



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

2005/SMEMM/015
Agenda item: 4.2

**Statement and Recommendations of
The 10th Women Leaders Network Meeting**
“Prosperity of Women Entrepreneurs through Innovation:
New Visions for Women Entrepreneurs”

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: WLN Chair



**Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial
Meeting**
Daegu, Korea
1-2 September 2005

**Statement and Recommendations of
The 10th Women Leaders Network Meeting**
“Prosperity of Women Entrepreneurs through Innovation:
New Visions for Women Entrepreneurs”
Daegu, Korea / 24-27 August 2005

1. Preamble

WLN is a public-private network of women of all sectors representing academia, civil society, business and government of the APEC economies that plays the important role by contributing women leader’s perspectives and expertise to the APEC region. The Women Leaders Network, launched in 1996 in Manila, has facilitated the integration of gender perspectives, women’s enterprises, and economic cooperation into the APEC agenda with annual recommendations to APEC Leaders and Ministers. This activity helps to achieve the needs of women and women entrepreneurs in the APEC region and increases participation and representation of women in APEC activities and a number of APEC fora.

- The 10th Women Leaders Network Meeting was held in 24-27 August, 2005, Daegu, Korea. Women Leaders from APEC Economies came together to promote women’s enterprises and support gender integration. More than 500 domestic and overseas participants from 19 APEC member Economies attended the network meeting including the focal points of Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Hong Kong China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States and Vietnam.

- The theme of WLN 2005 was “Prosperity of Women Entrepreneurs through Innovation: New Visions for Women Entrepreneurs” and the sub-themes were Microcredit Policies and Programs for Women Enterprises Development; Co-prosperity through Promoting the Next Generation Women Entrepreneurs; Access to Innovative ICT Technology; Promoting Trade through Networking in order to support SMEs ministerial meeting’s theme “Promoting Innovation of SMEs”.

2. Main Issues

- The promotion of women enterprises and the economic effectiveness was presented and the policies and program for women entrepreneurs were emphasized. The participants recognized that women enterprises have played important role to accomplish gender integrated policies and development of SMEs.

- Woman Business Incubation Center of KWEA(Korean Women Entrepreneurs Association) was recognized as best practices of the promotion and development of women enterprises.
- The participants shared the best practices of Microcredit policies and programs in APEC member economies and recognized the significant role of Microcredit in promoting and advancing women's micro enterprises.
- The meeting had the diverse proposal for promoting market access through networking which included undertaking more research on the challenges women SMEs face in expanding into the APEC markets, developing and providing trade promotion and training programs for women(rural, young and isolate)
- For access to information communication technology, the ways to increase the level of support programs and policies for access to ICT infrastructure and training, and usage of ICT tools, including e-communities were discussed.
- On the 10th Year of WLN, outstanding agreement was made among the focal points from 19 economies (the focal points of China and Peru did not attend in 2005). They agreed in principle to establish an independently funded Secretariat for strengthening of the status and cooperation of the network.
- The participants expressed their sincere appreciation and congratulated our host for organizing a successful meeting.

3. Recommendations¹

In order to promote women's enterprise development and strengthen the Women Leaders Network, the WLN recommended that APEC Leaders and SME Ministers:

- Commend WLN's efforts to establish an independently funded Secretariat as it enters into its second decade.
- Acknowledge the enormous contributions WLN has made to the increased awareness of social and economic importance of women and to the development and implementation of policies integrated with gender perspectives within the APEC region.

¹ Foot Note: See Annex 1 for Entire Recommendation.

- Recognize and acknowledge the economic benefits to be gained through promoting women enterprise development.

- Promote and provide incentives for women business incubation centers.

- Recognize the role of Microcredit in promoting and advancing women's micro enterprises, and the importance of developing and sharing effective Microcredit policies and best practices among APEC members by:
 - Endorsing pioneering research on micro enterprises in the informal sector using sex-disaggregated data.
 - Facilitating and sharing best practices and experiences in the micro enterprise sector between developed and developing APEC economies.
 - Encouraging the financial sector to serve women's micro enterprises.



Annex1

Recommendations of The 10th Women Leaders' Network Meeting

Daegu, Korea / 24-27 August 2005

WLN

WLN is a public-private network of women of all sectors representing academia, civil society, business and government of the APEC economies that plays an important role by contributing women leaders' perspectives and expertise to the APEC region.

On this 10th anniversary of WLN, we recommend that the APEC Leaders and Ministers

1. Commend WLN's efforts to establish an independently funded Secretariat as it enters into its second decade;
2. Acknowledge the enormous contributions WLN has made to the increased awareness of social and economic importance of women and to the development and implementation of policies integrated with gender perspectives within the APEC region;
3. Continue to ensure the inclusion of sex-disaggregated data and gender based analysis in the development and evaluation of APEC projects;

Microcredit Policies and Programs for Women Enterprises' Development

In honor of the UN's designation of 2005 as the Year of Microcredit, we commend APEC Leaders and Ministers for their continuing support of micro enterprise issues and projects. We recommend that APEC Leaders and Ministers

4. Recognize the role of Microcredit in promoting and advancing women's micro enterprises, and the importance of developing and sharing effective Microcredit policies and best practices among APEC members by:

- a) Endorsing pioneering research on micro enterprises in the informal sector using sex-disaggregated data
 - b) Facilitating and sharing best practices and experiences in the micro enterprise sector between developed and developing APEC economies.
5. Seek the most workable ways to institutionalize Microcredit through active discussions among APEC members by
- a) Encouraging financial institutions to serve women micro entrepreneurs, through NGOs or other providers;
 - b) Promoting ideas among APEC economies that will incentivize the financial sector to serve impoverished communities;
 - c) Supporting the establishment of Microcredit guarantee programs to encourage micro finance institutions and other providers to serve women who do not have collateral;
 - d) Maintaining the distinction between consumer finance and micro enterprise finance in policy formulation and implementation;

Co-Prosperity Through Promoting The Next-Generation Women Entrepreneurs

In recognition of the importance of the next generation of women entrepreneurs to the co-prosperity of the APEC region, we recommend that member economies

- 6. Recognize and acknowledge the economic benefits to be gained through promoting women enterprise development;
- 7. Formulate and implement an enterprise development framework of specific policies and programs to promote and develop the next generation of women entrepreneurs;
- 8. Promote and provide incentives for woman business incubation centers;
- 9. Allocate resources to implement best practices in supporting women's enterprise development and continue ongoing monitoring of its progress;
- 10. Support the building of institutions or special organizations dedicated to prospective e-Business training for women and household businesses;
- 11. Provide incentives for venture capital for women's startup enterprises;

Market Access Promotion

In recognition of the Bogor Goals of free trade within the region in 2010 and 2020, we recommend that economies

- 12. Allocate resources to undertake more research on the challenges women SMEs face in expanding into the APEC markets;

13. Make resources available to implement and advance best practices regarding policies and programs to promote and encourage the development of women's business activities within the APEC region;
14. Develop and provide trade promotion and training programs for women (rural, young and isolated);

Access to Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Prior to the WLN meeting, Asia Pacific Women's Information Network Center (APWINC) held an APEC forum on the Digital Economy for Women and, regarding women's e-Business for APEC economies, recommended that:

15. APEC increase the level of support for programs and policies that address women's
 - a) access to ICT infrastructure and training, and
 - b) usage of ICT tools, including e-Communities and e-Markets;
16. And encourage economies to provide incentives for the creation of e-Biz centers.

In closing, we would like to express our sincere appreciation and congratulate our Korean host for organizing such a successful meeting. We look forward to being even more effective in assisting APEC in the years ahead.