

Women at Work

Ingrid
Antonijevic
Chile

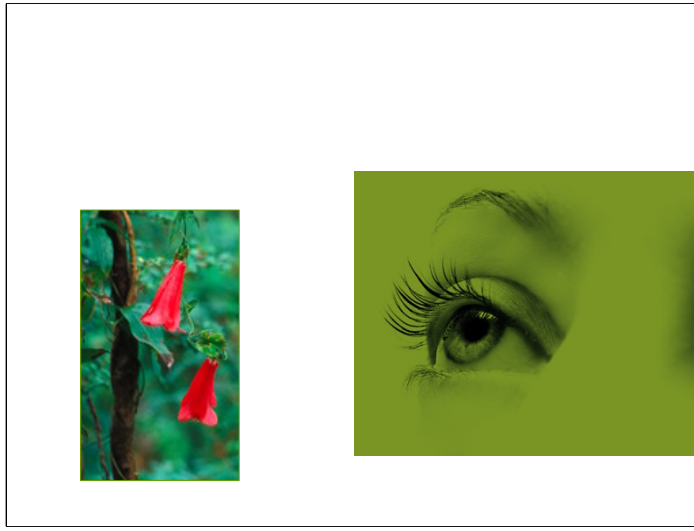
Greetings

Good morning/afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I wish to express my gratitude to

- the Women Leaders' Network,
- the Vietnam Women's Union,
- the Government of Vietnam,
- and all the sponsors and participants,

... for making this event possible.



Sharing experience and visions

I sincerely thank you for the invitation

- to join this international forum
- which gives us the opportunity to share
- our vision and experiences.

contributing to

- the promotion of entrepreneurship and networking,
- to the development of women's leadership abilities,
- in a cooperation framework throughout APEC member economies.

By the way, this is our national flower, the “Copihue”.



Women have always worked

We know of her being as a plant gatherer in the Stone Age

As a leather tanner, in charge of the children, the kitchen

And as a dress maker

Cleaning, cooking, sewing, knitting,

Peeling potatoes, sweeping the floors,

From morning till night, in her own affairs, in other's, or both

Grounded to the earth, without much time

For reflection, studies and reading;

At most managing the household finances

Because her man (father, brother, husband

Tutor, master, boss ...) is hunting, at war, traveling or

trading.

Therefore, when we now speak of women and work, we are concentrating our attention in the cultural and social process covering essentially the past 100 years



Women and paid work

The reflection we make now is what happens then with today's women who increasingly work outside of their homes for an income.

What happens to this woman who at last has access to money?

A woman who works for an income

Has the possibility to contribute economically

To her children's education, in contrast to the one who has had no education and cannot leave her house.

She becomes more independent, can do more things,

Feels more useful, more capable,

More considerate.

She becomes a dignified woman, free, autonomous as men.



Integration

¿How integrated are we, as working women, to society, the business community and politics?

Obviously, if we were truly integrated, this meeting would not be held separately from APEC regular business and economic forums.

In fact, neither would this organization, the Women's Leaders Network need to exist.

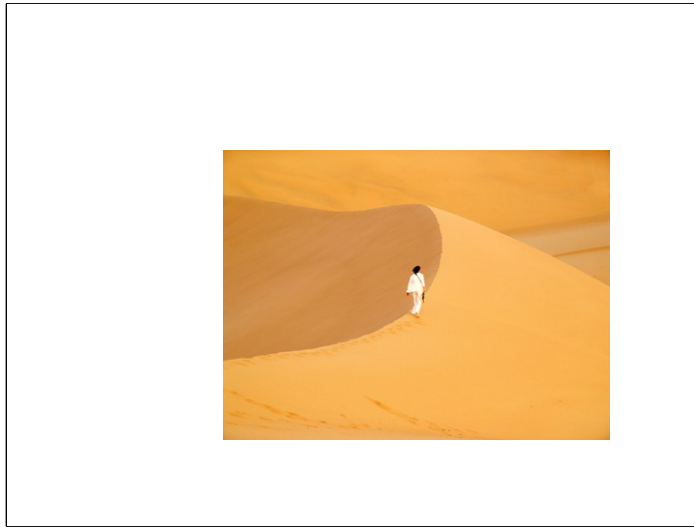
There is still much to do.

But times are changing.

In Chile, for example, for the first time in our history, we have elected a woman as President.

This clearly reflects that the world is undergoing a major cultural change.

Today's citizens are eager for a new style of leadership.



Chilean women in business

In Chile, as in the rest of the World, women's participation

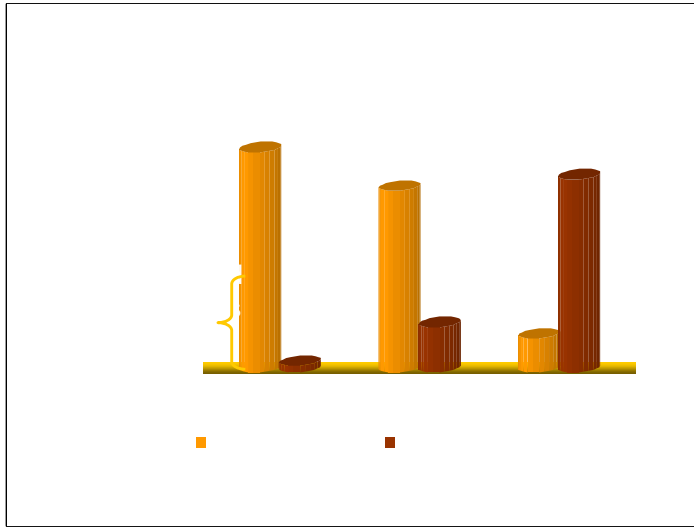
- In the working environment
- As well as in business
- Is increasing at fast rates, generating important
- Cultural and socio-economic changes.
- To which, society as a whole, must learn to adapt to

Today, one out of three households in our country is led by a woman.

Usually a lonely woman, traveling in a lonely road.

Most often than not, because she needs to,

Not by a mere whim.



Small and micro businesses in Chile

The role of small and micro businesses is essential for economic development, and especially important in attaining better quality of life and education for the population.

In Chile, 97% of our businesses are in the small or micro range, and they provide work for about 80% of the total labor force.

Of these, almost 30% are managed by women, mainly in the micro business sector.

In other words, women micro-entrepreneurs in our country are responsible for employing at least 25% of our work force.

However, micro businesses have to deal with serious profit, sustainability and competitiveness issues, which directly affect the quality of employment it generates, especially regarding women micro entrepreneurs, due to gender difficulties and discrimination.



Public and Private Measures for Social Development

What can we do?

We must, both, in public and private sectors, work intensely towards developing alternate models of working culture and the implementation of best practices in working environments, such as:

1. Promote the participation of women in trade and entrepreneur associations
2. Create and promote national and international women networks, such as this one; sharing knowledge and experiences is essential.
3. Introduce changes in school and university policies, creating early awareness of women's role in politics and working environments



Public and Private Measures for Social Development

5. We must search for alternate culture models in the working environment;
 1. meetings and training should always occur during working hours,
 2. Provide for flexible working schedules,
 3. tele-working, etc.
6. Promote best practices enabling the participation of women in executive positions, where decision making has a high impact in informal working spaces.
7. Develop alternate and better child care systems
8. Promote best practices which enable a balanced and healthy share of family, work and personal life.



Caring for the Future

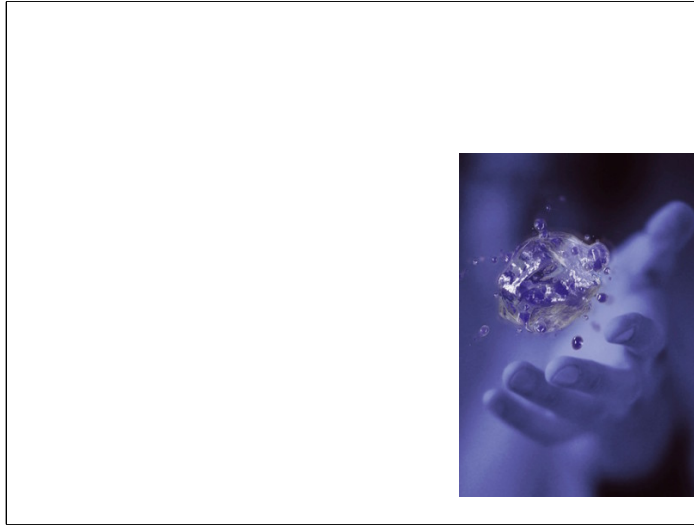
These are not protectionist measures.

It is an investment that will ensure a future of well-being for humankind.

I believe that today's society,

Our countries and our families

Need us all, men and women equally.

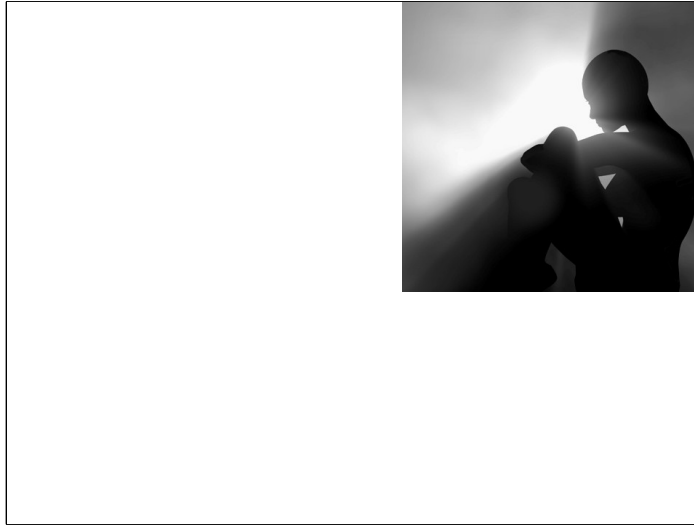


Caring for the Future

Finally, we can allow ourselves the reflection
About how to allow for further world population increase.

We must prepare ourselves for the organization of our society,
In order to be able to cope with the requirements of

- housing,
- food,
- transportation,
- education for the new times,
- health care,
- and conservation of our delicately balanced environment.



Cierre

The feminine in a masculine world.
For some, a necessary complement,
For the minority, by now, annoying.

However, it is still a conflict that has not been resolved.

But each one of us requires balance
The rational, the emotional, the subtle
That which we can verbalize, versus the intuitive active.
We, as individuals, men and women, and society as a whole.

Thank you very much.