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**MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIES IN AFRICA**

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## NOTE

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## ABSTRACT

Trade liberalization is deemed beneficial to a country because it is supposed to lead to growth resulting from a better allocation of resources in the world economy, exchange of knowledge, transfer of technologies and a consequent increase in productivity, as well as the development of human and physical capital. With the expansion of domestic production, income opportunities as a whole generally increase.

Within this context, women can be the winners or losers. Their multiple responsibilities and gender-related constraints, such as a lack of access to productive inputs and resources, can mean that they are not able to seize the opportunities provided by trade expansion to the same degree as men. Despite this, their entrepreneurial spirit has made them particularly active in various sectors of African economies. Given appropriate empowerment and encouragement, they could contribute significantly to economic growth and development on the continent.

In order to promote a mutually supportive, win-win (high growth, low gender inequality) scenario in the context of trade liberalization in Africa, women's multiple roles, responsibilities and limitations need to be taken into account. This report seeks to provide elements for the construction of just such a scenario, and considers how and why women as a specific target population in sustainable development policies could enhance the effectiveness of trade liberalization policies in a mutually supportive path of development and poverty reduction in Africa.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GATS</b>	General Agreement on Trade in Services
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>ITC</b>	International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>IWGGT</b>	Informal Working Group on Gender and Trade
<b>JITAP</b>	Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme
<b>LDC</b>	Least Developed Country
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MTS</b>	Multilateral Trading System
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NTAE</b>	Non-Traditional Agricultural Export
<b>S&amp;D</b>	Special and Differential Treatment
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
<b>SPS</b>	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
<b>TRIPS</b>	Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (also a WTO agreement)
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

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## **I. GENDER MAINSTREAMING: KEY PERSPECTIVES AND STAKEHOLDERS**

### **A. Gender mainstreaming and the United Nations**

The United Nations has been addressing issues relating to the advancement of women and gender equality since the early 1970s, a process which has led to greater international recognition of the importance of incorporating a gender perspective in all the goals of the United Nations (political, economic and social), including poverty eradication, human rights, good governance and environmentally sustainable development (Hannan, 2001).

The Beijing Platform for Action, which emerged from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, reinforced the various efforts undertaken previously and established gender mainstreaming as a global strategy for the promotion of gender equality.

Paragraph 58b of the Beijing Platform for Action calls on governments to: “Analyse from a gender perspective, policies and programmes – including those related to macroeconomic stability, structural adjustment, external debt problems, taxation, investments, employment, markets and all relevant sectors of the economy – with respect to their impact on poverty, on inequality and particularly on women”. Paragraph 164 addresses gender mainstreaming when it states: “In addressing the economic potential and independence of women, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively” (Hannan, 2000:2).

The Beijing Platform for Action recognized that much progress had been made towards an understanding of the negative impact of gender inequalities in some areas of economic development, particularly with regard to obstacles to the economic empowerment of women and the elimination of poverty (paragraphs 47,48). However, there was less recognition of the importance of a gender perspective in other areas of macroeconomic policy and institutions (General Assembly 2000, para 21, 53, as cited in Hannan, 2000:3). As a result, a number of feminist economists have highlighted that macro-economic policies and institutions that fail to take gender issues into account contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities, which harm the achievement of macro-economic goals.

Other intergovernmental mandates that deal specifically with the incorporation of gender into economic development include the agreed conclusions from the discussions of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1997, on women and the economy, and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in June 2000 to follow up implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The latter produced an outcome document which listed strategies for gender mainstreaming; Hannan’s (2001) summary (box 1) allows us to view the key points of the General Assembly’s strategy for the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The Millennium Development Goals agreed upon the same year include gender equality as one of the goals to be achieved by 2015. Gender mainstreaming is recognized as key to achieving not only gender equality and women’s empowerment, but also each of the other MDGs. Educating and empowering women are key elements in any strategy to improve maternal health, and fight AIDS and infant mortality, due especially to women’s reproductive and care-giving role. The fact that

women are responsible for household food security makes them essential actors in the war on famine. Their contribution to household income through their work, salaried or otherwise, makes them key actors in the eradication of extreme poverty. Also, the Commission on the Status of Women, in Resolution E/CN.6/2001/1.6 rev 1, states that gender mainstreaming “constitutes a critical strategy in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and for achieving the overall goal of gender equality.

### **Summary of key issues in the outcome document from the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly**

“The following aspects are emphasized:

- Responsibility for implementing the mainstreaming strategy is system wide, and rests at the highest levels within agencies, departments, funds and commissions; and adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress need to be established.
- Specific strategies should be formulated for gender mainstreaming; priorities should be established.
- The initial definitions of issues/problems across all areas of activity should be done in such a manner that gender differences and disparities can be diagnosed – assumptions that issues/problems are neutral from a gender equality perspective should never be made. Gender analysis should always be carried out, separately or as part of existing analyses.
- Analytical reports and recommendations on policy or operational issues within each area of responsibility should take gender differences and disparities fully into account.
- Medium-term plans and programme budgets should be prepared in such a manner that gender perspectives and gender equality issues are explicit.
- Gender mainstreaming requires that efforts are made to broaden women’s equitable participation at all levels of decision-making.
- Systematic use of gender analysis, sex-disaggregation of data, and commissioning of sector-specific gender studies, as needed, is recommended.
- Training should be provided to all personnel at headquarters and in the field, with appropriate follow-up
- Mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, women-specific activities; nor does it do away with the need for gender units or focal points.
- Clear political will and allocation of adequate resources for mainstreaming, including if necessary additional financial and human resources (gender units or focal points), are important for translation of the concept into reality.”

Source: Hannan, Carolyn (2001). *The United Nations commitment to gender mainstreaming – a global strategy for promoting equality between women and men*. Paper prepared for the 2001 ODCCP field representatives seminar. Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. New York: 3.

The agreed conclusions from the discussions of the Commission on the Status of Women on women and the economy in 1997 stated: “The interlinkage between national policies at the macro level and economic and social gender roles and relations at the micro level should be clear in order to make the policies more effective. The impact on women of liberalisation policies, which include privatisation, financial and trade policies, should be assessed (199773, para 23, contained in Commission on the Status of Women, 2000).

As noted by Hannan (2001:1-2), gender mainstreaming involves “identifying and addressing relevant gender perspectives in data collection and research, analysis, legislation, policy development, development of projects and programmes, as well as in training and other institutional development activities.” In order to effectively mainstream gender, however, much



more is involved than increasing women's participation; it involves identification of the linkages between gender and different sectors.

In February 2003, UNCTAD was asked by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Equality (2002:2) to be the coordinator of an Interagency Task Force on Gender and Trade. In the context of globalization and trade liberalization, this task force could make a major contribution towards an understanding of the impact of trade on gender equality (and vice versa) and related policy implications.<sup>1</sup>

## **B. Approaches to gender mainstreaming by the World Bank and other organizations**

The World Bank started to define its approach to gender mainstreaming in 1979, in a report on the situation of women, entitled, *Recognizing the "Invisible" Woman in Development: The World Bank's Experience*. Its objective was to identify the contributions of women to development, the problems they face and how they are affected by development.<sup>2</sup> It acknowledged the importance of issues concerning women and development and called for further studies to be made on the subject, which would lead eventually to the recognition by the Bank of "the relevance of attention to women for poverty alleviation and economic growth, on grounds of improved efficiency and equity" (World Bank, 1995).

The Bank's first policy framework on the issue was contained in the 1994 policy paper, *Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development*, and the accompanying Operational Directive 4.20, *The Gender Dimension of Development* (World Bank, 2003:56). These policies, and the Bank management's support to gender issues resulted in a significant effort towards gender mainstreaming (World Bank, 1996:3-6). Arguably, the most significant advance during the 1990s was the recognition of the need for "engendering" macroeconomic policy, and the recommendation that macroeconomic frameworks sensitive to gender be developed in order to serve as guides for an understanding of the gender implications of different economic restructuring packages (World Bank, 1996:3-6). Despite these efforts at gender mainstreaming, significant obstacles remained.

The World Bank's rationale for gender mainstreaming is based on observations that gender inequalities undermine people's well-being,<sup>3</sup> entail high costs in terms of productivity and economic growth, and affect good governance. More importantly it recognizes that there is a positive correlation between gender equality and economic growth in both directions (in other words, more equality equals more growth and vice-versa), although this does not conclusively imply a causal relationship. The World Bank's 2000/2001 *World Development Report: Attacking Poverty*, also identified gender as a central issue affecting three facets of the fight against poverty: opportunities, security and empowerment. The Bank's more recent policy and strategy

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<sup>1</sup> Hannan (2000: 5) cites a series of United Nations "briefing notes" on gender perspectives concerning a number of key issues in macroeconomics and trade which discuss how the incorporation of gender perspectives in these areas support economic goals lists ways for economists to start using gender perspective in their work.

<sup>2</sup> This report attempted to present the situation of women in each of the thematic areas it covered: education, agriculture and rural development, urban development, salaried and informal work, population, health and nutrition.

<sup>3</sup> The cost to well-being of gender inequalities is measured using indicators such as prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS, violence, child malnutrition and mortality, and high fertility (World Bank, 2001: 74-83).

on gender mainstreaming (World Bank, 2002) further makes the case that gender equality is a question of development efficiency. Its operations include monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming, fund allocation and integration of gender concerns into pertinent analytical work and through the implementation of the process to ensure that its staff and member countries “make rational choices about gender-responsive development actions” (World Bank, 2002:18).

The World Bank’s poor track record with its structural adjustment policies shows that it is not enough to promote micro enterprises and project-based solutions for women for the fight against poverty to be effective; the gender implications of macroeconomic policies must also be explored, and in a participatory fashion. The correlation between gender and economic issues should be a central consideration in gender mainstreaming in all institutions and programmes, including JITAP. Gender equality is a development goal in and of itself. But gender mainstreaming in the context of the MTS and trade issues, requires that its implications be made clear and that they be translated in economic terms. Just as gender consolidation in the World Bank was the result of extensive research which documented the importance of eliminating gender inequalities for effective and efficient development and promotion of economic growth, gender mainstreaming in general macroeconomic and trade policy can be effectively achieved only on the basis of extensive research and understanding of the implications of gender for trade and macroeconomics, and vice-versa.

There are three arenas in which mainstreaming strategies are relevant to development: the development cooperation agency, the development programme and the country itself (Schalkwyk and Woroniuk, 1996). Community ownership of gender mainstreaming strategies is an essential component both within an agency and the country for successful gender mainstreaming; conversely, the “ghettoization of gender” has been identified as a factor contributing to the failure of gender mainstreaming efforts (Dankelman, 2004). Activities essential for both country and agency ownership are: the generation and use of gender analysis, capacity-building, education and training of professionals and staff in gender (Kindervatter, 1999); and the establishment of partnerships and strategic alliances (with women’s organizations, other NGOs and social movements, and among development agencies) for knowledge, cooperation and resource sharing (Wells and McEwan, 2004).

Other important steps for ensuring gender mainstreaming include:

- The development of a gender mainstreaming plan for sectoral policies;
- A gender review for all phases and products of work;
- Gender balance in staff ratios (especially in decision-making positions);
- Targeted interventions to reduce gender inequalities;
- Equal participation of women (especially at decision-making levels of sectoral policies);
- Monitoring by women’s organizations, and accountability (Dankelman, 2004).

## II. MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

### A. Identifying the gender impact of trade and development policies

A gender-sensitive approach to trade involves a vision of trade as an essential component of efforts to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable, people-centred development. This implies that in order to effectively mainstream gender, the current debate on the possible positive or negative effects of trade liberalization on gender equality, and vice-versa, must be understood within a broad context and framed in relation to overall development objectives, such as those defined by the MDGs.

However, since trade is essentially an economic issue, and gender equality has many implications in the economic sphere, trade also has significant consequences for gender equality. We examine both these implications and consequences in this paper. In a general sense, the importance of gender for economic development is better understood when it is viewed as a “category of social and economic differentiation that influences the division of labor, and the distribution of work, income, wealth, productivity of inputs, and economic behavior of agents” (*World Development*, 2000: 1148).

Gender inequality is associated with social norms that assign distinct roles to each gender in a division of labour that limits the opportunities available to women and their ability to participate in political and economic life on the same footing as men. The responsibility of women for reproduction of the household (and, by extension, of society) involves the functions of caregiver, cleaner, cook and seamstress, among others, to which can be added, in rural agrarian societies, that of subsistence food producer. These responsibilities severely limit women’s possibilities of finding full-time, paid employment in the labour market. When women do integrate in the formal labour market, they face occupational segregation and discrimination resulting from gender stereotyping and from male authority at home, which translates into the workplace as well. This disadvantaged position weakens women’s bargaining power both at home and in the workplace, which translates into a reduced capacity to earn an income and limits, if not prevents, their access to resources such as land and credit. When combined with a lack of access to services such as education and health care, the full economic dimensions of gender inequality are revealed, in terms of both opportunities and outcomes, as identified by Tran-Nguyen (2004:3-4):

- “Employment opportunities – opportunities to participate in the labour market in all sectors (horizontal distribution of activities) and all occupations (vertical distribution of activities in a profession);
- Returns from labour (wage equality);
- Conditions of work and quality of employment...[including]...sustainability and regularity of employment, social protection (health, maternity, unemployment and pension), working time, intensity of work, occupational risks, possibility of career advancement or skill upgrading and social status attached to a job;
- Access to basic services (such as health and education);
- Access to resources (such as land, credit and business services);
- Empowerment (participation in decision-making);
- Distribution of income inside and outside the household (or poverty levels).”

In addition, given the role of women as primary caregivers in the household, they tend to be concentrated in the informal economy, as self-employed (often home) workers and owners of small businesses, as this allows them to combine work and family responsibilities.

Research demonstrates that women's income (whether from the formal or informal sector) largely goes towards caring for the family (e.g. providing food, education and health), whereas men tend to have more control over income (whether earned by them or their wives) for the satisfaction of their individual needs (including leisurely pursuits such as drinking). Highlighting the interrelatedness of women's productive and reproductive roles also provides a better understanding of the importance of their roles in the reproduction of society. Nowhere is this interrelatedness more evident than in economies dominated by agriculture, where women tend to participate in cash crop farming done by their husbands, while at the same time being equally responsible for household food security and basic medical care, in addition to coping with typical domestic responsibilities such as child-rearing and running the household.

Trade policies have an impact both on women's formal and informal labour market participation, and on their unpaid domestic labour. They also have a strong impact on the structure and scale of employment and on the distribution of resources (e.g. labour and land) between "a tradeable and a non-tradable production sector" and between "business and household enterprises" (Floro, 2001). The resulting modification of production relations in both the formal and informal sectors has gender-specific effects "in terms of social burden, earnings, employment and level of unpaid work" (Floro, 2001:6).

In a general sense, trade liberalization policies are considered beneficial because they can lead to growth resulting from a better allocation of resources in the world economy, exchange of knowledge, transfer of technology and an increase in productivity and the development of human and physical capital (Tran-Nguyen, 2004:15). With the expansion of domestic production, employment opportunities as a whole generally increase. Women can be winners or losers from trade liberalization due to the fact that "different sectors of production can gain or lose from international trade, certain categories of workers or population have fewer capabilities to absorb adjustment costs, and international competitive pressure to reduce costs of production affect workers differently depending on their skills or specialization" (Tran-Nguyen, 2004: 16).

Women can gain from the expansion of the sectors in which they are mainly active and for which they have the required skills. Some examples of segments of the labour market in which employment opportunities for women (with low skills) have been multiplied due to trade-related expansion are: textiles and clothing, footwear and horticulture (Tran-Nguyen, 2004:17). There are several developing countries in which "the employment effect of export orientation has been a significant turning point for women's engagement in the market economy", such as Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Taiwan Province of China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Mauritius (Floro, 2001:7). The expansion of employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector has often been followed by an expansion of employment in the services sector (e.g. basic utilities, transport, communications, infrastructure, specialized business services, health care and childcare for the families of working women and housekeeping), both domestically and through migration.

The liberalization of trade in goods and services has increased income-earning opportunities for women and significantly improved their situation compared to their former unpaid or poorly paid domestic, informal or agricultural work (Tran-Nguyen, 2004:18). There is also evidence that wages earned in the trade-related formal sector confer a higher status on women and give them more decision-making power in the household; and women workers gain a higher sense of self-esteem, more opportunities and life-choice options (Tiano and Fiala, 1991 and Amin et al. (1998) cited in Tran-Nguyen, 2004: 18; Floro, 2001:7). In addition, this phenomenon seems to weaken traditional gender values and leads to a change in gender relations in some societies by shifting parents' perceptions of daughters from a liability to a potential income earner in whom investment in education becomes worthwhile (Tran-Nguyen, 2004: 18).

However, research has also revealed several negative effects of trade policies on women in terms of employment, returns from labour and conditions of work (labour standards) mainly in the context of the modern export sector. Women play an important role in the export competitiveness of many developing countries by providing a source of cheap labour for the labour-intensive functions of global value chains of transnational corporations (TNCs). Many countries have created export-processing zones (EPZs) "to attract foreign investors and provide special incentives for export activities in such sectors as electronics, information-technology industries, footwear, textiles and clothing" (Tran-Nguyen, 2004:20). Women in these sectors are typically confined to low-skilled, low-paid jobs and, as the nature of employment in the zone evolves and includes higher technology inputs, the nature of the workforce evolves to include more men (Tran-Nguyen, 2004:21). When companies subcontract their work out to the informal labour market in order to remain cost-competitive, women are typically caught in a downward spiral in terms of flexibilization and a decline in wages and quality of work (Tran-Nguyen, 2004:21). The more sophisticated jobs are generally offered to male workers because of a "male breadwinner" bias,<sup>4</sup> whereby employers take women's professional involvement less seriously and exclude them from the training or skills upgrading offered to male workers.

There is a debate as to whether trade narrows or widens the wage differentials between men and women. Statistics compiled between 1985 and 2001 for 25 countries show that, as a general trend over time, in all regions wage differentials have tended to diminish, although there are a few "backsliding" countries. In all the countries studied, women's wages remained lower than men's, causing the author to reach the conclusion that "competitive forces arising from foreign trade have not eliminated the wage gap between men and women. Even in the most industrialized countries, where women have attained the same level of skills as men, women still earn less than men." (Tran-Nguyen, 2004:25-26).

Thus it seems that market forces do not cause wage gaps to close, but does this necessarily mean that competition will push firms to consistently use wage gaps as a tool to remain competitive? While this may be a strategy that many firms are pursuing in the short term, Tran-Nguyen (2004:27) argues that a strategy which develops export industries on the basis of cheap labour cannot be sustainable, as long-term development is undermined by fierce competition which penalizes the competitive advantage of early movers. The maintenance of a competitive edge through wage differentials is not a feasible long-term strategy. Moreover there are other factors

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<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of the effects of the "male breadwinner bias" on macroeconomic policy, see Elson and Cagatay (2000: 1347-1364.).

that cause employers to favour female labour, such as greater adaptability and skill at managing interpersonal relations (attributes increasingly seen as valuable in many service industries). Taking this into account, it can be seen that reducing the pay gap between men and women does not prejudice competitiveness. According to Joekes, 2002:186), “Enterprises largely take wage levels as given and tend to invest and adapt production organization methods appropriately to maintain and increase productivity in response to wage increases. In any event, many other aspects of competitiveness (market intelligence, product design, marketing and so on) are important to firm and sector performance and these are independent of the wage bill.”

However, wage discrimination concerns tend to affect only women in formal salaried employment. As already mentioned, a large proportion of the world’s women are self-employed. Whether in the formal or informal sector, whether producers of goods or services, these women entrepreneurs suffer from a lack of access to resources (capital, credit) and often face discrimination in attempting to set up and maintain their business. This affects their ability to adapt to changing market conditions by changing sectors or production. It has been shown that the liberalization of financial services resulting from trade liberalization policies has not increased the options available to small (especially women-owned) businesses (Tran-Nguyen, 2004:28). In addition, trade policies involving the lowering of barriers and tariffs on imports may pose a direct threat to many small women-owned local businesses if the goods they produce are unable to compete with cheaper imports.

Women producers of agricultural goods often face similar problems to those faced by owners of small businesses. Many of them lack access to and control over land, and when they do participate in the export-oriented agricultural sector their earnings tend to be lower as their crops are usually more perishable and of lower value than those of men. Where their crops do find export markets, it is common for men to then “capture” these crops or the land used to grow them. If they contribute their labour to production of export crops, their share of the revenue is lower than that of men; and “where the expansion of the export agriculture sector entails increase in paid labour, although women are often preferred as the source of paid labour (as in manufacturing), conditions of employment are more precarious and lower paid than in the case of men.” (Joekes, 2002:186-187).

In addition, women farmers who sell their crops locally face the same problems as businesswomen do when trade barriers are lowered and the market is flooded with cheaper, heavily subsidized imports from other countries.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, export expansion in agriculture can threaten food security as has been evidenced in parts of Africa, the Caribbean and Central America, where women subsistence producers have lost their access to land following a rise in cash crop production, leading them to move into the informal sector, especially in Africa (Floro, 2001: 7).

Another important issue relating to the impact of trade policy on gender equality concerns the effects of structural adjustment. Gender-related literature has repeatedly criticized structural adjustment policies (including trade liberalization policies) for the disproportionately high social costs borne by women as a result of these policies. The argument, according to Joekes (2002:

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the Briefing Statement on Gender and Trade of the Informal Working Group on Gender and Trade (IWGGT, 1998: 3) mentions two cases where local production of garlic and onions by female farmers is directly threatened by subsidized imports.

187) is that “demands on women’s unpaid labour time within the household increased as wage incomes and social services... [such as health and education]... fell and product prices rose.” This phenomenon has led to the “feminization of poverty” which has had a disempowering effect on women by increasing their responsibilities while reducing their resources. It has thus affected their capacity to effectively balance and manage their different roles and to be able to take advantage of empowering economic opportunities. Even more important than the resulting economic inefficiency stemming from women being prevented from pursuing productive careers, is the high human cost: “women’s physical and psychological health suffer due to the resulting overwork, malnutrition, stress and tensions of managing households with inadequate resources” (IWGGT, 1998:2).

## **B. Stakeholders and strategies for women’s participation in trade policy design and implementation**

Women participate massively in economies: in agriculture, in the informal sector, through unpaid domestic labour and, more and more, in formal salaried employment. It is therefore crucial that they be given a voice by ensuring their participation in the formulation and implementation of trade policies, particularly in the sectors in which a large proportion of women are involved (e.g. services, textiles, agriculture and commodities). Unfortunately, their participation is often sorely lacking in the decision-making, power-wielding arenas within their economic sectors, within trade unions, within their governments and in international trade negotiations.

Ensuring their participation will involve seeking out “grassroots” women’s organization and NGOs – from small groups of producers and networks of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, to gender activists and academics concerned with trade and development. Consultation and inclusion of this segment of civil society as key stakeholders is a necessary (but not sufficient) first step towards ensuring the effective participation of women. Another important area is capacity building to make sure that all segments of civil society have the resources with which to participate.<sup>6</sup>

Groups of women workers and networks of women entrepreneurs can play a particular role in shaping national trade policy. The informal economy contains a large proportion of women workers. These workers are often neglected in the strategies of trade unions, and efforts to defend and organize them have been taken up by new organizations such as Home-workers Worldwide (HWW), which has developed a programme to link their activities with those of unions and other home-worker organizations.<sup>7</sup> It is through organization, capacity building and leadership training

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<sup>6</sup> This argument was put forward in an APRODEV case study of Zimbabwe, which identified likely effects of economic partnership agreements on the country, and concluded that there was the need to ensure that women had a voice in trade policy-making Ulmer, Karin (2003). “Are trade agreements with the EU beneficial to women in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific?” in *Gender and Development*, Vol. 11, No.1: 53.

<sup>7</sup> An organization whose aim is specifically to support women workers “through information exchange, international networking, and public education” is Women Working Worldwide (Pearson, 2003: 14). Another example is Australia’s Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union, which through the “Fair Wear” campaign, “used information on subcontracted chains to improve home worker’s conditions, organise home workers, achieve legislation, and put in place a retailers’/manufacturers’ code specific to home workers”(Delaney, 2004). This was done using a four-pronged strategy, which involved targeting the public, the government, the home-workers themselves, and the use of existing law and codes. Of particular interest for determining effective strategies to enhance women’s participation is the way the home-workers were organized. At the beginning “training, advocacy and

of this sort that labour unions and civil society can work together to ensure women workers gain empowerment. Gender desks could be established in trade unions and trade and industry associations (including agricultural associations) of countries.

Women entrepreneurs are another important stakeholder group that needs to be involved in trade policy negotiations and national policy strategy formulation. A study of female entrepreneurs in Botswana (Ntseane, 2004:41) reports that in response to the constraints they face they rely on non-competitive networking and forming of pressure groups. Their strategy of non-competitive networking extends through regional networking in South Africa and even reaches out globally, effectively supporting a growing cross-border trade where businesswomen deal directly with consumers and in which their markets thrive as a result of the female networks. According to the author, several studies have shown that this cross-border trade has been effective in lifting some women out of poverty. In order to guarantee the participation of these women entrepreneurs in trade policy design and implementation it would be important to provide a space for these networks to make themselves heard in decision-making arenas for the formulation of national trade policy and its implementation. They can also bring a new vision of trade to the negotiating table based on collaborative competition. Provisions should therefore be made at both the national and international levels for the strengthening of such women's networks, including support for networks of gender specialists, as it is crucial to "identify and use expertise within the region in gender analysis, and support the exchange and transfer of information and skills within the region" (CAFRA/WIDE, 1998:4).

Governments, the United Nations and other agencies, such as the ILO, the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO could also promote women's participation. A four-pronged strategy involving these stakeholders could be pursued. First of all, there is a notable lack of women staff, especially in high-level positions, in some of these organizations (notably, the WTO and IMF) and in some governments. A "quota" policy could thus be introduced. Also, the creation of "gender desks" within governments and within the organizations lacking them (such as the WTO and the IMF) would help ensure that women's participation becomes a priority within these structures. In addition, consultative mechanisms with civil society could be reinforced (or created where they are lacking). And an "external gender-monitoring group" could be created to monitor and evaluate progress in gender mainstreaming and women's participation, as suggested by the Women's Caucus (2002) in Monterrey.

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multilingual communication" were involved, then gradually workers gained confidence and invited the organizers into their homes to document working conditions. FairWear eventually brought groups of workers together to "document their problems, discuss what could be done, and examine where they were placed in the contract chain...Home worker leadership has developed through these...activities" (Delaney, 2004:25-26).



### **III. EMPOWERING WOMEN AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING TRADE AND ACHIEVING POVERTY REDUCTION IN AFRICA**

#### **A. Empowering women as economic actors and decision-makers**

Various views have been expressed on the issue of the empowerment of women as economic actors and its relation to factors such as export-led employment and micro-credit initiatives. Views have diverged in part because of the lack of a clear, unanimously agreed-upon definition of “empowerment”. Different studies have focused on different elements of what could constitute “gain in” or “access to” power for women. We subscribe to the broad definition by Fernando (1997:4-5) that encompasses various aspects of women’s empowerment and how they affect women’s contributions to an economy and to decision-making: “Empowerment, in broad terms, refers to an institutional environment that enables women to take control over material assets, intellectual resources, and ideology. The material assets over which control can be exercised may be physical, human, or financial, as land, water, forests, peoples’ bodies and labor, money and access to money. Intellectual resources include knowledge, information and ideas. Control over ideology signifies the ability to generate, propagate, sustain and institutionalize specific sets of beliefs, values, attitudes and behavior. Empowerment ‘begins not only by recognizing the systemic forces that oppress them, but [by acting] to change existing power relationships”.

Women’s economic vulnerability is a key factor contributing to their powerlessness; improving their economic status is therefore necessary for their empowerment because of its positive effects on the other dimensions of empowerment mentioned above. Thus micro-enterprises owned by women, often supported by micro-credit, have become key strategies for the empowerment of women by improving their economic status. High repayment rates, varying between 85 and 97 per cent (Fernando, 1997; Van Staveren, 2001a) seem to indicate that women are using the loans productively and controlling credit “In Bangladesh alone, more than four million women now receive micro finance services” (Hunt and Kasynathan, 2001:42). Other success stories involving microfinance initiatives have been reported in countries such as Ethiopia, Madagascar and Uganda (UNCTAD, 2002).

From a global finance perspective, this repayment rate translates into greater efficiency of the credit market. In addition, “If women are excluded from credit markets, poverty cannot be reduced to the same extent that it might be if they were able to borrow. This is because loans to women appear to result in a higher amount of money being spent on the household than is the case with loans to men. On average, for every 91 (US) cents that women are loaned, an extra \$1 will be spent on household consumption (for example, purchase of food, clothing, and other essentials). In comparison, it takes an average loan of \$1.48 dollars to men to result in the same increase in household consumption” (Van Staveren, 2001:15). In addition, there is evidence that when women control income from credit, they spend it on security-related assets, such as land, and that mother’s control of credit (rather than father’s control) is more likely to result in daughters being sent to school (Hunt and Kasynathan, 2001:46). Scaling up from the household level to the macro level, there is also evidence that, according to the law of diminishing marginal returns, “Since women have less access to...production factors...it becomes clear that the combined gender biases in financial markets, technology markets, and education, together limit

the potential growth rates of GDP, and result in a failure to reduce poverty” (Van Staveren, 2001:16).

Thus, in development terms, the benefits of empowering women as economic actors through micro-financing can be seen not only in the high repayment rates, but also in the multiplier effects that credit and income have on the woman and her family. Such effects include gains in human capital development through training and building of women’s self-confidence, and investment in children’s education, health and well-being which have been shown to yield high returns on investment in terms of future productivity and participation in a growing economy.

However, micro-credit programmes have had mixed results. While there is evidence of their leading to women’s empowerment and control over income, this may not necessarily be the case and tends to vary by family and community. It is therefore dangerous to assume that if women earn money they will be able to keep it and decide how it is spent (Van Staveren, 2001a). Sometimes such programmes have only marginal or even negative impacts on women’s empowerment (Mayoux, 1999, cited in Hunt and Kasynathan, 2001:4). For example, while there is some evidence to indicate that microfinance has been effective in giving women control over assets and in increasing the likelihood of their daughters being sent to school (Kabeer, 1998, cited in Hunt and Kasynathan, 2001:46.), other evidence has shown the contrary in both cases.<sup>8</sup>

What this shows is that for microfinance programmes to be effective, they need to be complemented by additional strategies that contribute to the other aspects of women’s empowerment. Gender-sensitive and gender-specific strategies for empowerment need to be incorporated *ex-ante* into these programmes. Awareness raising is a necessary initial step to women’s empowerment because it improves their “capacity to define and analyze their subordination, to construct a vision of the kind of world they want, and to act in pursuit of that vision” (Kabeer, 1994, cited in Fernando, 1997:5). Without this kind of awareness-raising, women who participate in microcredit initiatives may never see themselves as more than extra income earners, and may never develop the desire or the resources to shift the balance of power in the household (often through negotiation with their spouses) in order to control their own income and launch themselves as entrepreneurs. The balance of power within the household is a key element in the success of women’s empowerment. For example, it has been shown that when the spouse is absent, and the household is effectively female-headed this significantly increases the likelihood of women controlling their loan incomes (Hunt and Kasynathan, 2001:45). Ideally, negotiation with the spouse arising from awareness-raising efforts with both men and women should aim to achieve similar results.

There can be several other barriers confronting women along the road to successful entrepreneurship, including: a lack of access to resources – both those that help alleviate the burden of their domestic responsibilities and those that are crucial to their kind of work (land) – lack of proper training and education, lack of a positive self-image and self-confidence, and lack of market access.<sup>9</sup> The obvious role that liberalization can play in women’s empowerment is by

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<sup>8</sup> For more details concerning control over assets, see Halder, SR and Hussain, AM.M, “Identification of the Poorest and the Impact of Credit on Them: The Case of BRAC”, unpublished paper, BRAC. Dhaka cited in Kabeer, Naila, 1998.

<sup>9</sup> A major constraint is “women’s lack of access to the market for the purchase of inputs and for the sale of goods, particularly for non-traditional income-generating enterprises” (Goetz and Sen Gupta, 1996, cited in Hunt and Kasynathan, 2001).

opening up access to new markets for them, and this needs to be accompanied by planning, policy and action that tackle the other barriers simultaneously.

Where these factors are taken into consideration, often, microfinancing programmes have evolved beyond simple credit provision, and the impact has been quite positive, extending beyond the initial purpose of the programme. Many microcredit programmes rely on self-help groups which allow the members to build up social capital<sup>10</sup> that generates externalities, rendering the market more efficient either by substituting for it or by complementing it (economies of scale). Such groups also form a base for the personal empowerment of women and for collective action to try and better women's situations. Sometimes these groups can even lead to an increase in women's political participation.<sup>11</sup> One example of a successful programme of this kind is the SEWA programme in India, which goes beyond its initial functions of providing loans to its beneficiaries. Its initial objective was to offer poor women access to credit so they could launch into or expand an economic activity. Today, it performs the functions of a trade union, credit cooperative for lower caste women and those working in the informal sector, self-help groups, and most importantly, serves as a pressure group supporting issues of relevance to women. Beyond its social activities (children's vaccinations, literacy classes, training courses, day-care centres...), it also raises awareness among women of their rights and how to improve their lives and their social status while encouraging a spirit of solidarity. (Marius-Gnanou, 2003: 30).

The extension of the activities of these types of programmes beyond credit and loans is thus of considerable importance, not only in terms of sustainable women's empowerment, but also in terms of the contribution it makes to the overall economic growth impact of gender equality. Several studies have noted the positive impact of gender equality, measured mainly in terms of educational levels, on growth;<sup>12</sup> or the negative impacts of gender inequality in education on growth.<sup>13</sup> The growth impact of an improvement in female education is transmitted through its negative effect on fertility<sup>14</sup> and its increased investment in human capital, both of which increase productivity. In "microfinancing plus" programmes such as SEWA, several initiatives contribute either directly to the education of the beneficiaries (training and literacy courses), or indirectly by freeing beneficiaries' daughters (for example by providing day-care centres) so that they can pursue their education. Through these kinds of initiatives women's empowerment as economic actors can translate into women's empowerment on a broader scale, thus effectively promoting gender equality. And, as mentioned earlier, gender equality and growth can be mutually supportive, although this is not always automatically the case.

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<sup>10</sup> Social capital can be understood as a social resource that emanates from cultural or structural relations with other agents capable of generating externalities which modify peoples' economic situation (Marius-Gnanou, 2003: 27).

<sup>11</sup> For example, Marius-Gnanou (2003:29) mentions that in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu, self-help groups have been notable in augmenting the number of women elected in the last local *panchayat* (literally, "council of sages") elections.

<sup>12</sup> Tran-Nguyen (2004: 10), for example, cites studies by Benavot, 1989; Hill and King, 1995; and Barro and Lee, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Dollar and Gatti, 1999; and Klasen, 1999 (Tran-Nguyen, 2004: 11).

<sup>14</sup> Citing Lagerlöf (2003), Tran-Nguyen (2004) points out that "it is noteworthy that the fertility rate and ratio of female-to-male schooling are inversely related, as shown in a cross-country mapping for a set of 78 countries in 1990".

## **B. Empowering women in Africa: strategic pilot sectors for exploratory paths**

President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, in a speech made at the Second Ordinary Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Trade, Customs and Immigration (27-28 May, 2004) in Kigali, stressed the importance of Africa's participation in the multilateral trading system: "Africa needs the multilateral trading system as much as the multilateral trading system needs Africa to play its deserved role in moving forward the agenda of the WTO. International trade is an important factor of external finance for sustainable growth and poverty reduction. Without international trade Africa will not be able to create sufficient wealth to grow out of poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals" (Nokuzola, 2004:13).

Within this context, the need for women's empowerment, especially as entrepreneurs, was stressed by the Ministers, and the conditions for their economic empowerment were addressed, including the need for a political commitment by heads of State and Government. It was suggested that these commitments then be implemented in each African country through "a national policy for the economic empowerment of women which offers them real business opportunities on the national, regional and international markets; and specific and relevant programmes...for the development of women's entrepreneurship which will facilitate the access of women to land, loans, technological innovations and research results in terms of business opportunities" (Nokuzola, 2004:19-20).

This suggests a clear political will is a prerequisite for effective, gender-sensitive action. It also recognizes a major aspect of women's economic participation, that of facilitating women's entrepreneurship. This aspect cuts across sectors and is where trade liberalization can be of the greatest benefit to women, and vice-versa.

The picture that emerges from the available literature on women's economic participation is complex. Earlier in this paper, in the subsection that reviews the literature on gender and trade/development issues, women's participation in the global economy was seen to take place through a mixture of paid and unpaid, formal and informal sector work. In addition, in largely rural economies, it was noted that women subsistence farmers participate in cash crop production while also often engaging in some sort of entrepreneurial activity, such as agricultural goods production and trading or service provision. Women's responsibilities for reproduction and care of the household have prompted many of them to devise various strategies – depending on their specific contexts and the resources available to them – for generating income and providing food and care to the family. These strategies often combine work in more than one of the sectors where they have a strong presence. In a general sense, in Africa are where women are responsible for securing food, their efforts will primarily concentrate on food production, supplemented by cash generation activities like retail trade and food processing on the side. Where land is scarce, such as in sub-Saharan Africa, strategies are geared towards accessing cash through retail trade, barter and food processing. In all cases, the amount of cash generated determines the type of expenditures they cover, including school and medical expenses or investments in livestock.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Evidence of different methods of income generation and how this income is used can be found in Gladwin et al., 2001 and Deere, 1995 (cited in United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and Mariana Fe B. Durano, International Gender and Trade Network (2004), op. cit: 366-367). Peterson (1999) is also cited stating that "women farmers in eastern Zambia, for example, used 'small money' activities, such as selling buns or fritters or sewing, to raise cash for grinding maize and buying soap and salt. 'Medium money' activities, such as brewing beer and selling crops and livestock, raised cash for school fees and

In Africa, there are several sectors in which women play a key role, and on which trade liberalization could have a potentially positive impact, especially agriculture, fisheries, forestry and mining. Africa's comparative advantage of cheap labour has reinforced primary commodity production in that region through an emphasis on export-led growth. In commodity-dependent developing countries commodity production, in which women constitute the bulk of the labour force, drives development.

Unfortunately, agriculture in the developing world is a struggling sector that continues to be marginalized in world markets, and small farmers in developing countries feel the brunt of this, as they are often unable to compete with foreign imports in domestic markets while being left out of overseas markets. This is due to the constraints that small (men and women) farmers face, such as lack of credit, inadequate infrastructure, lack of adequate land-tenure systems and technology, and, sometimes, civil conflict (Garcia and Nyberg, 2004:78). Developed countries' subsidies to their own farming sector also profoundly affect the capacity of small farmers in developing countries to compete in foreign and domestic markets. These challenges are exacerbated by the gendered division of agricultural labour in Africa, whereby crops produced for household consumption or the local market (tubers, vegetables) tend to be grown and marketed by women, while the production of cash crops such as cotton and sugar is dominated by men (Garcia and Nyberg, 2004). In most cases, when a subsistence crop becomes an export crop, the control of production and commercialization passes from the hands of women to those of men. According to Nosa Viktor, IT consultant and lecturer in physics at the Plateau State Polytechnic in Nigeria: the recent opening of the market in Nigeria to the exportation of cassava has created the effect described above. As cassava is involved in the production of the local food staple *garri*, women were in charge of its production until it became an export crop, and now more men are involved. This raises the question of what will happen to the livelihood of these women as in most communities they cannot inherit land or obtain bank loans because they do not have the collateral or securities required by the banks. Considering that in Africa women produce, process and store up to 80 per cent of food, the transformation of subsistence crops into cash crops also becomes an issue of food security for the region (Madonsela, 2002).<sup>16</sup>

According to a study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), women's involvement in fisheries displays much of the same characteristics and challenges as their involvement in agriculture. In Africa, women are active mainly in artisanal fisheries, fishing in rivers and ponds (and sometimes managing the latter), including "post-harvest handling, preservation (such as salting, smoking and drying), processing (such as making fish paste and cakes) and marketing activities" (Garcia and Nyberg, 2004: 79-81). However, they tend to be involved only in semi-processing because of several constraints that they face. They are not able to take advantage of the opportunities that full processing offers due to their lack of access to capital, equipment, technology, know-how and education, for example. Modernization also affects women's involvement in fisheries as they are unable to meet the growingly stringent sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements and hazard analysis and critical control point

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medicine. 'Large money' activities, which are rare, such as producing cotton or tobacco, were used for purchasing fertilizer or investing in livestock."

<sup>16</sup> There are some countries, like Nigeria, where "Subsistence farming accounts for 90% of Agricultural outputs". *Going Against the Grain: Sustainable Agriculture and the Global Food Economy. The Nigerian Perspective*. Document available at: [http://www.lead.org/events/wye/hLEAD\\_Nigeria\\_FS\\_VC.ppt](http://www.lead.org/events/wye/hLEAD_Nigeria_FS_VC.ppt).

standards, which makes it increasingly difficult for them as small processors to participate in the export supply chain. Also, the landing of fish has tended to become concentrated in fish ports instead of on beaches where women have traditionally participated in the processing and sale of fish. Thus, when a fishery's activity is enlarged or mechanized, it often becomes the domain of men, as in agriculture.

The FAO study also examines women's involvement in forestry. Women are only occasionally employed in forest enterprises where they tend to work as wage labourers or marketers of non-wood products from trees. In addition, their use of forest products for medicines, fuel and food gives them a unique knowledge of forest resources. Harvesting products derived from forest resources other than wood is a labour- and knowledge-intensive activity, which provides significant revenue, and is normally particularly suited to women as it is relatively easy to combine with household responsibilities. However, as with agriculture and fisheries, the development and modernization of forestry, which can potentially bring a higher income, has led to men replacing women (Garcia and Nyberg, 2004). Men are generally responsible for commercial timber and, as owners of the land they tend to be the main beneficiaries of subsidies related to the commercialization of wood. Liberalization policies tend to affect women adversely when forest resources are privatized, as land titles are usually given to (male) heads of households, thus excluding women from the management of forest resources.

However, when projects include components specifically designed for women, their political power and ability to defend their interests can be increased. Some examples include the creation of a leaf gatherers' association in Ghana, a shea butter project in Uganda, and the expansion of the basket industry in Botswana, where "quality has improved and exports have grown, resulting in increased revenues" (Garcia and Nyberg, 2004:81).

These cases of women's involvement in agriculture, fishing and forestry illustrate one of the most salient problems facing women's economic empowerment and involvement in trade: once any activity practiced by women is developed and modernized, men often take it over. Since trade liberalization usually favours agricultural exports over the production of food crops, the benefits go mainly to medium and large-scale farmers in sectors where often only a few farmers and employees are female (Peters, 2004:126). Women smallholders, who are often involved mainly in subsistence food farming, are disadvantaged in terms of taking up new export opportunities because of obstacles to accessing resources such as land and credit. Moreover, the gains from new export opportunities are often unequally distributed. Under agricultural market liberalization, the growth of commercial farming for export may put at risk women's household subsistence farming and small-scale production, thus threatening national as well as household food security.

When women do participate in export-oriented agriculture, they face several challenges. For example, smallholders usually have trouble complying with SPS and environmental standards (Peters, 2004:136). When participating in the production of export crops, women's incomes do not necessarily increase due to the low wages paid to them. Thus there may be a "fall in women's contribution, both in monetary and non-monetary terms,...[which]...may further lower their bargaining power within the household"(Garcia and Nyberg, 2004:111).

On the other hand, Garcia and Nyberg (2004) point out several examples where women have been able to benefit from the intensification of trade. Non-traditional agricultural exports

(NTAEs) have become a market niche where women's participation has greatly increased. One such sector is that of horticultural products (fresh and processed fruits, vegetables, flowers and nuts), in which, since the 1980s, women constitute a significant proportion of the labour force in Africa (notably in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe). For example, in Volta River Estates Ltd., a fair-trade, banana-exporting NTAE firm in Ghana, women comprise about 20 per cent of the workforce. Although they are employed in the unskilled labour segment of banana processing, their salaries are equal to those of men and are much higher than the country's minimum wage. Like the men, they are paid overtime and enjoy three weeks' leave, medical benefits and on-site childcare, besides which their jobs are permanent. Studies for the Ecuadorian and Mexican flower industries also show that NTAEs have the potential to reduce gender inequalities among the younger generation in terms of women's control over income, participation in household decision-making and increased bargaining power with their spouses.

NTAEs and cases involving components of projects specifically designed for women are an encouraging first step. However, in order to reverse the phenomenon of men taking over an activity which becomes lucrative and export-worthy, and in order to promote greater involvement of women in trade, more proactive, affirmative-action types of policies are needed that facilitate women's moving out of the subsistence end of the spectrum and into competitive commerce. These should include not only legislative reform on issues such as access to land and policies to facilitate women's access to other resources and to capacity-building, but also incentives and even subsidies for women's businesses so that they can develop export crops and compete in the commercialization of wood and fisheries, for example. Diversifying production, as is seen in the projects in Botswana and Uganda (mentioned earlier), is one possible alternative approach, for both men and women, but more needs to be done to level the playing field so that men and women can compete equally in commodities production.

Another strategy to level the playing field is to support women who are breaking into sectors traditionally dominated by men, as in cotton farming in Ghana: up to a fifth of cotton farmers are now women. Cotton had been a major crop for small farmers in northern Ghana since its large-scale promotion by the Ghana Cotton Development Board starting in 1957. The Board all but collapsed during the 1980s, and, following structural adjustment policies introduced in 1983, plans were made for the liberalization of the cotton sector. As the Board became a private company, small entrepreneurs also set up their own businesses, which grew from 13 men farmers engaged in cotton production in 1990, to 75 men and women farmers engaged in cotton production in 1996. Men are happy to have women cultivating cotton "because it is of value in the crop rotation system, adding fertility and decimating striga" (Naylor, 1999:43-44). Women, who are quite new to this sector, are still facing constraints relating to time and access to labour (i.e. the labour of family members or paid labourers) and inputs, with the result that income from cotton, while helping alleviate the increasing burden of meeting their children's basic needs, is not improving their living standards. Other initiatives that focus on organizing women into groups to address their strategic needs, as well as to provide credit and extension services and inputs, have been necessary to improve their status, capacities to organise, and levels of confidence (Naylor, 1999:45-46). This shows that privatization can work both for and against the interests of women. More should be done to support the initiatives of women who have broken into this sector, in terms of addressing their strategic needs, their time constraints and lack of access to resources.

Thus, while trade liberalization can have potentially damaging effects on women's subsistence farming and on food security, women should in no way be considered passive victims of policies, but rather as agents who can be supported and assisted in their efforts to adapt to changes in the agricultural sector. Equally, when gender-specific constraints are taken into account and programmes tailor-made to address not only practical gender needs, but also strategic ones (like microfinance initiatives or the above-cited gender-sensitive agricultural programme), gender-based inequalities in control over resources can be reduced.

Another area of commodities in which (rural) women are significantly involved, and that is combined with women's household and reproductive responsibilities, is mining; women play a significant role in small-scale mining.<sup>17</sup>

For all of these different segments of the commodities sector, there are several important trade-related issues such as: market access,<sup>18</sup> market entry, domestic support programmes, export subsidies and competitiveness issues. Addressing these is key to the future development of African least developed countries (LDCs) since the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) which came into effect in 1994. However, it is important to note that the lowering of barriers can reduce the costs of imported goods, thereby benefiting women as consumers. When considering the impacts of these aspects of trade liberalization on women it is important to bear in mind that they do not affect developing and developed countries equally, or all developing countries equally; and neither do they affect men in the same way as women in any given country. This means that understanding the specifics of these differential effects can help indicate paths to follow in order to minimize negative impacts and maximize women's empowerment and participation in the multilateral trading system.

In order to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities the MTS offers, women's capacity for mobility between sectors needs to be improved. This requires that high priority in development policies be given to measures such as providing them with appropriate training and education. In addition, "new alternatives for rural women, such as employment opportunities in the services sector or export industries and improving the supply capacity of women, should take place before developing-country markets are opened up to greater competition in the production of food crops" (Peters, 2004:138). Also, special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing countries in agriculture would help create "enough policy space to overcome the difficulties faced by their smallholders and subsistence farmers" (Peters, 2004:135). Measures that could be useful for this purpose include special product provisions and a special safeguard measure for developing countries. The special product provision – under which a few sensitive products would be exempt from reduction commitments, or the commitments would be lower – and the

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<sup>17</sup> Women participate in mining for "gold, gems, diamonds and other types of precious and easily extractable minerals" in "extraction, processing, sorting, packaging, trading and the provision of services... as miners, entrepreneurs and traders"; and "the proportion of women employed in this sector varies widely both by country (...30 per cent in the United Republic of Tanzania...50 per cent in Zimbabwe) and by region (...60 per cent or more in much of the African region...)" (Puri, 2004: 63).

<sup>18</sup> Tariffs on agricultural products constitute an important barrier to market access, along with SPS and other technical barriers to trade (TBTs). These affect particularly developing countries and LDCs, because even though they benefit from preferential access to some developed-country markets, the volume of their exports to developed-country markets under the various preferential schemes is not particularly high for reasons such as rules of origin, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, supply-side constraints and inadequate institutions and infrastructure. Another market-access concern is that countries are expected to import their agricultural products from those countries that can produce them cheaply. This threatens food security in countries that do not have enough foreign exchange to procure these goods on the market (Peters, 2004:126).



safeguard measure would allow countries to protect women farmers as producers and consumers. It is therefore important that they be considered in domestic development policies and international negotiating strategies.

Thus, in summary, benefits to women in the commodities sector can be increased through measures designed to level the playing field, such as:

- Promoting equality in women's and men's involvement in NTAEs (the VREL example in Ghana at least partially achieves this);
- Purpose-driven, affirmative-action types of policies which support women's breaking into sectors traditionally dominated by men (e.g. helping women break into cotton in Ghana);
- Purpose-driven, affirmative-action types of policies that would help women break out of subsistence level agriculture and fishing (for example) and compete on an even level with men in the more lucrative, modernized and developed export-oriented activities in this sector.

Additional recommendations to consider include:

- Improvement in access to resources;
- A halt to tariff escalation in developed countries;
- Technical assistance, targeted training and education; and
- Gender-disaggregated, context-specific studies of the possible effects of the different aspects of trade liberalization.

Possibly even more important than commodities for the promotion of women's participation in the MTS is the services sector. Women's participation in this sector in developing countries is prominent and expanding. For example, in Kenya, women account for as much as 56 per cent of the workforce in this sector, according to World Bank estimates (Puri, 2004a:223). They are involved in a wide variety of services, including hospitality, health and education and social services, both in the public and private sector. In development terms, the services sector is of prime importance as "developing countries are already exporting a minimum of 40 different services to a range of export markets" (Riddle 2004:177-180).

However, increased foreign participation in domestic services can potentially have negative consequences, especially for small women-owned service providers. In order to prevent these potential negative consequences, and instead maximize the possible development benefits from the liberalization of trade in services, developing countries need to implement gender-sensitive regulatory frameworks which are "grounded in a fundamental understanding of the role of services as production inputs, their current domestic availability [in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy] and the existing range of service exports" (Riddle, 2004:181). Apparently, even though services account for about 62 per cent of global economic activities and most of the GDP of developing countries, few of these countries have incorporated them into their economic development plans. Telecommunications infrastructure and incentives are lacking, including microenterprise initiatives that would favour the typically micro and small service firms (Riddle, 2004:193-194). In addition, most services, with the exception of tourism, are not

included in national export strategies, and even tourism is of dubious benefit to women in the absence of gender-sensitive policy support.

Policy recommendations to assist governments in introducing measures for the empowerment of women in the services sector in the context of trade liberalization have tended to focus on the following key areas (Riddle, 2004:181-195,199-208):

- Recognizing the need for special provisions and funding to promote local and women-owned service providers. For example:
  1. Ensure that economic development organizations focus on service sector analyses in economic reviews and allocate significant funding to support business-to-business service-sector development.
  2. Ensure that development aid for essential services (i.e., water, health and education) is not contingent upon the adoption of a particular economic model, such as privatization.
  3. Ensure that development assistance programmes focusing on women's entrepreneurship dedicate at least 30 per cent of programme resources to entrepreneurial activities in services that have an export focus.
  4. Ensure that development assistance programmes and initiatives directed at attracting foreign direct investment survey and utilize existing local business support service suppliers (especially women-owned service firms and businesses).
  
- Affirmative-action and quota-type recommendations in order to increase the participation of women entrepreneurs in trade. For example:
  1. Set standards for the participation of women entrepreneurs (e.g. at least 40 per cent of participants) in all trade-related activities. Stage service-specific trade events with at least 30 per cent participation of women business owners, and address any export market access issues that are gender specific (such as visa restrictions).
  2. Support an increase in the number of women presidents of industry associations so that they are in a position to influence trade links with other markets.
  
- Policy recommendations aimed at creating a level playing field:
  1. Ensure that gender-sensitive employment and equitable pay legislation is in place, and applicable to national and foreign service suppliers.
  2. Provide developing-country governments with model national development plans that include a priority focus on service industries, particularly women-owned service firms; and appropriate initiatives for increasing the visibility of women service exporters.
  3. Remove any size restrictions on the access of firms to export promotion assistance, recognizing that the majority of service exporters are micro or very small firms [and often in the informal sector].
  4. Review domestic legislation to ensure that all incentives provided to manufacturers apply equally to service firms, and that tax regimes are equitable for services.

- Recommendations aimed at the human development aspect of the service sector and of women's business in general, such as: capacity-building, education, access to resources crucial to the sector (such as IT), networking and the promotion of a positive self-image for women in business. For example:
  1. Publicize the success stories and innovations of women-owned service firms.
  2. Ensure cost-efficient, high-speed access to telecommunications infrastructure and availability of Internet to all communities in a manner that is readily accessible to women.
  3. Facilitate online and other forms of networking among women entrepreneurs in different markets.
  4. Provide skills training and mentoring on how to manage and market a service business to women owners of service businesses.

Some major constraints facing women entrepreneurs in the service sector can be gleaned from the above set of recommendations. First of all, there seems to be a general lack of awareness of the importance of the services sector and of adequate measures for its promotion. Second, there seems to be a lack of understanding of the importance of women-owned businesses in the sector, whereas research on women entrepreneurs in services shows that they are as likely, or more likely, than men to engage in export-oriented services, and thus need access to information about export markets and training on how to manage and market services (Riddle, 2004:197). Also, there seems to be a lack of participation of women service-providers in development-aid-funded projects and in important trade-related activities and associations. This effectively means that their activities in this sector remain at the subsistence level. Thus policy and human development initiatives are needed to level the playing field and promote women's participation on a competitive footing. Increased access to and training in information and communication technology (ICT) is fundamental in this respect, as is training in other skills specific to service-oriented businesses, such as: problem-solving, computer and online skills, customer service, learning how to learn, and services design (Riddle, 2004:198). One important point which is seldom, if ever, mentioned in the context of human development is literacy; yet this is a fundamental component of any capacity-building programme in the services sector, as it is difficult to imagine a sustainable ICT training or learning-how-to-learn training (for example) without a basic level of literacy. This issue also affects women as workers in the services sector: their lower literacy rates and lack of training and skills upgrading are largely responsible for the clustering of women in the low-skill, low-pay, informal home working segment of this sector.

Other major obstacles women entrepreneurs face are financing the growth of their enterprises and being able to keep up with international quality standards. The nature of some service firms set up by women (such as ones surveyed in Nigeria, Mauritius and Mozambique) show that these women tend to be well-educated and provide skilled services in the fields of health, legal, architectural, engineering, consultancy and training (Riddle, 2004:198-199). Their ability to export tends to be constrained by barriers to temporary business travel (GATS Mode 4 on service provision), requirements to establish a local presence rather than through cross-border trade (GATS Mode 1 on service provision), and/or limitations on mutual recognition of professional credentials and licences. It is noteworthy that in some countries there is a significant brain drain of qualified service professionals (most notably doctors, nurses and teachers) when they are recruited to work abroad. In order to generate jobs for women who might otherwise emigrate, a policy priority in the context of the liberalization of trade in services should be to support locally

owned operations in cases where services can be provided from a distance; and where services are required to be provided in person abroad, government or private sector agencies should be established that employ women (and provide benefits and oversight against abuse) for work abroad (Riddle, 2004:204).

These constraints taken as a whole, combined with the ever-increasing importance of the services industry in trade and the scant attention given to services in national development and trade negotiation strategies, beg for country-specific discussions of the issue for Africa. Some relevant questions to answer when designing a gender-sensitive strategy specific to the services sector are:

1. Where are women concentrated in the national services sector – in skilled or unskilled service provision, or in both?
2. In what proportions should a gender-sensitive strategy for the services sector focus on brain-drain issues, on capacity building, and on promotion of women's entrepreneurship through incentives and affirmative-action-type measures?

The liberalization of trade in services affects women as (service sector and other) entrepreneurs, workers and consumers. All women are consumers of services, and as such there are issues related to the liberalization of trade in services that affect all women, both positively and negatively. On the positive side, "trade liberalization can result in lower prices, more choices, better quality service and the availability of specialty services"; also, as "discretionary family income expands, so do opportunities for girls and women in terms of education, access to health care and employment options" (Riddle, 2004). However, privatizing essential services without taking into consideration equitable access could result in a rise in the cost of these services, for which women tend to compensate by producing services themselves, reducing their own consumption of services in order to reduce family expenses, and by depriving themselves or their daughters of educational or health services in order to save money and to spend time earning money instead (Riddle, 2004:204-205). All too often the privatization of services has resulted in the feminization of poverty for exactly this reason, resulting not only in women's increased poverty in purely monetary terms, but also in terms of time constraints and of a general deterioration in the quality of their life. This is a crucial issue that directly concerns the central development goal of poverty reduction. It is therefore fundamental that countries take this into account when formulating their negotiating positions and locking in sector-specific commitments under GATS. It is important to note, in this context, that under GATS, governments have the right to replace private sector provision with public sector provision, or to devise a combined scheme like the one being piloted in health service provision in the province of Quebec where, if waiting times are exceeded for certain types of treatment, social security compensates users for treatment in private clinics. Such a scheme might be interesting, especially if complemented with measures to foster gender equality in private service provision, such as giving some form of preference to women entrepreneurs or "introducing a gender-based employment requirement" (Beviglia Zampetti, 2004:312). In any case, there needs to be a balance between the consideration of the needs of women as consumers of services and those of women as entrepreneurs in the services sector.

The manufacturing sector is estimated to be the second largest employer of women in developing countries after agriculture (Hayashi and Bauer, 2004:141). They are employed from micro enterprise up to large assembly-line operations manufacturing goods such as handicrafts, toys,

food, pharmaceuticals, and electronics. In developing countries, women's participation is most notable in the textile and clothing sector (Puri, 2004:64). The globalization of apparel is driven mainly by two factors: labour costs and the quota system established by the 1974 Multi-Fibre Agreement. Both have globalized the dispersion of textile and apparel production in ways that affect women's labour directly. Labour costs have caused the relocation of labour-intensive segments of apparel value chains to countries with large supplies of low-cost female labour. Quotas further encouraged this global dispersion of apparel production by restricting imports from countries that would have been able to increase their apparel exports were they not constrained by their quota allocations (Hayashi and Bauer, 2004).

At the end of 2004 all quota restrictions were abolished and international trade in textiles and apparel became subject to WTO disciplines. This will no doubt have a significant impact on the development of this industry, and particularly on the future of countless women workers, as the highly competitive and globally decentralized factories that comprise the global value-chains of the industry can no longer rely on any quota advantage over other countries/firms. As quotas become fully phased out, companies that have relied on trade policy to give them a competitive edge are likely to undergo significant adjustments. A particularly high proportion of women are in paid employment in this sector, particularly in countries (many in Africa) that are strong exporters. In Botswana and Mauritius, for example, 80 per cent and 67 per cent respectively of the paid workers in the textiles and clothing sector are women (Hayashi and Bauer, 2004:149), while in Cape Verde, Kenya and Malawi, women constitute 88, 60 and 51 per cent, respectively, of the workforce in that industry (Tran-Nguyen, 2004:23). Exports of textiles and clothing account for a significant proportion of the export earnings of the following African countries: Benin (35% of total export earnings), Burkina Faso (47%), Cape Verde (32%), Lesotho (95%), Madagascar (51%), Mali (43%) Mauritius (61%), Swaziland (28%), Chad (75%), and Egypt (30%) (Hayashi and Bauer, 2004:148).

The impact of post-quota changes in the global value chains on women is likely to be mixed: in some cases employment opportunities will increase, but in most cases women will bear the brunt of downsizing (Hayashi and Bauer, 2004:155). As there is a genuine concern that low-skilled women will be pushed aside, upgrading women's skills (especially those in relatively simple segments of operation, such as sewing) is essential. Also, in the long run it will be necessary for manufacturers to modernize and upgrade their products and factories through the introduction of new technologies. It is essential that women be included in this technology transfer from the very beginning: mechanisms must be put in place to ensure equal opportunities to train them in new skills and positions, and equal opportunity hiring practices. Preferential trade schemes and unrestricted market access by LDCs to developed-country markets have been crucial in contributing to the garment industry in the former. Minimizing restrictive rules of origin and cumbersome administrative procedures would further contribute to the creation of employment opportunities, including for women.

The possible loss of employment by women is not the only threat from the global decentralization of production chains in the textile industry; women are also particularly vulnerable to exploitation and poor working conditions at the bottom of these value chains, especially in LDCs. Special attention should be paid to protect them from such conditions.

Other aspects of the effects of trade liberalization on women that merit consideration are specific agreements in agriculture, services (and manufacturing) that have implications for women in Africa. The GATT/WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) affects women in several ways: as custodians of traditional knowledge (e.g. medicinal, agricultural and cultural), as consumers of public health services and as the most vulnerable segment of the population under threat of HIV/AIDS, and as farmers and custodians of biodiversity (crucial for food security).

Women have traditionally been custodians of traditional and community knowledge and folklore, and the keepers of seeds and other genetic resources, all of which “have gained economic value almost as much as patented inventions based on high technology, research and development.”<sup>19</sup> Traditional knowledge covering the use and conservation of biological resources worldwide is covered by the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), which states that such knowledge is to be protected subject to national legislation. However, according to Gehl Sampath (2004:254-277) the TRIPS Agreement may “encourage firms to patent inventions based on traditional knowledge without acknowledging their source or sharing benefits that arise from the commercialization of such products”, and “IP rights on agricultural varieties – whether patents or plant breeders’ rights – have the effect of shifting power in the world food system towards seed companies.” Thus a lack of recognition of traditional knowledge and the patenting of crop genetic resources (seeds and germplasm) could pose a major setback to women.

In order to make women partners in promoting overall sustainable agriculture, their comparative advantage should be recognized and protected by governments using plant variety protection laws to promote their rights as breeders and encourage women to create and use technology within their own local contexts. For example, indigenous Mixtec women have always used a strain of naturally brown cotton called *coyuchi*, which is native to the Pacific coast of Oaxaca in Mexico, to weave traditional clothing sometimes marketed to the United States through artisan’s organizations. However, they now face the possibility of copyright infringement when attempting to sell this product – borne of generations of indigenous knowledge and craft –because of the patenting of the *coyuchi* in the United States.

The health-related aspects of the TRIPS Agreement is of particular concern to women as prices of medicines rise due to their patenting, especially of medicines essential for the treatment of HIV/AIDS, and for women’s reproductive and general health. The proportion of HIV-positive pregnant women is growing in at least 20 African countries, and statistics show that “of the 600,000 children who have AIDS worldwide, about 90 per cent are from sub-Saharan Africa, almost all of whom acquired the virus from their mothers during pregnancy” (Gehl Sampath, 2004: 265; 286). In addition to the issue of HIV/AIDS, women in many developing countries suffer from a lack of access to fertility control methods, to drugs for other sexually transmittable diseases and to basic maternity care. Not all of this is directly linked to the TRIPS Agreement or trade-related policies (women’s access being often determined by local customs, local health policy and the quality of service-delivery infrastructure). However, as the Agreement itself gives

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<sup>19</sup> According to the WHO: “Several types of biogenetic resources, which have been used traditionally for therapeutic, cosmetic, health care or herbicide purposes, are being widely marketed under different guises in developed-country markets with or without authorized patents...[and]...there are areas of folklore, dance and music, which have been appropriated and commercially exploited without disclosure and prior informed consent, and without any sharing of the benefits with the communities that have been the inventors, owners and keepers of the knowledge” (cited in Puri, 2004:68).

priority to public health and nutrition and it contains a degree of flexibility for countries to ensure affordable prices of necessary generic drugs, it has the potential to limit the negative effects of price escalation on women's access to life-saving drugs.

#### **IV. A FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND FOR THE PROMOTION OF A WIN-WIN SCENARIO FOR GENDER, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

One of the key points that has been made throughout this report is that the effects of trade liberalization on gender equality can be highly variable; in a general sense, gender equality has a positive impact on economic growth and development. Women, despite their multiple responsibilities and general lack of resources and power, have a strong entrepreneurial spirit and, when given the slightest chance, manage to engage in (often multiple) economic activities in order to secure the welfare of their households. Because women can be both winners and losers of trade liberalization policies, and especially because a "win-win" scenario is possible, gender needs to be mainstreamed into trade and development policies (in Africa and in general). To achieve this, a policy framework is suggested with the aim of reducing gender inequality and increasing growth stemming from the ability to profit from increased opportunities related in part to trade liberalization.

A few key aspects of successful gender mainstreaming strategies, as described in section I of this report, deserve to be reiterated:

- Assumptions that issues/problems are neutral from a gender equality perspective should never be made, and gender analyses and specific studies using sex-disaggregated data should always be carried out in advance of planning, with well-defined objectives, clear target populations and suitable institutional mechanisms.
- Women's equal participation at all decision-making levels must be promoted (e.g. in trade unions, trade and industry associations, trade and finance ministries, and the WTO).
- There should be a strong political will and support from the upper echelons of national governments and the international community for gender mainstreaming.
- Country and community ownership of gender mainstreaming strategies and a commitment to gender-related action is essential.
- This support, both at the national and international level, should be backed by budgetary resource allocation, along with the setting up of appropriate infrastructure and training for gender specialists and other personnel in gender-related aspects of their work.
- Networks of gender and trade specialists should be set up where they are lacking, and solidified where they exist, including the development of synergies between national, international and civil society networks.
- Recognition and inclusion of local, regional, national and international women's networks in national and international trade policy decision-making arenas is essential.
- Policy and operational frameworks, with key indicators and guidelines for gender mainstreaming into sectoral strategies, national negotiating strategies and national financial and trade policies should be developed and implemented.

- There should be a clear gender framework, clear language, concepts and rationale so that the importance of gender mainstreaming in all branches of a programme's work is clearly understood.

Section II of this report has shown that women throughout the world participate in the economy in different ways, and are variously affected by a range of trade-related issues. The challenges that African countries face in participating in the WTO arena and in the multilateral trading system (MTS) arise in part from the intricacies of the different rules and agreements that form the system. Programmes like the UNCTAD/ITC/WTO JITAP and JITAP II try to address these difficulties through analysis, information and capacity building. The issue of the gender aspects of trade and its particular effects on local economies is often unclear to policy-makers, due to their lack of knowledge or information about women's economic participation and to erroneous assumptions that women and men participate on an equal footing, or that macroeconomic issues are gender-neutral.

The first step in designing a framework to guide concrete policies which address the gender dimensions of development and poverty reduction strategies within the context of trade liberalization is therefore to clarify women's participation in the specific economy of each country; that is by "bringing the invisible woman in the economy out into the open". In order to do this, we propose using a grid of four fundamental questions to effectively map women's participation in a given economy and the trade policies that affect them:

1. Where are women in the economy?
  - In which sectors do they participate and in which are they most active?
  - Do they represent more of the formal or informal segment of each sector?
  - How much of the economy does their unpaid work represent?
2. What are their activities?
  - How many different strategies does each type of family/household (i.e. male-headed, female-headed, single parent) carry out in order to survive?
  - In how many different sectors does each woman/household participate? For example, is she engaged in subsistence farming, cash-crop farming, sewing as a sub-contracted worker for an international clothing firm and providing health care and child care all in the same day/week?
  - What are women's responsibilities in the household? How many different jobs does a woman perform as part of her unpaid domestic and reproductive work? Once quantified, what does this work represent in terms of the woman's scarcity of time for other work and in terms of her economic and social contribution? In other words, what is the quantified value of the work itself and the percentage of the woman's time and resources used for that work? This would give a realistic picture of her availability to engage in other activities.
3. How does trade policy affect women?
  - Are they losers, winners, or potentially both?
  - What resources do they have access to, and what do they lack?



4. What can be done to maximize the positive effects of trade policy and encourage women's participation in trade-related activities?
  - What resources and support do women need in order to take advantage of trade opportunities, and how can they be provided?

Applying this framework of questions to the overview of the relationships between trade and development policy and gender in Africa presented in this paper, some general answers emerge which can guide us to a proposal on how to achieve a “win-win” gender and growth strategy in the context of trade liberalization.

We have noted that all women participate in the economy first and foremost as consumers of services, and thereafter as unpaid providers of all sorts of services including health, education and care of the elderly and children. In Africa, they are subsistence farmers and subsistence food providers, responsible for about 80 per cent of subsistence farming. From this subsistence-farming role, they can branch into cash crops and NTAEs, or participate in their husbands' cash crop production, if they have the power and resources. If not, depending on the country and its export-oriented policy, they may be paid workers (formal or informal), home-workers, or factory workers in global value chains. We have seen that in manufacturing, in several African countries the textiles and clothing sector absorbs a large proportion of women workers. Many women are entrepreneurs (as well as, or instead of, farmers or paid labourers). Women's entrepreneurship tends to be concentrated mainly in microenterprises and informal businesses, but can, with encouragement (credit and capacity-building), be extended to small to medium-sized enterprises and formal businesses. Women are also significant participants in the services sector, occupying both the low- and high-skilled ends of the spectrum. However, the high-skilled service providers in LDCs often emigrate. It seems difficult to assess their main activities for Africa as a whole, other than to say that most women seem to have several strategies, and often participate simultaneously in many sectors, depending on their access to resources.

Starting from an understanding of women's work and their participation in the economy as an overutilized – not an underutilized – resource, consideration of the effects of different trade policies on women in different circumstances, and how they can be empowered and enabled to succeed in the context of trade liberalization, requires addressing the constraints and demands that they face in exercising their different roles and responsibilities.

The following is a summary of some of the main issues and the recommended solutions:

- One of the first steps towards the empowerment of women in the context of trade is to identify the gender impacts of trade policies (II.A). It is vital that gender impact analysis and gender perspective be integrated into the design, implementation and review of trade policies and programmes (IWGGT, 1998). Strategies for this include:
  1. Gathering of information for identifying the gender impacts of trade. This includes gathering of sex-disaggregated data and the development of indicators to measure the gender impact of trade agreements on women's paid and unpaid work, particularly elements affecting women's unpaid work, such as public service provision; and the creation of mechanisms and forums for women's participation, from the level of the village to the multilateral, such as the WTO.

2. Furthermore, since different sectors of production stand either to win or lose from specific trade policies, one important step towards determining their gender impact would be to map all sectors of the economy of a specific country – whether formal or informal – by gender composition, and carry out policy-specific analyses of the potential winning, losing and displaced sectors. This includes “Implementing a gender analysis of bilateral, regional and international trade negotiations and treaties including FTAA, Cotonou, TRIPs, TRIMs [Trade-related Investment Measures], GATS [General Agreement on Trade in Services] and ongoing WTO negotiations in order to identify potential opportunities and threats to the well-being of women and other disadvantaged groups in subsistence agriculture, displaced sectors and the informal sector.” (Floro, 2001:9).
  
  3. In addition to this, indicators should be developed to see the gender impact of all instruments of trade agreements and in sectors such as: health; employment; salary gaps; sexual harassment at work etc. Indicators should take into account the impact on women in their paid and unpaid sphere.” (CAFRA/WIDE, 1998:8). One such proposal for trade and gender indicators can be found in Puri (2004:73):
    - Openness and liberalization: special attention should be paid to efforts at openness and liberalization in gender-sensitive sectors and effects on women.
    - Securing development gains for developing countries: gains from each area of trade negotiations should home in on gender-related concerns and effects.
    - Providing equitable treatment for unequal partners: when looking at issues like [special and differential] S&D treatment, defensive and affirmative measures and policies highlighting the gender angle should be identified and implemented.
    - Policy coherence: involving dealing with other policies like: financial, fiscal, social security, transfer of technology, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), industry agriculture and services-related policies and measures in the context of national, regional and international development strategies, in a gender-friendly way.
    - Serving public interest: “The trading system should be guided by considerations of those public interest issues which are particularly relevant for women, such as poverty eradication, fighting infectious diseases and provision of universal access to essential goods and services.” (Puri, 2004:73).
  
  4. The formulation of export-led strategies to promote sustainable long-term growth and development should then take into account women’s vulnerabilities, and focus on human resource development and ensuing job mobility potential as a component of any strategy to move them up the supply chain.
- Once the gender impacts of trade policy have been explored, the integration of gender considerations into trade policy design and implementation must involve a significant participation of women (II.B) in the decision-making process and in positions of power

within their economic sectors, within trade unions, within their governments and in international trade negotiations. Strategies to this end include:

1. Greater inclusion of groups of women workers and networks of women entrepreneurs in trade unions and in the private sector, including trade and industry associations through the establishment of gender desks.
  2. Greater representation of women's grassroots organizations (the above and other women's groups and NGOs) in government and in international agencies and trade negotiating bodies through the introduction of a quota-type policy to increase female staff, the creation of gender desks, reinforcement of consultative mechanisms with civil society, and the creation of an external gender monitoring group to ensure monitoring and evaluation of progress.
  3. Provisions must be made at the governmental and international levels to strengthen women's networks and for capacity-building ensuring that all segments of civil society have the resources to enable them to participate.
- When considering how to empower women in Africa so that they can reap greater benefits from trade and participate more actively in the ways suggested above (III.A), strategies and programmes which focus on women's empowerment (such as microcredit initiatives) need to include as essential components not only a focus on economic needs, but also *ex-ante* measures such as:
    1. Awareness-raising in order to promote a positive self-image and self-confidence, and providing them with the capabilities to shift the balance of power within the household in order to control their own income and be able to launch themselves as entrepreneurs.
    2. Ensuring access to resources that would help lighten the load of their domestic responsibilities.
    3. Ensuring access to resources that are crucial to their line of work (credit, land, labour, self-help groups which can create "social capital" from which to mobilize and become actors in their own development)
    4. Giving them better market access.
  - Regarding strategic sectors for exploratory paths to women's economic empowerment and involvement in trade in Africa (III.B):
    1. In all branches of the commodities sector, in order to counteract the phenomenon of men taking over any activity which becomes lucrative and women being relegated to subsistence level activities, purpose-driven, affirmative-action type strategies are needed to level the playing field, including: promoting equality in women's and men's involvement in NTAEs; supporting women in their efforts to break into sectors traditionally dominated by men; helping women break out of subsistence level agricultural and fishing industries in order to be able to compete on an even level with men in the more lucrative, modernized and export-oriented activities; improvement in access to resources; a halt to tariff escalation in developed countries; technical assistance, targeted training and education; and

context-specific studies of the different effects of trade liberalization on men and women in a given sector.

2. Recommendations for taking into account the services sector and promoting measures beneficial to women include: development funding that targets women and recognizes the necessity of special provisions in order to promote local women-owned service providers; incorporating the services sector into national economic development plans and export strategies; affirmative action and quota-type measures to increase the participation of women service providers in trade; incentives and legislation designed to provide a level playing field for women service-providers; measures aimed at the human development aspect of the services sector, such as capacity-building, access to information technology, literacy and computer literacy training, networking and promotion of women-owned businesses. Also, as the liberalization of trade in services affects women as consumers as well as service-providers, a balance needs to be maintained between privatization and considerations of equitable access to essential services such as health and education.
3. In the manufacturing sector, especially the competitive and globally decentralized textile industry in today's post-quota regime, the main recommendations are to focus on labour standards and safeguards to prevent women from remaining at the lower end of global value chains (as has often been the case), and instead focus on upgrading women's skills and guaranteeing equal opportunities so that they benefit equally with men from efforts to modernize and upgrade the industry.
4. With regard to intellectual property and the TRIPS Agreement, as women are often stewards of traditional knowledge and the conservation of biological resources, in order to make women partners in promoting overall sustainable agriculture, their comparative advantage should be recognized and protected by governments, using plant variety protection laws to promote their rights as breeders; women should also be encouraged to create and use technology within their own local contexts. Also women's particular vulnerability to HIV/AIDS needs to be recognized and their access to affordable life-saving drugs ensured.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that a win-win scenario in the relationship between gender equality and growth is possible.

Findings in the issue of *World Development* (2000) dedicated to gender and trade show that the relationship between gender inequality and growth is quite complicated; depending on variables, such as the structure of the economy and the nature of gender relations. Two studies mentioned in this journal (*World Development*, 2000:1149) point to the factors underpinning a win-win scenario - dimensions of gender inequality that directly affect growth and which can be dealt with at the national level, such as "closing gaps in education and health.": Klasen found that particularly South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa were held back by gender inequality in education and employment, and Dollar and Gatti presented evidence that gender differences in health and education are responsible for lower growth. In addition, a 1995 United Nations study found that

“a strong positive correlation was...observed between economic growth and women’s participation in the labour force as compared with men, in 61 countries during the period 1980-1990” (cited in Trinh-Nguyen, 2004:9). Finally, there are “other national policies that enhance growth and gender equality...[such as]...strengthening women’s ownership and control over assets, especially land, and improving their access to credit, marketing structures, and technology” (*World Development*, 2000). We have also discussed women’s time constraints as a factor affecting their possibility for participating in the economy, and thus suggest that an additional component to consider as part of a win-win scenario is a “social wage” (or subsidization of women’s social reproductive functions), which has the potential to positively affect all women (whether they be entrepreneurs, workers, farmers or consumers) through a de facto lifting of the burden of various free services they perform for the household, thus allowing them to more effectively pursue other (economic) activities. Depending on the preferred model, this “wage” could take the form, for example, of investment in free access to services or actual monetary subsidies for the women.

As a skilled workforce is part of any long-term successful sustainable development strategy, the empowerment of women is the other essential component of any win-win scenario. Their empowerment can be achieved through capacity-building programmes, and the promotion of women’s participation (individually or in networks) in decision-making arenas. Within this context, three aspects of women’s skills upgrading and capacity-building merit special attention: (a) encouraging and preparing women to enter high-value, non-traditional sectors such as NTAEs and Fair-Trade-type initiatives in both agriculture and manufacturing; (b) promoting literacy and ICT-related capacity-building and support for women entrepreneurs and women producers and traders; and, last but not least, (c) providing assistance through other capacity-building programmes, such as JITAP and JITAP II, of international organizations (e.g. the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UNCTAD and ITC) The UNCTAD programmes and those of the other agencies of the United Nations provide an important example of what can be done to empower women and promote their participation in international trade and in the global economy in a way that enables them to take advantage of the opportunities that trade liberalization can potentially offer them, and thus increase the positive effects of trade liberalization itself. The challenge ahead is to improve our understanding of women’s overall participation in the economy, adapt capacity-building programmes, such as JITAP II, to include gender considerations, and design new ones which will further enhance the positive role that women can play in society and in the economy.

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