

12th APEC Women Leaders' Network Recommendations to APEC Leaders and Ministers

Port Douglas, Australia, 24-27 June 2007

The Women Leaders' Network (WLN) – over four hundred women leaders, representing business, government, academia and civil society – met to consider issues that are critical to building a sustainable future. Issues were addressed through the core focus areas of globalisation, climate change, sustainable trade, technology and business practices, and strengthening the capacity of women entrepreneurs and their communities of interest.

It is requested that the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade note the following decisions taken by the WLN, including future actions for Leaders, Ministers and the WLN.

Climate Change

Recognising the major challenge of climate change:

WLN must immediately be fully engaged and consulted in the positive work being undertaken by APEC economies to meet the challenge of climate change, ensuring that women are fully integrated in the development of their strategies and solutions.

Priority areas where APEC problem solving will particularly benefit from WLN views and expertise, as key decision makers, include:

- the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
- community awareness, education and response;
- emergency preparedness and early warning systems;
- disaster management;
- community health and wellbeing; and
- community and economic recovery.

Ensuring women benefit from the Trade Liberalisation Agenda

The WLN recognises the increasing importance of APEC in trade, especially given the uncertainties in World Trade Organisation negotiations. In November 2006, APEC Ministers noted that Regional Trade Arrangements/Free Trade Agreements and the Doha Development Agenda could be having differential impacts on women and proposed research be undertaken¹. WLN is equipped to support the Ministers Responsible for Trade in progressing their research through the Committee on Trade and Investment. Peru intends to make this issue a key focus of WLN in 2008, including a workshop on the impact of free trade agreements on women in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Ministers are asked to ensure that research on the nature and extent of any differential impacts on women of Regional Trade Liberalisation and Free Trade Agreements within the APEC region is prioritised and urgently progressed in consultation with the WLN Chair. The

¹ http://www.apec.org/content/apec/ministerial_statements/annual_ministerial/2006_18th_apec_ministerial.html

timeframe for reporting the outcomes of this research should coincide with the 2008 WLN and APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade meetings.

Women and Labour Mobility

WLN will discuss with ABAC the issue of labour mobility and ensure that ABAC's recommendations to the 2007 APEC Leaders meeting takes into account the implications for women, in particular the protection and safeguarding of the rights of migrant women.

WLN calls on APEC Ministers to favourably consider the development of a common accreditation system for skills recognition that would facilitate the recognition of skills and qualifications across the APEC economies.

Facilitating the full participation of women in business

Facilitating the full participation of women in the economy – delivered through education, skills and capacity development, and access to opportunities – is a central strategy to alleviate poverty and enable women to build a sustainable future for themselves, their families and their communities.

The WLN calls upon responsible Ministers to identify opportunities for women and to identify and to overcome any barriers to women in Micro, Small, Medium and Large enterprises accessing business development opportunities, ICT, financing, markets and any other forms of assistance within their economy. One of the measures for evaluating the quality of the business environment in an economy must be opportunities for women.

Further, the WLN urges leaders to ensure that, by 2010, their economies have identified, funded and implemented gender-responsive programs and policy models that will assist women-owned and/or women-led Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Such interventions should enable women to expand their businesses, and to build international trade links and networks, through increased participation in global supply/value chains.

The WLN is deeply concerned about APEC's decision to abolish the Micro-Enterprise Sub-Working Group. Micro-Enterprises are a lifeline for the hundreds of millions of women in the APEC region who are disproportionately affected by poverty: seventy-five percent of those who live on one dollar a day are women; women often lack property, divorce or inheritance rights; and only one percent of private property is owned by women.

Formal written reassurance is sought from responsible Ministers, by December 2007, that they will ensure that the SME Working Group maintains a strong focus on Micro-Enterprise.

Digital Divide

To build a sustainable e-future, strategies and programs need to provide women with ICT competencies, trade and entrepreneurship support, harnessing gender differences to increase women's capacity to contribute to and benefit from the growth of their economies.

To ensure that women are able to take full advantage of developments in ICT, and are not left behind, APEC Ministers should ensure:

- **improved infrastructure and access;**
- **skills development targeted at women's needs;**
- **gender-disaggregated research and sharing of best practices; and**
- **that women-led businesses are fast-tracked into the global value chain.**

WLN within APEC

The WLN is pivotal to strengthening APEC's capacity to deliver on its responsibility to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue in all its problem solving and actions. To further APEC's achievement of its commitments on gender issues, WLN asks APEC Leaders to:

- **grant the WLN guest status at the meetings of all APEC working groups from 2008;**
- **appoint at least one woman to each economy's APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) delegation from 2008, to begin to address the striking gender imbalance currently evident within ABAC;**
- **include the presentation of the WLN recommendations by the Chair of WLN as a standing ABAC agenda item at the APEC Leaders Dialogue from 2008; and**
- **ensure the continued attendance of ABAC at the WLN meetings each year.**

The way forward for WLN

Each economy focal point is committed to establish and maintain effective communication and consultation with her economy's APEC Senior Official and, as a priority, to assist with her economy's preparation for the forthcoming United Nations conference on global warming (Bali, Indonesia 1-3 December 2007).

A Forum on the Digital Economy for Women and a *Women in Export Trade Day* were held in conjunction with the 2007 WLN meeting. The WLN appreciated the efforts of the Asian Pacific Women's Information Network Center, with the support of the Korean Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Austrade in organising these complementary events.

The WLN will integrate similar events in its future programs under the pillars of: Trade; Micro-Enterprise; Small and Medium Enterprises; Information and Communications Technology; and Education.

The WLN will continue to take all reasonable actions to:

- **establish a Secretariat in the Philippines; and**
- **establish a web portal as a major means of awareness raising and communication.**

The WLN welcomes the APEC Women Leaders in ICT as a key collaborative partner.