Leaders Network (WLN) from APEC Economies, with expertise in gender, economy, finance and trade, came together for the eleventh time in Hanoi, Viet Nam from 19 – 21 September, 2006, to demonstrate our commitment and support for APEC.

WLN strongly believes that the economic contribution of women and gender-responsive policies and practices will bring about sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in the region and will advance a stronger APEC community. The increase in women’s participation in the economy through entrepreneurship, management and employment has contributed substantially to global and regional growth (in GDP) over the past ten years. If APEC member economies seek to expand their economic growth, they need to harness the economic potential of women, as well as that of men.

The 11th WLN Meeting’s sub-themes were:

1. Women entrepreneurs and dynamic, effective and sustainable economic development; and
2. WLN in the second decade ~ where do we go from here: capacity building, finance and business network development.

WLN commends APEC Leaders for their continued focus on and support for policies that recognize the contribution of women to APEC economies. The WLN looks forward to the ongoing strengthening of its partnership and cooperation with APEC Leaders and Ministers.

To build on the successes of the past decade resulting from the ongoing positive collaboration between WLN and APEC, and to ensure the continued integration of a gender perspective within the APEC themes and objectives, the WLN provides the following recommendations to APEC Leaders.

Women’s Participation in the Digital Economy

Recognizing the extensive and enabling role that ICT can play in the creation and advancement of M/SME, WLN requests that APEC Ministers responsible for M/SME:

- 1) Implement the recommendations of the APEC Forum on Digital Economy for Women 2006, including the establishment of an APEC Advisory Committee on Women’s Participation in the Digital Economy.
- 2) Explicitly include urban and rural women in each economy’s ICT master plan and develop a database and research on women’s contribution to the digital economy across the APEC region. This can be made available in a single portal, so that economies can collaborate and share their research, knowledge, technology and experience.

Legal Frameworks and Gender Analysis

Recognizing that member economies in which women fully participate in the economy have higher standards of living and more successful business communities, WLN requests that APEC Ministers responsible for M/SME:

- 3) Review existing investment, business and credit laws, regulations and practices to eliminate gender bias in their impact and enforcement, and strengthen their compliance by increasing M/SME awareness of such instruments. These instruments include e-business, e-payment, cross-border trading, intellectual property rights and access to debt and equity capital.
- 4) Encourage APEC economies to provide gender analysis training for their government trade officials and make gender analysis an ongoing part of trade policy development at both the economy and regional levels.

Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (M/SME)

Recognizing that the full participation of women in the economy is an effective strategy to eradicate poverty and the important role women play in sustainable development, WLN requests APEC Ministers responsible for M/SME to:

- 5) Identify, fund and implement gender-responsive programs and policy models that will assist women-owned and/or women-led M/SME to expand their businesses, and to build international trade links and networks through increased participation in global supply/value chains.

Human Security

Recognizing women's increasing vulnerability to HIV infection and its disproportionate impacts on women, as well as the disparate impacts of migration, WLN requests APEC Leaders to:

- 6) Promote the economic empowerment of women and safeguard APEC prosperity through encouraging APEC enterprises to adopt and implement the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, and provide related capacity building programs.
- 7) Protect the rights of migrant workers, the majority of whom are women, and establish and implement effective legal protection for female and male migrant workers at both the economy and regional levels.

Women Leaders Network and the Future

At the 2006 WLN Meeting, the WLN made a commitment to undertake the following actions:

- With fundraising support from several APEC economies, a WLN Secretariat will be established in the Philippines immediately upon receipt of funding;
- To monitor APEC's response to the WLN's recommendations and the implementation of the APEC Framework for the Integration of Women (i.e., gender analysis and collection and use of sex-disaggregated data on the participation of women in APEC fora);
- To develop a holistic Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise Development to build capacity and support the growth of women-owned and/or women-led enterprises, at all stages along the business continuum, at the member economy level;

- To develop a research agenda related to women's entrepreneurship and related funding proposals for presentation to diverse APEC and other funding bodies. This will include development of a framework to measure the economic and social impact on APEC economies of investing in women's entrepreneurship.

In recognition of these commitments, the important contributions of women to APEC economies and WLN's ongoing contribution to a wide range of APEC fora, WLN requests APEC Leaders and APEC Ministers to:

- 8) Acknowledge the important contribution of women to APEC and reaffirm APEC's support for the role of WLN and the millions of women we represent in the region by according the WLN official observer status at relevant Ministerial Meetings and Working Groups (SME, Trade, ECSG, CTI, etc.), beginning with the APEC Ministerial Meeting on Trade in 2007.
- 9) Call for an annual WLN report to be formally presented to APEC Leaders.

Recognizing the ongoing task of implementing the Framework for the Integration of Women, and the need for consistent support for GFPN to achieve our common goals for gender integration, the WLN asks APEC Leaders to join them in reaffirming support for GFPN. We request APEC Leaders to:

- 10) Support and fund the development of a database to increase access to sectoral gender expertise and training to enable capacity building and enhance business networking.
- 11) With strong support for the GFPN recommendation to convene the Third Ministerial Meeting on Women, WLN requests APEC Leaders to convene this meeting in 2008, with participation from diverse sectors such as industry, trade, finance, HRD and ICT. Subsequent meetings for Ministers responsible for women should be held every three years.

In conclusion, we would like to thank and congratulate Viet Nam, the host of the 11th annual Women Leaders Network for arranging such a productive and innovative meeting. We wish Australia, the host of WLN 2007, great success and look forward to the next ten years of WLN with great anticipation.