

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP: FROM PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE

ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
7 MARCH 2013, 18.00-21.00

INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL, GENEVA

CONCEPT NOTE

The Issue:

Despite their significant participation in the economy, with over 34% of firms worldwide having female participation in ownership, it is estimated that women win less than 1% of corporate contracts. The Women's Empowerment Principles seek to change this through emphasising the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Under Principle 5, signatories commit to implement enterprise development, supply chain management and marketing practices that empower women. At this meeting, speakers will share experiences in translating commitments into reality, underlining how this is creating opportunities for women business owners.

Focus of the Discussion:

Over 400 companies have signed on to the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), promulgated by the United Nations Global Compact and UN Women. The meeting will open with an exploration of the added value of the WEPs. The corporate perspective will then be shared regarding outreach and inclusion of women. The International Federation of Business and Professional Women, with 30,000 members around the globe, will share on how they connect women to global supply chains, including through the ITC-lead Global Platform for Action on Sourcing from Women Vendors. The International Trade Centre (ITC) will elaborate on their role in catalyzing WEP 5 through building the capacity of women entrepreneurs to meet buyers' requirements. The meeting will close with a cocktail.

Time: 18h00 – 21h00

Opening: Ms. Aicha Pouyé, Director, Division for Business and Institutional Support,
International Trade Centre (ITC)

Speakers: Ms. Aurore, Bui, Board Member, UN Women National Committee Switzerland
Swiss Reinsurance Company (SwissRe – TBC)
Ms. Anne Wood, President, Business and Professional Women Lake Geneva
Ms. Meg Jones, Women and Trade Programme Manager, ITC

Closing: Ms. Violette Ruppner, President, Organization of Women in International Trade –
Lake Geneva

Background:

The International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Organization of Women in international Trade – Lake Geneva (formerly Geneva Women in International Trade) have jointly organised an event on International Women’s Day since 2003. Whilst the focus has changed each year, the purpose has remained: To draw policymakers’ attention to the significant contribution women make to trade. Past events have raised awareness and the degree of comfort members of the trade community have in advocating support for the economic empowerment of women through Aid for Trade to increasing sourcing from women-owned companies through private and public procurement. In 2013 we focus on crystallising commitment to the Women’s Empowerment Principles and the operationalization of WEP Principle 5 on expanding business opportunities for women’s owned enterprises.

Topics of previous years:

- 2003 ‘Women as Economic Players in Sustainable Development’ panel at WTO Public Symposium
- 2004 ‘The Impact of Women in Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises on Increasing Trade under WTO agreements’ panel at WTO public Symposium
- 2005 ‘Engaging Women in Economic Activity and Trade brings Positive Results!’ Roundtable hosted by Canadian Mission
- 2006 ‘Celebrating Success in our Community: Advancing Women in the Workplace and Women in Trade’ Roundtable hosted by Canadian Mission
- 2007 ‘Women and Biofuels: Trade Policy Delivering Equity and Empowerment or Subsidies and Self Interest’ Roundtable hosted by Canadian Mission
- 2008 ‘Expert Round-table on the Gender Dimension of the Enhanced Integrated Framework’ Cocktail co-hosted by GWIT and Canadian Ambassador to WTO
- 2009 ‘Women Leading Change – Traction for Trade’ meeting at Intercontinental Hotel
- 2010 ‘Sourcing from Women-Owned Enterprises: Ethics or Economics?’ meeting at Intercontinental Hotel
- 2011 ‘Women in Trade - Tasting Success in Global Markets’ with WTO at WTO
- 2012 ‘Leveraging the Power of Women’s Networks to Effect Change’ meeting hosted by US Mission

Registration:

To register, please visit www.owit-lakegeneva.org

For information on the Women’s Empowerment Principles, see www.weprinciples.org.

For further information on the meeting and ITC’s work in support of women entrepreneurs, see www.intracen.org/womenandtrade