



Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

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Agenda Item: 7.2

Report Of Women Leaders' Network Meeting 2003

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: Women Leaders' Network



**Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting
Chiang Mai, Thailand
7-8 August 2003**

WOMEN LEADERS' NETWORK MEETING 2003
Chiang Mai, Thailand
July 30 – August 3, 2003

Statement and Recommendations:

We, the Women Leaders' Network (WLN) from APEC economies came together for the eighth time in Chiang Mai, Thailand on July 30 – August 3, 2003, to reaffirm our commitment to strengthening and deepening the partnerships within WLN and with all APEC fora.

We commend APEC Leaders, Ministers and Senior Officials for their consistent and continuing efforts in implementing the Framework for the *Integration of Women in APEC* and for endorsing the launch of the Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN).

The theme of this meeting was “Women Make a World of Difference: Partnerships for Gender and Development.” Under this overarching theme, we discussed the following topics:

- 1) Knowledge Creation, Sharing and Management through Partnerships
- 2) Women's Human Security
- 3) Women's Entrepreneurship

WLN confirms its commitment as an autonomous network ready to play a proactive partnership role within and outside the GFPN to ensure the integration of women in all APEC fora and activities. WLN agrees to take on the collection of best practices on women's entrepreneurship for the GFPN.

Women in all their social and economic capacities contribute greatly to job creation and economic growth in APEC economies and we acknowledge that human security for women and men is the foundation for future economic growth in the APEC region.

WLN recommendations

In pursuit of enhancing women's opportunities to contribute to the development and productivity of APEC economies, we issue the following recommendations to the SME Ministers:

- promote fair and equitable access to financial services, particularly for women led micro and small enterprises;
- support and provide incentives for comprehensive programs that empower women led micro-enterprises;
- facilitate the collection and dissemination of more extensive data on women's contribution to the informal sector;

- grant WLN guest status in the Microenterprise Subgroup of the SME Working Group;

In light of the cross-cutting nature of the integration of gender issues into the APEC process, we would also like to make recommendations to the following Sectoral Ministers.

HRD Ministers

- institute family friendly policies and working conditions, such as affordable child and elder care options and flexible hours, to help women and men balance family life and career;
- recognize the care services, in which women predominate, as important for social and economic progress. Empower women care workers with good economic and social benefits, higher levels of professional training and better access to business development opportunities and programs in the care-giving field;
- recognize women homemakers' contributions as important for social and economic progress and empower them through comprehensive measures, such as capacity building and tax incentives;

IST Ministers

- develop and implement a gender responsive ICT plan to empower women, which addresses both urban and rural needs, such as, providing affordable computers, building information infrastructure, education and training in ICT, and roadmaps for SME use of ICT;
- advocate international sex disaggregated ICT indicators to the International Telecommunications Union;
- ensure that women fully participate at all levels in the development of science and technology and have full access to and benefit from science and technology.

In accordance with APEC 2003's themes and sub-themes, the Women Leaders' Network would like to make the following recommendations to the APEC Economic Leaders.

- facilitate and support research pertaining to women's and gender related issues, including increase in funding for such research;
- fully implement the provisions of the APEC gender framework¹ and ensure gender responsive collection and use of sex disaggregated data;

¹ Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC

- address the gender dimension of human security issues, and remove barriers that prevent marginalized and displaced women from their full participation in and benefit from the economy;
- ensure that liberalization of trade and investment does not lead to violation of rights, in particular labor rights of women migrant workers and women in the informal sector, as well as rights to human security of those who are vulnerable to trafficking;
- reinforce the commitment to the unique economic contribution of indigenous people by supporting existing and new economic partnerships;

We applaud the APEC leaders and Ministers for their recognition of WLN's unique role and contribution.

We thank the Thai Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development, the Thai Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Federation of Business Professional Women's Associations of Thailand and the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society of the National Institute of Development Administration for their support and contributions toward the success of this gathering.

We welcome Chile as chair of the 2004 APEC WLN Meeting and host of the Third Ministerial Meeting on Women in 2004.
