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**COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development

Sixth session, 10 and 11 February 2005

Sub-item 4.3.3 of the provisional agenda

TEAM OF SPECIALISTS ON WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Progress Report

1. At its second session in March 2001 the Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development (WP.8) established a Team of Specialists on Women's Entrepreneurship. At its first meeting, held in February 2002, the Team of Specialists (TOS) elected its officials and adopted Terms of Reference and a work plan for 2002-2003 (OPA/2002/NONE/3). The mandate of TOS was renewed at WP.8 meetings in 2003 and in 2004. Its programme of work for 2004-2005 was also approved (TRADE/WP.8/2004/15).
2. During the reporting period TOS work focused on (i) a publication on good practices in access to financing and ICT; (ii) assessment of data on women's entrepreneurship; (iii) analysis of training needs and methodologies; and (iv) supporting sub-regional initiatives.
3. A second volume presenting good practices on women's entrepreneurship, "*Access to financing and ICT for women entrepreneurs in the UNECE region*", was published (ECE/TRADE/336; sales No. E.04.II.E.11). The publication, available in English and Russian, includes policy recommendations on micro-credit schemes, cooperatives and credit lines for women entrepreneurs provided by commercial banks. It shows how E-technologies could be used to develop small companies run by women and presents also the assessment of data on self-employment by sex and guidelines to improve data collection and methodologies.
4. The TOS reviewed methodologies and data on women's entrepreneurship. It concluded that data are inconsistent, have many gaps and are not comparable across the UNECE region.

Problems are related to general weaknesses of data on self-employment (such as lack of a common definition of an entrepreneur, variety of sources of data and indicators used at national levels) but also very limited availability of gender-disaggregated data. The TOS therefore recommended that further work be considered on data and methodologies aimed to establish: (i) a standard framework for defining entrepreneurship; (ii) a common set of indicators to measure entrepreneurship; and (iii) gender-disaggregated data.

5. An analysis of training needs and capacity (TNCA) and development of training modules was carried out by a TOS expert. A list of criteria for selecting good practices was also prepared.

6. TOS representatives participated in two sub-regional workshops in Udine, Italy (April 2004) and Portoroz, Slovenia (November 2004), in cooperation with host institutions, respectively the gender bureau of Provincia di Udine and the Small Business Development Centre of Slovenia. The workshops improved knowledge on the impact of EU enlargement on women's entrepreneurship and identified good practices from Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, including at the level of regions (rural areas) and municipalities (Berlin). The Business incubator for women entrepreneurs (Graz, Austria) demonstrated how similar centres could be established elsewhere.

7. An ad hoc meeting of the TOS was held on 7 June 2004 in Istanbul, Turkey. It discussed questions related to the organization of the sub-regional UNECE Forum of Women Entrepreneurs, to be hosted by the Turkish Government, Gender Bureau and the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, as reflected in the WP.8 programme of work for 2004-2005 (TRADE/WP.8/2004/14). The Forum will be held in 2005. The meeting also discussed a project proposal to support women's entrepreneurship in the Balkans. [Ms. Virginia Littlejohn, CEO Global Project on Women's Entrepreneurship (United States) was elected as the second deputy chair of TOS. The ad hoc meeting was organized at the request of the representatives of the host country and TOS members, who participated in the event on women's entrepreneurship organized on the occasion of the OECD ministerial meeting on SMEs (3-6 June 2004).

8. Cooperation was established with the Eurochambers Network of gender focal points in national chambers of commerce and the International Council of Small Business (ICSB) – women in business group.

9. The Working Party may wish to consider the recommendation by its Enlarged Bureau to discontinue the mandate of the Team of Specialists on Women's Entrepreneurship and to deal with women's entrepreneurship issues in the framework of the proposed sub-programme on Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development and the regional advisory services.
