

5th APEC Women Leaders Network Recommendations to APEC Leaders and Ministers Brunei Darrusalam, 18-20 June 2000

We, the Women Leaders Network from APEC economies met for the fifth time in Brunei Darussalam prior to the SME Ministerial Meeting. The theme for this year's meeting of the WLN was SMEs as Global Traders.

Following the agenda set for the SME Business Forum and the SME Ministerial Meetings, the WLN held sessions on Financing SMEs, Enhancing Strategic Alliances in SMEs, Human Resource Development for SMEs, and the role of E-Commerce in SMEs. We welcome the participation of the Confederation of Women's Business Council in the WLN.

Recalling the:

- 1996 Manila WLN *Call to Action*;
- WLN Delegations of 1997 Ottawa-Hull, 1998 Kuala Lumpur and 1999 Wellington;
- Recommendations from the Ministerial Meeting on Women in Economic Development and Cooperation in Manila in 1998

And building upon the theme for APEC 2000 of:

- delivering to the Community
- building stronger foundations
- creating opportunities in the millennium
- making APEC matter more to the people
- recognizing APEC's commitment to continue to engage the business community, women and youth

We congratulate the Leaders for their adoption of the *Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC* and the formation of the SOM Ad-hoc Advisory Group of Gender Integration (AGGI).

Recalling the 1996 Manila *Call to Action*, the Women Leaders Network from APEC economies has developed an Expert Data Base of women leaders from across APEC with expertise in all areas of issues relevant to APEC.

Recognizing the value of the increasing participation of women in SMEs throughout the APEC economies, we note that women are building new businesses and adding value to

the economy at unprecedented rates. We must endeavour to ensure that the economic divide between rich and poor decreases. In building new partnerships across cultures and continents, we need to continue to develop and enhance the women's contributions to the economies.

The WLN recommends that APEC leaders:

- review the membership of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) so that women's participation is increased and that each economy ensures that of its three ABAC members, at least one is a woman.

The WLN recommends that APEC Ministers:

- draw upon the Expert Data Base developed by the WLN to ensure the full participation of women in the APEC process.
- implement training programmes, in particular distance learning, to assist women to access the most advanced training and skills development available
- ensure that all women and, in particular, young women, indigenous women, rural women and women most at risk have equal access to education and opportunities for skills development
- formulate policies which encourage employers to develop more favourable working terms and conditions for women
- establish appropriate mechanism and incentives to facilitate the development of women-owned SMEs and e-business
- develop incentives for private sector investment in women-owned SMEs
- improve access to finance for women-owned SMEs and remove barriers to investment and finance which continue to exist
- identify best practice models with respect to access to technology, finance and training for women, and encourage their implementation throughout the APEC economies

Finally, we applaud APEC Leaders and Ministers for their recognition of the contribution and unique role of the Women Leaders Network from the APEC economies. We thank the Council of Women of Brunei Darussalam and the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources of the Government of Brunei Darussalam for hosting the 5th meeting of the Women Leaders Network. We support the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Mexico as Chairs of the 2001 and 2002 APEC Leaders Meetings, respectively, and, in particular, China's commitment to continue the momentum and acceptance of the Women Leaders Network.