We are all women!

ARANCHA GONZÁLEZ, Executive Director, International Trade Centre

‘We are all women’. That is a bold headline to open this new issue of International Trade Forum which for the first time features contributions only from women.

What do I mean when I say ‘we are all women’? Essentially I am suggesting that the struggle for gender equality is not a ‘women’s issue’ but a human issue – it is an inalienable human right. And all of us – no matter the gender, race, religion, country of origin or political affiliation – have to work towards ensuring that the economic empowerment of women becomes a reality.

As head of the International Trade Centre (ITC), I have the enormous good fortune of meeting many inspiring people from around the world. I have met many women leaders and CEOs of businesses. I have visited the factories and companies of women-owned enterprises. I have visited the farms of women working in the field to grow our food. I have launched mobile apps developed by young female entrepreneurs and attended fashion shows with clothing from young female designers. These women, and their teams, have all been inspiring. This issue of Trade Forum – is dedicated to them.

From the Third Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa to the Sustainable Development Summit in New York, the conference on climate change in Paris and the WTO Trade Ministerial in Kenya, women played a crucial role last year in securing agreement on which direction we want the world to go. Sustainable Development Goal 5 – to empower all women and girls – is an important new milestone that we have to coalesce around. The ITC did its part by convening women trailblazers for several of its 2015 events, most notably for the Women Vendors Forum in São Paulo and the International Forum on Women in Business in Nairobi, where policymakers – women and men alike – met women entrepreneurs to talk business and do business.

ITC’s focus on businesses owned and run by women is a deliberate one. While businesses that trade across borders tend to be more productive, more profitable and employ more people than their domestically-focused counterparts, ITC surveys in developing countries suggest only about one-fifth of firms that engage in trade are led by women. This is unfortunate because ownership matters: firms owned by women employ more women at senior levels and mentor more women at the entry level. But it’s not just about ownership. Paid work for women yields social dividends that last for generations, not least because women invest far more of their income than men do in their families’ health and education.

Calling for something to happen requires more than words. We need data and the ability to analyse how to overcome obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs seeking to trade goods and services. Women entrepreneurs and their companies – big or small – need support to become part of global trade.

It was in response to these challenges and others that in 2015 ITC launched the SheTrades initiative to connect one million women entrepreneurs to market by 2020 (pages 24 and 25). We launched an app, built by a young Kenyan female entrepreneur – that allows women to register their businesses and connect to larger companies looking to source specific goods and services from women owned businesses. This is part of a greater effort under the SheTrades initiative to build a network through which women entrepreneurs can connect with each other and build a larger and more sustainable business portfolio.

The successful effort by the Turkish presidency of the Group of 20 to establish the Women 20 further underlines the increased importance that the world’s biggest economies are placing on the inclusion of women in the economy: from finance to IT, from civil society to trade. This importance is entirely justified. The International Labour Organization estimates that some 865 million women could be contributing more robustly to the world economy were they allowed or trained to do so. But there is much work to still do. A recent World Bank survey found that 155 countries still had at least one formal law impeding women’s economic opportunities. Women face gender-based job restrictions in 100 countries, often confining them to low-paying activities, more often than not in the informal sector.

We are on the right track. Empowering women is not just the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do economically, socially and politically. After all ‘we are all women’.

ARANCHA GONZÁLEZ, Executive Director, International Trade Centre

MESSAGE FROM
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TRADING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW
In Benin, women are the ones bringing goods across the borders and to markets, ensuring an income for themselves and their families.

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UN Secretary-General launches panel on women’s economic empowerment

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the first High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment. Its purpose is to provide leadership and mobilize concrete actions aimed at closing economic gender gaps that persist around the world.

Announcing the panel, Ban said the empowerment of the world’s women ‘is a global imperative’.

‘Yet despite important progress in promoting gender equality, there remains an urgent need to address structural barriers to women’s economic empowerment and full inclusion in economic activity,’ the Secretary-General said. ‘If the world is to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals we need a quantum leap in women’s economic empowerment.’

The panel will provide recommendations for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to improve economic outcomes for women and promote women’s leadership in driving sustainable and inclusive, environmentally sensitive economic growth.

The panel is backed by the United Kingdom, the World Bank Group and UN Women, with Luis Guillermo Solis, the president of Costa Rica, and IKEA Switzerland CEO Simona Scarpaleggia serving as panel co-chairs. They will be joined by a diverse range of gender and equality actors, economics experts, academics, trade union leaders and business and government representatives from all regions.

European Commission announces biggest-ever aid budget

The European Commission adopted its humanitarian aid budget for 2016. With nearly €1.1 billion (US$1.2 billion) as an initial allocation, it is the highest European Union (EU) humanitarian budget to date. The move comes as global humanitarian needs are increasing as a result of armed conflict, the increasing impact of natural disasters, climate change and the economic crisis.

‘Next year we’ll have a record budget due to tragically high levels of needs,’ said Christos Stylianides, the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. ‘The EU will continue to play its role to address the needs of the most vulnerable and can be proud to remain among the leading global donors of humanitarian assistance in 2016’

The budget will address the external dimension of the refugee crises in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, the Western Balkans and Iraq. It will also assist people affected by other conflicts, such as in South Sudan and Ukraine and address the needs of communities affected by complex and recurring crises in the Sahel region and Lake Chad Basin.

The funding will also help vulnerable people caught up in many of the world’s ‘forgotten crises’, including in Colombia, Myanmar and Afghanistan. The Commission is set to increase in 2016 its humanitarian funding for education in emergencies from 1% to 4% of the EU’s overall humanitarian budget, meeting the UN target.

UN launches aid operations to assist Fiji

The United Nations has begun work to provide international assistance to Fiji, which was hit by a powerful tropical cyclone that left at least 28 people dead and some 14,000 people sheltering in evacuation centres.

The UN Pacific Humanitarian Team and new partners arriving in Fiji are being asked to work through Fiji’s existing operational structure to allow for a coordinated and effective response, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

It has been agreed that OCHA will be the conduit for communications between Fiji’s National Disaster Management Office and international humanitarian partners regarding offers of assistance. Relief supplies and assessment teams have now arrived on Koro Island, where whole villages have been destroyed, OCHA’s situation report says.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is also working with its partners to help rebuild the enterprises of beneficiaries that were destroyed or damaged. ITC Executive Director Arancha González will pay a visit to Fiji in early April for talks with the Government and other partners on how to advance the rebuilding.
**Gender: the wide divide in work**

Inequality between women and men persists across a wide spectrum of the global labour market. This is despite major progress in education that is not yet reflected in employment wins for women.

This is the thrust of a new International Labour Organisation report entitled *Women at Work: Trends 2016*, released just ahead of International Women’s Day, 8 March.

The employment gender gap has narrowed by only a fraction of a percentage point (0.6) over the past twenty years with an employment-to-population ratio of 46% for women, but almost 72% in men.

Examining data for up to 178 countries, the report concludes that women continue to work longer hours per day than men in high and lower income countries.

On average, women carry out at least two and a half times more unpaid and care work than men. This limits their ability to have more paid work. Employed women also, when combining paid and unpaid labour, work longer hours in total.

For a range of reasons, working women still take home on average 77% of what men make, estimates the ILO. At the current rate of progress, it will take more than 70 years to close the gender wage gap.

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**OECD report calls for stronger measures to boost growth**

Policymakers must deploy broad-based reform plans that incorporate monetary, fiscal and structural policies to stimulate persistently weak demand, re-launch productivity growth, create jobs and build a more inclusive global economy. So says the annual Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *Going for Growth* report.

This year’s edition shows that a slowdown in the pace of reforms first observed in the 2013-2014 period continued during 2015, notably in advanced economies and also in emerging ones. New reforms are aimed at improving educational outcomes and raising the labour force participation of women. Still, not enough is being done to boost innovation or streamline product and labour market regulation, which are critical aspects of today’s productivity and equity challenges.

‘The worrying slowdown in the global economy calls out for an urgent and comprehensive policy response, drawing on all the monetary, fiscal and structural policy levers at governments’ disposal,’ OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said.

The 2016 report makes the case for prioritizing growth-enhancing measures to best support demand in the short term, combining structural policies targeted toward regulatory reform with investment in public infrastructure.

‘Today’s exceptionally low interest rates improve governments’ fiscal space, affording a unique opportunity to make investments in infrastructure that will boost demand, stoke growth and actually improve public finances,’ Gurría said.

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**UN report finds migrants play critical role in Asia-Pacific development**

Migrants from countries across Asia and the Pacific play a key role by helping to drive economic growth in their countries of destination while also supporting families in their countries of origin. However, the benefits of migration remain under-acknowledged, a new United Nations report has found.

*Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2015: Migrants’ Contributions to Development*, draws on evidence gathered from across the region. It found that more than 95 million people from countries in the Asia-Pacific region live outside their countries of birth and that the region hosts more than 59 million migrants. The majority of those migrants are temporary migrant workers.

The Asia-Pacific region also hosts more than 5.5 million refugees and three of the main refugee-hosting countries in the world are in the region, according to the report.

Among its conclusions is that many migrant workers benefit from their migration while contributing to the development of their home countries through their work and the remittances they send home. Migrants also face hardships and abuse, so action needs to be taken to maximize the benefits by ensuring that migration is orderly, safe, regular and responsible, the report found.

The study also provides guidance on the steps that countries, regional organizations, civil society actors and others can take to improve positive impacts, notably through securing the rights of migrants and ensuring their access to social protection and decent work.

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Trading for a better tomorrow

CECILIA VISCARRA MOSER, Trade Facilitation Consultant, UNCTAD

In Benin, women play a crucial role in trade, moving goods across the borders and selling them at the markets.

For several years, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has worked towards mainstreaming gender into the organization’s daily work. This is true for its dedicated ‘global’ Gender, Trade and Development Programme, as well as for its many smaller projects. UNCTAD also works to encourage its member states to maintain a gender balance, for example in their cabinets and in their national trade facilitation committees.

During a mission to Benin I had the opportunity to visit Ganvié, the lake village near Cotonou, as well as Hillacondji, which serves as the main border crossing point with neighbouring Togo. With my camera I was able to document the importance of women to trading system, witnessing how they move goods across borders and ensure that they reach markets.

At the border there were mainly women selling either imported goods, items for export or services, materials, food and drinks for trading agents. Meanwhile, in Ganvié men are usually preoccupied fishing, while women take the lead at the market, selling fish, fruit, drinks, fuel and other goods to ensure they can provide for the basic needs of their families. In both places I saw women trading and mothering at the same time. These are some of the people I met, trading in Benin and across its borders.

1. Fruit seller, Ganvié.
2. Fish market near Cotonou.
3. Seller preparing her canoe, Lake Nokoué, Cotonou.
4. Going to the market, Ganvié.
5. Catch of the day, Cotonou.
6. Oliva gives a haircut, Ganvié.
7. Women selling mango at Benin–Togo border crossing.
8. Buying and selling, Ganvié.
Mega-regional trade agreements: a threat for developing countries and the WTO?

KIMBERLY ANN ELLIOTT, Senior Fellow, Centre for Global Development

Frustrating as the Doha deadlock might be, doing trade deals with selected countries risks further fragmenting the global trading system

For over two years the U.S. has pushed to open markets globally, in our hemisphere and with sub-regions or individual countries. As WTO members ponder the future the U.S. will not wait: we will move towards free trade with can-do countries.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, Financial Times, 22 September, 2003

Ambassador Zoellick’s opinion was triggered by frustration following the failure of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations in Cancún, Mexico, earlier that month. In his view, ‘won’t-do’ countries had trumped the interests of ‘can-do’ countries in blocking agreement on a multilateral trade agreement that would have lowered trade barriers around the world. The so-called Doha Round eventually resumed but then collapsed again in 2008. Though WTO members finally managed to agree on the Trade Facilitation Agreement in Bali in 2013, the remaining issues on the Doha Development Agenda remained in limbo.

At the time of the Cancún meeting the United States of America had signed six free trade agreements (FTAs); it negotiated nine more over the ensuing five years. Most were with relatively small countries that wanted to lock in access to their largest export market or to cement relations with the United States after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Only the agreements with Canada, Mexico and South Korea were of commercial significance, accounting for a third of total United States merchandise trade in 2013.

The recently concluded Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the ongoing Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership...
(TTIP) negotiations with the European Union (EU) break new ground. For the first time, the largest and richest countries are negotiating preferential trade agreements with one another. The potential implications for developing countries and the multilateral, rules-based trade system depend on whether the negotiations succeed and, if they do, what is in them.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

The direct economic impact for the vast majority of excluded countries will depend on the scope and depth of the provisions negotiated, but it is likely to be relatively small. The potential exception is the impact on poor Asian countries, such as Bangladesh and Cambodia, if Vietnam is able to adapt to the TPP’s restrictive rule of origin for apparel and substantially increase its exports in that sector. The United States could mitigate that impact by extending duty-free, quota-free market access to these least-developed countries as other high-income countries have done.

Given the patterns of trade and the generally low tariffs between the United States and EU, the TTIP poses a lower risk of traditional trade diversion. Rather, the concern is that the emphasis on regulatory cooperation as the key to a successful agreement raises the possibility of regulatory trade diversion. This could come about if efforts to harmonize standards in some sectors result in higher standards that are more difficult for developing countries to meet.

A more likely approach to regulatory cooperation is that the negotiators will try to reach mutual recognition agreements in certain sectors. That could be positive if mutual recognition is also extended to third parties that meet either EU or United States standards. The more likely alternative is that only European and American exporters will be able to take advantage of any such agreements, which will put other exporters at a competitive disadvantage.

Perhaps even more likely is that there will be little more than a hortatory agreement on regulatory issues. The TPP chapter on regulatory coherence focuses only on process and principles (an approach that EU negotiators have rejected as inadequate), is not subject to dispute settlement, and, in the words of the United States Trade Representative’s office, does not ‘require changes to U.S. regulations or U.S. regulatory procedures’.

**WHAT IMPLICATIONS?**

Assuming that there is eventually a TTIP agreement, and that the US Congress ratifies the TPP deal, what are the implications for the WTO? Supporters of the competitive liberalization theory might argue that completion of the mega-regional agreements will spur developing countries to come back to the table in Geneva and revive multilateral trade talks there. But if the United States, European Union and Japan have the TPP and TTIP in hand, would they still be interested in making concessions in multilateral talks? If WTO negotiations remain stalled, will the creeping discrimination uncovered in the Global Trade Alert continue to spread with and further weaken the remaining multilateral disciplines?

The frustration with Doha deadlock in Geneva is understandable. However, negotiating only with ‘can-do’ countries in the short run, risks further fragmenting the global economy. This could lead to lower trade costs from reduced tariffs being offset by higher trade costs due to rules of origin and other trade transactions costs. It also risks undermining the multilateral, rules-based system the United States helped to create and led for decades.

1. Vietnam is looking to harvest the gains from the TPP agreement.
Fighting poverty through trade

TONE SKOGEN, State Secretary, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Trade, gender equality and hard work are crucial to sustainable growth

Trade is crucial for development and growth. While we should not pretend it is a quick fix, the fight against poverty cannot be won without trade, increased production and job creation. This is why the Norwegian Government will make greater use of trade as a development-policy instrument to help integrate the poorest countries into the global economy.

History shows that obstructing foreign trade and investments rarely leads to sound and sustainable economic growth. On the other hand, countries setting out to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) seek to use trade to develop their economies. Making this kind of political choice entails both rights and obligations. At the WTO Ministerial Conference in December last year, Liberia and Afghanistan, two least developed countries (LDCs) troubled in different ways, were welcomed as members of the trade body. Welcome, too, was agreement on the so-called Nairobi Package, covering agriculture, cotton and preferential rules and treatment of LDCs.

In its role as a global champion of trade, the WTO continues to provide a bulwark against protectionism and offers a common framework for international trade. It provides a forum in which LDCs can work together to promote their interests as a group. From a development perspective, maintaining and strengthening the WTO should therefore be a primary trade policy goal.

OPENING MARKETS
However, the export interests of developing countries have received too little attention in WTO negotiations. More focus is needed on the potential gains for developing countries from opening markets. Implementation of WTO commitments is also an important policy tool for reaping the benefits of international trade.
trade. An open, rules-based trading system is good for business, not only globally but also at the country level. Predictability and stability are essential in creating an enabling environment for fair competition and private-sector development, which in turn can help develop economies on a broad scale, including those of the poorest countries.

Developing countries make up a highly diverse group and their potential for benefiting from international trade varies greatly. So does the extent to which they can take on commitments. Special and differential treatment for developing countries should not just mean that they remain outside the multilateral trading framework. Rather, their specific needs should be identified with the aim of including them.

It is also important to provide assistance to developing countries in implementing agreements. Agreements should be better adapted to the specific situation in developing countries, as in the recently ratified WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. This agreement broke new ground, in the sense that the requirement to implement the agreement is linked to the capacity of each country to do so. Assistance and support should be provided to help countries achieve that capacity.

South-South trade has increased immensely over the past 20 years, largely led by China and other emerging economies. However, the poorest countries need to be able to tap into the potential of South–South trade: for LDCs with limited resources, trading with neighbouring countries is often the first step towards participation in global trade.

MUTUAL BENEFITS

Still, barriers to trade among developing countries can sometimes be greater than those between developing and developed countries. Overcoming them and strengthening trade and cooperation between neighbouring countries can lead to more diversified trading patterns. WTO rights and obligations may also provide mutual benefits in trade among neighbours, among LDCs and between LDCs and other developing countries.

While market access is important, it is not sufficient to improve the situation for the poorest countries. The LDC share of world trade is still far too low: it was only 1.23% in 2013, according to WTO data. More effective development cooperation is therefore needed for such countries to increase their exports. The individual countries concerned and the international community share responsibility for overcoming the constraints. It is therefore a matter of concern that only three of the ten biggest recipients of Aid for Trade since 2006 are classified as LDCs (Aid for Trade at a Glance, OECD, 2015).

A larger share of Aid for Trade resources – and official development assistance in general – should therefore be allocated towards the poorest countries. At the same time, the poorest countries must demonstrate a genuine desire to facilitate private-sector development and trade.

Another key factor for economic growth and poverty reduction is gender equality. It is crucial to integrate the gender perspective in all policy for business development and trade. Too often, politicians overlook the contributions made by women and the particular challenges facing them. For developing countries to succeed in exploiting their full trade potential, women must be part of the process.

While it is clear that trade is an engine for economic growth, there is no direct link between trade and poverty reduction. Targeted efforts to promote business development and job creation, efficient taxation, healthcare and education for all are also vital for people to have a fair chance of working their way out of poverty. In fact, no one is ever “lifted” out of poverty; it is always about hard work.

1. Coffee is one of the most important crops in Timor Leste, a LDC, bringing much-needed revenue to the country.
2. It is crucial to integrate the gender perspective in all policy for business development and trade.
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SATURDAY: 1800 GMT
How business can help us meet the Global Goals

JESSICA LONG, Managing Director, Strategy and Sustainability, Accenture North America

Think about the state of the world today. One in ten people live on less than US$ 1.90 per day and 20% of people in developing countries exist below the poverty line. Almost 800 million people are undernourished and 57 million children do not attend primary school. Meanwhile, 2.5 billion people do not have access to adequate sanitation. Women earn 24% less than men.

With no action on climate change, the world's temperature could increase by 4.5°C in the future.

Now imagine our world in 2050. Two-thirds of the global population will be living in cities and 70% additional agriculture output will be needed. One-fifth of the population is over the age of 60 and 80% of this aging population lives in developed nations.

The demand for constrained resources will grow to 130 billion tons (from 50 billion tons today).

These scenarios present profound challenges for governments and the international development sector. In September 2015 the 193 members of the United Nations adopted the most ambitious development agenda yet to address them: the Sustainable Development Goals.

Businesses should look at the Sustainable Development Goals as opportunities instead of barriers.
Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 objectives aimed at ending poverty, reducing inequalities and fixing climate change.

So what does this have to do with the business world? It could help fulfill its social responsibility obligations through philanthropy to help with the challenges above or look at the challenges as opportunities.

Let’s take a different view of the world. By 2020, the organic fruits and vegetables market is expected to be worth US$62.9 billion. The market for telemedicine solutions will grow to US$34 billion. Healthcare solutions for the base of the pyramid will surge to US$87.7 billion. Revenues from micro-grids will soar to nearly US$20 billion. Twenty million electric vehicles will be on the road and fully half of global vehicle production will come from developing countries. Those searching for talented workers will find them in emerging markets.

FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH

Leading companies are already turning today’s challenges into tomorrow’s opportunities. The business world can leverage the SDGs as a framework for growth. This was discussed in a new Accenture Strategy report, ‘Corporate Disruptors: How business is turning the world’s greatest challenges into opportunities,’ produced in collaboration with the World Economic Forum’s Young Global Leaders Community.

In the report we discuss how leading companies view the SDGs as a way to help them migrate from corporate social responsibility to corporate social opportunity, thereby becoming more competitive and resilient in an increasingly volatile and complex world. Some companies even view corporate social responsibility as their reason for being, developing new business models to capitalize on the opportunities provided by the Global Goals.

Consider, for example, GlaxoSmithKline’s (GSK) re-investment of 20% of its profit in the least developed countries to develop healthcare infrastructure through the training of frontline health workers. Since 2009, the programme trained close to 40,000 medical workers who have reached out to 11 million people across 35 countries. This has positively impacted the GSK brand as a responsible pharmaceutical provider and has helped develop a future market for products and services.

TALENT SOURCING

Dangote Group, the largest manufacturing conglomerate in West Africa, is also worthy of mention in this regard. It has invested close to US$6.5 million in the Dangote Academy in Nigeria to address its difficulty in finding employees with the right technical skills. The initiative is helping reduce talent sourcing costs while providing vocational training to young people.

These are just two of the many examples of how leading and innovative companies are responding to global challenges with opportunities that grow and protect their businesses. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg. The potential for business is massive — from new consumer groups to growing demand for sustainable products and services to clean technologies that reduce cost to a new and talented workforce. The SDGs provide both a guiding light and a practical framework for companies that want to grow their business, increase competitiveness and create sustainable value.

Some companies will naturally align with one or two goals, maybe even a handful of them. Others may touch upon all 17. Still others may choose to leverage non-aligned goals (or their underlying business opportunities) to move into new markets or create new businesses. The key is that this is not an all-or-nothing scenario.

This article first appeared on the World Economic Forum’s Agenda blog.
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The 2015 Human Development Report (HDR): ‘Work for Human Development’ examines the intrinsic relationship between work and human development. Work, which is a broader concept than jobs or employment, can be a means of contributing to the public good, reducing inequality, securing livelihoods and empowering individuals.

This description of the HDR captures the importance of the strategies pursued by successive Governments in post-independence Barbados as well as the efficacy of these, specifically in the area of women’s empowerment. Women have received quality education, which has allowed them to acquire and benefit from decent work.

The success of these empowerment strategies is demonstrated by the country’s current status, as captured in the HDR rankings.

The report describes the situation of women and men in a set of indices.

- Barbados has been classified as a country in the high human development category and is positioned in the top third of the 188 countries studied.
- The Gender Development Index (GDI) measures gender inequalities in achievement along three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and command over economic resources. The 2014 female GDI value for Barbados is 0.791 in contrast with 0.777 for males.
- In Barbados, 89.5% of adult women have completed secondary level education, compared to 87.7% of their male counterparts. Female participation in the labour market is 65.9% compared to 76.6 for men.

The above excerpts from the HDR offer evidence of female empowerment. While multiple definitions of empowerment abound, it is defined here as ‘a process where the powerless or disempowered gain greater share of control over resources and decision-making. A very similar definition is offered in the United Nations Development Programme’s ‘Report on Human Development in Bangladesh – Empowerment of Women’ (UNDP 1994).

In the case of Barbados, significant resources have been invested in education, health and social services. These are available to all citizens. In the 50 years since independence, women have taken advantage of such services and the benefits are clearly demonstrated above.

The success of women at the individual and group levels does not mean there is no glass ceiling for women in business.

A half-century of independence has made Barbadian women better educated and better able to contribute to their economy and society.
consumption. They own houses, land, vehicles, savings accounts, bonds, shares.

Furthermore, through tertiary education women are able to pursue successful careers in managerial and technical sectors.

TRIPLE BURDEN
Still, the success of women at the individual and group levels does not mean there is no glass ceiling for women in business. Few can be found in either ownership or leadership ranks of large business entities nationally, regionally or internationally.

Women in Barbados face challenges in their pursuit of economic empowerment that may differ from many of those faced by women in other developing countries.

Many Barbadian women experience what can be described as a triple burden. In a situation where a significant number of Barbadian households are headed by women, they are the sole or main breadwinners while also having the responsibility for child and elder care. In such scenarios women have major financial responsibility.

Despite opportunities offered by access to education, women are often faced with significant constraints on their ability to self-actualize as business owners and entrepreneurs. In many respects women are only partially empowered or, where empowered, must overcome many barriers in their efforts to benefit maximally from such empowerment.

BARRIERS TO PROGRESS
A situation that is common in the context of the Caribbean is the existence of barriers to entering certain businesses. In the case of women, the barriers relate less to the ability to get into business and more to the types of business in which women engage.

Traditionally many women in Barbados established lifestyle and personal-services businesses, such as cosmetology or catering concerns, businesses with little or no real growth potential. This is changing. Women have leveraged their educational qualifications to go into a diverse mix of professions. They have not only accumulated resources, they are better able to spot and respond to various business prospects. They are in positions to apply their education and training, applying technology in ways that allow them to explore non-traditional business ventures.

For example, we have a female-owned and operated fertility clinic that is internationally acclaimed for its high success rates. We also have Barbadians in the diaspora who have sought to come home and utilize their internationally acquired experience and expertise to launch entrepreneurial ventures. The barriers for us would have been a perception of limits to the types of businesses women envisaged they could develop.

Because of our educational and other social policies and level of investment in education, health and social services women have felt freer to explore and take risks than they might have some decades ago. They continue, however, to be challenged to by some traditional values that rated the ‘professions’ over entrepreneurship and conservative economic and financial decision making over risk-taking.

Still, there is work to be done. Women who have received education only at the secondary or below secondary level are among those facing the full brunt of poverty in our society. Policies targeted at those in lower-paid positions and those in disadvantaged situations would need special measures such as minimum wages and other targeted initiatives to help them cope in a society where quality work is a major determinant of success in life. Furthermore, in societies undergoing economic restructuring, measures should be put in place to ensure assistance for those who lose their jobs and are unable to maintain a viable standard of living.

On the whole, the Barbados experience for women and girls over the past 50 years has improved significantly beyond the life opportunities of the generations before. There is little comparison on all fronts: access to education, jobs, status and opportunities for the females of the past and the females of today. We must make sure it stays that way.

The Barbados experience for women and girls, over the past 50 years has improved significantly beyond the life opportunities of the generations before.

1. Quality education is helping to empower Barbadian women, allowing them to take up work in the STEM industries.

2. Barbados Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Maxine McClean and ITC Executive Director Arancha González.
Building women’s economic empowerment

SUZI NANDERA, Programme Officer at the Overseas Development Institute

It will take more than eliminating discrimination against women to achieve true gender equality

The adoption of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 marked a momentous year for the United Nations. They aim to transform lives in the 21st century and address such challenges as poverty, gender inequality and unemployment.

However, only one of the 17 goals is entirely dedicated to gender: Goal 5 commits countries to ‘achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.’ This means tackling the social, political and economic constraints that stop women from reaching their full potential. With wide gender disparities in countries across the globe, it will take more than eliminating discrimination against women to achieve true gender equality.

While there has been progress for women around the world, they still earn less than men, they still experience abuse and their chances of accessing technology and jobs continue to be limited by traditional views about household duties. As a result, the proportion of working-age women actually employed in 2013 stood at just 47.1% compared to 72.2% for men according to the International Labour Organization (ILO). In South Asia, women’s participation in the labour force ranges from just 21% in Afghanistan to 79.4% in Nepal (Figure 1).

The benefits of expanding women’s economic opportunities are readily apparent. Evidence from a range of countries shows that women who earn an income tend to reinvest that income at home, with subsequent benefits for the health, education and well-being of their families. In terms of economic benefits, women not only improve their own skills through work but often advance the interests and choices of other women in their community.

Women’s economic empowerment is crucial for the achievement of many SDGs. At the same time progress towards most, if not all of the others could spur women’s economic empowerment. Lasting progress towards better health and education (Goals 3 and 4), for example, will require interventions with regard to gender issues. Equally, a strong body of evidence suggests investment in infrastructure, technology and sustainable facilities can boost women’s economic empowerment and make them more visible as key players in the prosperity of their communities.

Goal 9 is a prime example: ‘Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.’ Gender matters for infrastructure and the impact for beneficiaries is the benchmark for the success or failure of community projects. Findings suggest that infrastructure can become more sustainable when it caters to gender differences.

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

Despite such findings, women are often excluded from the social and economic benefits that come with better services in their communities, according to the Organisation
Nepal showed community ownership – and in particular ownership by women – was fundamental to the local sustainability of water and sanitation.

The benefits of such projects to women go beyond the economic realm: they have gained equal participation in community and market opportunities. For example, a rural roads project in Bangladesh transformed local communities as women became the major traders in the area. This was achieved through quotas reserving space for women in markets and the provision of separate toilets for men and women.

For Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Women spend twice as much time on unpaid work than men as they carry a far heavier burden of domestic and childcare responsibilities (Figure 2).

Evidence from the ILO suggests that even though women provide approximately two-thirds of the world’s work and produce half of its food, they earn just 10% of the world’s income and own 1% of its property. The allocation of gender roles remains unfair and, for poor women in particular, under-investment in public infrastructure adds to their burden. As such, prioritizing infrastructure for women and girls could help to ease that burden, particularly in the household.

WOMEN AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The lack of robust and sustainable infrastructure does more than weaken the global economy and constrain productivity. It hinders the progress of human development, keeping millions of families locked in poverty.

There is usually an assumption that both men and women benefit automatically from new infrastructure. In reality, the design of new infrastructure projects often neglect gender dimensions and their location often prevents access by women who have heavy household duties.

Studies suggest a growing recognition of the need to target infrastructure as an escape route from poverty, particularly for women. The Bangladesh Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development Project, implemented by the World Bank, found that rural women with appropriate technology and business skills can make substantial contributions to rural electrification. Rural projects in Nepal and Peru have also found there is greater progress on women’s economic empowerment when it is coupled with infrastructure programmes ensuring their equal participation in opportunities that would otherwise have been denied to them.

When efficient sources of energy, transport and access to technology are more accessible to women, it not only gives them time to take part in new ventures but also benefits communities and contributes to achievement of the SDGs, the Asian Development Bank has said. Studies in Bolivia, Egypt, India and Kenya have shown that owning a mobile phone empowered women by improving access to income-generating opportunities, education and healthcare. What’s more, it increased their independence.

Projects with all-encompassing gender policies and coverage ‘strengthened women’s individual and collective assets and capabilities in strategic areas of their lives and they did this when new opportunities created by the infrastructure made it valuable for women to get in on the ground floor, and perhaps easier for the projects to reduce gender inequalities,’ the World Bank has said. An evaluation from a World Bank-approved water and sanitation project in Nepal showed community ownership – and in particular ownership by women – was fundamental to the local sustainability of water and sanitation.

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BEYOND GOAL 5

Women around the world are on the brink of breaking into more productive work. Initiatives by governments and global actors are empowering them through improved roads, greater access to markets and more opportunities to become entrepreneurs. Gender-sensitive infrastructure services are more responsive to women, recognizing the hurdles they have to overcome to share equally in the benefits of progress.

There is no doubt that empowering women is the right thing to do. It leads to positive economic and social change, which has a direct link to improvements in infrastructure. That link is increasingly shaping the way programmes are designed and implemented. Gender equality – and by extension, the Global Goals – cannot be achieved without women’s economic empowerment and their equal access to resources.
A new strategy to address gender inequality

SRI MULYANI INDRAWATI, Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer, World Bank Group

No country, no economy, no company or community can meet today’s challenges or achieve its potential without their women

The evidence is clear: when countries value girls and women as much as boys and men; when they invest in their health, education, and skills training; when they give women greater opportunities to participate in the economy, manage incomes, own and run businesses – the benefits extend far beyond individual girls and women. They expand to include their children and families, their communities, societies and economies at large.

This is the vision behind the World Bank Group’s new Gender Equality Strategy, which charts an ambitious path toward improving opportunities for women and girls not only because it is morally right, but because it is critical to economic development.

Informed by months of consultations in 22 countries with governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and other relevant actors, the new strategy builds on robust evidence that persistent gaps between men and women impose significant costs globally that can and must be addressed.

For instance, women are barred in some countries from opening bank accounts or lines of credit and often do not own the kind of property that banks request as collateral. Promising projects to overcome these constraints include recognizing property such as merchandise and other movable collateral that would allow them to access credit. For those who only have limited proof of identity,
a problem that often begins with failing to register the birth of a girl, documents such as utility bills could help women open bank accounts, which are strongly linked to poverty reduction.

Our strategy builds on four objectives, all of them indispensable to a more equal world: reducing maternal mortality and closing remaining health and education gaps; creating more and better jobs; closing the gender gap in ownership and control of key assets such as land, housing, technology and finance; and enhancing women’s ability to direct the course of their own lives. It focuses on promising interventions that achieve tangible, real-world results that transform lives and genuinely level the playing field and create opportunities for all.

In Bangladesh, for example, investments in family planning led to improvements in women’s health, declines in child mortality and increased female labor force participation. This is projected to boost growth by almost 2% over the next decade. In Latin America and the Caribbean, women’s labour force participation increased by 7 percentage points in 2000-2012. World Bank research attributes to this a 30% reduction in the region’s extreme poverty and a 28% reduction in inequality over the last decade.

Closing productivity gaps between females and males in sectors such as agriculture adds to growth in the overall economy in low-income countries. One of our most recent studies showed that increasing female farmers’ access to land, capital and financial services would not only lead to real GDP growth but would also ensure a sharp drop in the share of people who go hungry.

MOVING FORWARD
We now face the exciting challenge of implementing our new approach and tailoring solutions to suit unique country contexts and building on what works best. We will target areas in which we can be transformational, leveraging partnerships while working closely with the private sector. We will innovate and evaluate.

Infrastructure is a promising and often neglected area when it comes to promoting and implementing gender inequality. More women than men rely on public transport and meeting their needs for safe, reliable, affordable transportation may open up a world of work and other opportunities for women in particular while creating a better transportation system for everyone.

In Brazil, for example, the World Bank designed and supported a program to update Rio de Janeiro’s sprawling urban transport system, taking high rates of gender-based violence into account and drafting the urban network to deliver a wide range of services to women. Now all stations have women’s restrooms and better lighting while five major stations offer legal, medical, and counseling services to women who experience violence. A similar initiative is under way in Ecuador. Gender inequality remains one of the biggest obstacles to shared prosperity. No country, no economy, no company or community can meet today’s challenges or achieve its potential until all its people can achieve theirs. We look forward raising our game in ways that get us to equal.

1. They hold the key to the future.
2. Women statisticians in Turkmenistan are trained in processing and analysis.
3. A woman at work at an export promotion agency Maison D’Exporteur in Tunis.
SheTrades, because she can

Why ITC’s initiative to connect one million women entrepreneurs to market matters

S tephen Elop, the former Microsoft executive, said on the takeover of Finnish mobile-device maker Nokia a couple of years ago that ‘we didn’t do anything wrong, but somehow, we lost’.

The way consumers behave, companies do business and economies trade is changing at a rapid pace. The lesson from the demise of a pioneering company such as Nokia is that adapting to these trends is inevitable, even for a development community traditionally known for its conventionality.

The International Trade Centre’s (ITC) Women and Trade programme has since it was launched placed innovation at the centre of its work. This was decision done in anticipation of an ambitious new development agenda that would underscore the importance of the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

MAXIMIZING IMPACT

We envisaged that to make a meaningful contribution to the new development agenda, we would have to deliver a programme that supports systemic change and results in longer-term impact and value. In concrete terms, this means leveraging relatively modest resources to integrate women entrepreneurs in to the economy at a significant scale.

Close to one hundred years since the first observation of International Women’s Day, despite the substantial gains in advancing women’s rights, the facts about women’s participation in the economy are sobering. ITC’s work is premised on the evidence that trade can be a powerful lever for economic resilience and transformation when women have the opportunity to fully participate. In a survey of firms across 20 countries we found that only one in five exporting companies is owned by a woman. Further analysis by the University College Dublin Centre for Economic Research of data on 19,000 firms across 99 developing countries found that women face significant discrimination barriers when exporting, including higher costs and lower benefits.

SHETRADES

It is in this context that ITC last year launched the SheTrades initiative to connect one million women entrepreneurs to market by 2020. Following year-long consultations with a diverse range of stakeholders – including government, the private sector, development community, academia and others with mutually reinforcing interests – a set of eight key issues to be addressed was established to unlock trade opportunities for women.

Those issues are: to collect, analyse and disseminate data on women’s economic
SheTrades helps companies to include more women entrepreneurs in their supply chains and successfully fulfill diversity and inclusion commitments.

participation; to create trade policies and agreements that enhance women's participation in trade; to empower women-owned businesses to participate in the US$10 trillion annual public procurement market (their current share is an estimated at between 1% and 5%); to create corporate procurement programmes that embed diversity and inclusion in value chains; to set up mechanisms to certify ownership and eligibility of women-owned businesses; to address supply side constraints that especially affect women-owned businesses; to close the gap between men and women for access to financial services; and to ensure legislative and administrative reforms guarantee women's rights to ownership and control over resources.

Still, connecting women entrepreneurs to international markets is a complex matter. The SheTrades initiative provides stakeholders with a platform through which they can combine expertise, resources and networks to address the multitude of issues. It creates an ecosystem that cultivates growth and competitiveness of women entrepreneurs. At www.shetrades.com a registration, tracking and monitoring tool has been developed to highlight commitments and keep stock of progress towards the one-million-women goal. Currently in beta mode, the tool will be fully functional from April 2016.

With the right policies established, women entrepreneurs trained and mentored to be more competitive, and access to financial services made available to finance their business growth: what is left to be done is to connect them to international markets.

The most frequently cited barrier to doing business with women-owned companies is the inability to identify eligible businesses to include in the supply chain. We teamed up with Google and CI&T, a Brazilian tech company, to run a tech challenge calling on developers around the world to help us create a solution. Some 300 developers, five finalists and one winner emerged. A woman-owned company from Kenya created the SheTrades web and mobile application, which was launched in conjunction with the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in December 2015.

CONNECTING TO MARKETS
The SheTrades app provides women entrepreneurs around the world with a unique platform to connect to markets. At SheTrades, women entrepreneurs are able to share information about their companies, increase visibility, expand networks, connect and internationalize. SheTrades also helps corporations to include more women entrepreneurs in their supply chains. Here is what SheTrades offers women entrepreneurs:

- SheTrades lets the market know what their companies have to offer;
- It enables them to find new business and partnership opportunities;
- It matches them with companies that have complimentary interests, and;
- Provides the latest technology nut simple to use. Quick information at their fingertips all the time.

SheTrades offers a place to create new business in real time, in a user-driven, dynamic and user-friendly space. The app is based on internationally recognized business protocols. SheTrades also helps companies to include more women entrepreneurs in their supply chains and successfully fulfill diversity and inclusion commitments.

Through a series of customized filters, companies can identify women entrepreneurs that could meet their sourcing requirements. As a SheTrades member, companies have full access to women entrepreneurs’ profiles and company information.

As we set out on the journey to 2030, ITC welcomes one and all to join and advance SheTrades initiative with passion, dedication and energy to drive forward the transformational change that will result in resilient, prosperous economies and just equitable societies for all humanity.

Where there is a will, there is a way.

1. ITC Executive Director Arancha González and Kenya Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Amina Mohamed unveil the SheTrades mobile app in Nairobi in December 2015.
2. The online version of the SheTrades app.
WOMEN VENDORS EXHIBITION AND FORUM
1-2 September 2016, Istanbul, Turkey

WORLD EXPORT DEVELOPMENT FORUM
12-13 October 2016, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Trade for Success: Connect, Compete, Change
A revolution for gender parity?

NAADIYA MOOSAJEE, Co-Founder, WomEng

The technological gap between girls and boys is rapidly diminishing as obstacles fall, but much work remains undone

Because I am a woman, I will earn between 25% and 40% less than a man doing the same job, if I’m lucky, according to numbers released by UN Women.

Yet, new studies are showing the potential for economic growth and development if you educate girls, and if women become active participants in the labour force.

As we move into the Fourth Industrial revolution, where technology has the power to change economic landscapes, we may see more strides in achieving gender parity. The previous industrial revolutions have been mechanical in nature and largely excluding to women. The Fourth Industrial revolution, on the other hand, revolves around disruptive technology to create new solutions.

Technology as an enabler can yet be the solution to gender discrimination and can bring about equality. Already we start to see the shifts of women from consumers of technology to designers and coders, creating demand and matching unmet demands. But there is still a big gender gap in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

In developed countries women represent around 26% of the STEM workforce. In developing countries, this number is much lower. If you disaggregate STEM, one will find numbers skewed with more women in science and mathematics and fewer in engineering and technology.

In South Africa, women represent only 10% of the engineering and technology workforce according to work done by my organization, WomEng, which champions women in engineering. So how do we change the status quo, especially as economic growth and development hinges on a STEM skilled workforce?

FUTURE OF JOBS

The answer as it turns out is relatively simple; we start to involve girls at a younger age. There is a new understanding of the role of STEM and the importance of STEM in jobs of the future. It has become a learning imperative, a basic skill like reading and writing. We have seen a number of gender-targeted programs increase, showcasing of better role models for girls in STEM and moving perceptions around STEM careers to attract girls.

Technology as an enabler can yet be the solution to gender discrimination and can bring about equality.

It takes time to change a culture, and to make STEM appealing, but we can see positive strides. In 1989, the British Journal of Guidance and Counseling found that 11-year-old girls aspired to be teachers, nurses, flight attendants, secretaries and hairdressers, the very ‘traditional’ female careers. In 2015, Fatherly (a website for millennial dads) released survey results showcasing the drastic shift for girls.

Overall 41% of girls expressed interest in technical career, against 32% of boys. Both health science and hard sciences are becoming an increasingly popular choice among women. Engineering may not yet be on the above list but it is a matter of time. In South Africa, we have seen enrolment rates for girls into higher education increase, especially for STEM courses. In Kuwait girls make up more than 50% of the engineering classes.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution may just see a gender revolution as a happy consequence. It is the hope that with this new generation, and through this new revolution, gender parity will be within reach.

This article first appeared on the World Economic Forum’s Agenda blog.

1. The Fourth Industrial Revolution may just see a gender revolution as a happy consequence.
Connect, compete and change for inclusive growth

Download for free: www.intracen.org/SMEoutlook
Propelling Morocco to new markets

SUSANNA PAK, Staff Writer, International Trade Centre

As head of Maroc Export, Zahra Maafiri reaches across borders and groups of society to help small businesses export

From aerospace to seafood, Maroc Export helps small and medium-sized enterprises in a wide range of sectors to tap new export markets.

As the national trade promotion organization of Morocco, Maroc Export helps businesses to sell goods and services in 40 markets around the world by providing services such as market information and opportunities to participate in business-to-business and business-to-consumer events.

In 2015, nearly 800 companies met clients and sold to international markets using Maroc Export’s services.

The key to the organization’s success, according to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Zahra Maafiri, is remaining flexible in changing times.

‘Maroc Export is always questioning itself about how to adapt its services to companies and to the environment in international markets,’ she said. ‘And it also goes hand-in-hand with the private sector. We should always be looking towards the expectations of the private sector, the government and international markets.’

AN EVENT ‘FOR AFRICA’

By collaborating with the business community and policymakers, Maroc Export works to create a business-friendly environment for local enterprises, laying the foundation for them to develop relationships with clients, tap new markets and increase exports.

Later this year, Maroc Export will expand its role by providing a platform for trade promotion organizations around the world to improve their services, as the host of the 2016 Trade Promotion Organization Network World Conference and Awards in Marrakesh.

NEW MARKETS

Looking ahead, Maroc Export is working to broaden its base of exporting companies to meet the national target of doubling or even tripling exports by 2018. One element of achieving this goal is to encourage more women-owned businesses to export.

‘We don’t have a lot of women CEOs of exporting companies,’ Maafiri said. ‘Just to let them know that there are trade promotion organizations that can help them to launch their businesses toward international markets and to go one step further in this kind of business.’

Maroc Export is teaming up with the business community to explore new export markets and trade opportunities in countries including Brazil and Viet Nam.

We will share what we have succeeded in and also accept the experiences of others who have succeeded.

‘We will share what we have succeeded in and also accept the experiences of others who have succeeded, so there will be a good exchange and a positive and mutual benefit for all parties within this network,’ Maafiri said.

The biennial conference co-organized by the International Trade Centre facilitates the sharing and learning of best practices, discussions about the latest issues affecting trade promotion organizations, and opportunities for cooperation among organizations to strengthen and widen their service delivery.

‘This event won’t only be an event for Morocco, it will be the event for Africa,’ said Maafiri. ‘We are working with our network of African trade promotion organizations to show to the world the potential of Africa as an exporting continent.’

1. Zahra Maafiri (left), CEO of Maroc Export, discusses with two of her staff members. Nearly half of the employees at Maroc Export are women.
Making trade deliver for the climate

INGRID JEGOU, Senior Manager, Global Platform on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainable Energy, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development

How the Paris Agreement on climate change will have an impact on trade

The decision at the United Nations meeting on climate change (COP21) last December to adopt the Paris Agreement marked a fundamental shift towards a new, global climate regime.

Two elements of the agreement and its implications stand out in particular. Above all was its stated ambition to keep the global average temperature ‘well below 2°C above preindustrial levels’, and to ‘pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C’. This marked a considerable change compared to the global goal of 2°C previously enshrined into international climate policy.

Important, too, is the universality of the Paris Agreement. According to the final text, all parties are expected to contribute to climate action and to demonstrate their undertakings in Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). This is another major shift from the previous regime, in which only a narrow list of predefined developed countries committed to undertake mitigation action.

Keeping temperature increases closer to 1.5°C will require tremendous efforts by governments to abate emissions and to do so quickly. Central to that goal will be a massive shift away from fossil fuels, which constitute the main cause of climate change. Similarly, the move to universality means climate-mitigation efforts will be rolled out on a much broader scale, including in countries with no previous experience in designing and implementing them and with very little guidance offered by the UN system. This suggests significant implications for the global trading system.

TRADE AND CLIMATE ACTION

Trade must therefore necessarily be part of the solution to climate change. For example, as climate change alters productive capacities for food production, trade will allow...
countries to secure food supplies by substituting reductions in domestic output with imports. Similarly, trade-enabled economic diversification can also build resilience to the economic impact of climate change.

Fostering the shift to clean energy technologies will require exploiting economies of scale. It will also require reducing barriers to trade to ensure that all countries, even those currently without domestic manufacturing capacity, can access the technologies at a competitive cost. As a positive side-effect, installation and maintenance of such technologies require services that are normally sourced locally, thereby generating domestic job opportunities.

The Paris Agreement acknowledges ‘the need to promote universal access to sustainable energy in developing countries, in particular in Africa, through the enhanced deployment of renewable energy’. In fact, import tariffs on certain goods, particularly those relevant for energy access, are significant in several African countries. Solar lamps, for example, attract tariffs of between 10% and 25% in many countries where access to electricity is an issue. A rather simple, unilateral tariff reform could therefore make a difference.

Enshrined in the agreement is also an emphasis on the role of technology development and transfer. It is clear that to meet the more ambitious goal of ‘well below 2°C’ there will be a need for enhanced deployment of existing mitigation technologies in addition to the development of new and improved ones, as well as for negative emissions technologies. In this area, too, there is an important role for trade to play. Competition in an open market spurs innovation and the right frameworks for trade and investment are crucial to fostering technology transfer.

One related issue still largely absent in trade and climate policymaking is that of embedded carbon. In fact, as much as one-quarter of emissions are embedded in international trade of goods and services. Herein lies an important opportunity. By eventually relocating carbon intensive production and concentrating new investments in countries and regions where there is abundant access to clean sources of energy and exporting the relatively less emissions-intensive goods, it would be possible to reduce the amount of embedded carbon.

However, to reap the benefits of trade, it is crucial to get the political signals and relative prices right. Shifting to clean energy and low-emitting transport will require regulation and a carbon price that reflects the environmental cost of the associated emissions. The Paris Agreement sends a clear message that carbon pricing will be an integral part of the global mitigation effort under the new climate regime. It also opens up the process to greater cooperation, including through international carbon markets, by introducing ‘internationally transferred mitigation outcomes’. By fostering international collaboration and thus mobilising a more comprehensive response to climate change, the risks for carbon leakage can also be stemmed – an important development from a trade perspective.

CHALLENGES AHEAD
Trade-related challenges may become more prominent following the Paris Agreement. The move towards universality, with a wide range of policy packages being developed, adapted to the needs and capacities of each country, may lead to unintended consequences for the social and economic development, also for third countries. For instance, carbon-labelling schemes, standards or carbon taxes may all alter demand and supply of goods and services, and ultimately trade flows. Such effects need to be better understood and, when negative, minimized.

Moreover, this major scale up of climate action is likely test the limits of existing trade rules. Different subsidy schemes to clean energy, for example, have already proven contentious in the World Trade Organization (WTO). It may however not be enough to assess these schemes according to existing rules; a review of the trade framework with a view to fostering effective climate action may be necessary.

The recent trade ministerial meeting of the WTO in Nairobi, Kenya, taking place only one week after the pivotal climate agreement was reached, has been seen to open up for ‘new issues’. The Paris Agreement hints that climate change should be a priority for the WTO and constitute one of these new issues.

Whereas some opportunities and challenges outlined above must be addressed multilaterally, there remains a range of actions governments can take unilaterally or in collaboration with small groups of countries until the WTO is ready to move, or to go beyond what may be feasible multilaterally. Doing so can foster climate action and increase the chances of the Paris agreement to deliver on its goals. Considering the fragile if not perilous state of the global ecosystem, that seems a worthwhile goal.

1. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (second left); Christiana Figueres (left), Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); Laurent Fabius (second right), Minister for Foreign Affairs of France and President of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP21) and François Hollande (right), President of France celebrate after the historic adoption of the Paris Agreement on climate change.
2. The Canal Top Solar Power Plant in Gujarat, India.
Three reasons financial technology works for green SMEs

BRINDUSA FIDANZA, Founder and CEO of The Ground_Up Project

For years, technology has been adopted by large organizations to streamline operations with little innovation. Advances in technology and data management capabilities now provide an opportunity to disrupt traditional financing, create new value in the green economy, at large scale and with reduced transaction costs. Fintech — short for financial technology — has become the new buzzword and it has already seen tremendous success in crowd funding and market lending areas.

Fintech is a boon for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have a positive impact on the environment in addition to a sustainable economic case — such businesses are referred to as green SMEs. Today, green SMEs have a hard time getting funded because they do not fit into a given box within mainstream finance — they are not a separate asset class. In other words, there are few common tools to evaluate risks and returns involved in such investments. In turn, traditional finance will not allocate new resources to design new boxes if they don’t amount to a significant scale, creating a ‘catch-22’ scenario.

Why the new development goals can lead to a boom for green businesses

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All that is about to change.

This year’s international context holds much optimism for green SMEs thanks to a few milestones from 2015. In September, United Nations member states decided to support a new set of Sustainable Development Goals that include ending poverty, access to clean and affordable energy, access to water and sanitation and many other aspirations for a better more sustainable world.

In Paris last December countries adopted a global treaty that confirms a universal desire to stop the growth of greenhouse gas emissions and limit the effects of climate change, with finance as a key enabler for the green economy.

At the risk of hyping my own industry (I am a fintech founder myself), it is easy to see how this new context creates vast opportunities for financing environmental enterprises. Within a legal framework that looks far into the future, investors have more certainty that the impacts their investments will achieve will be as valuable as their financial returns over a longer timeframe.

Now is the time for SMEs that have a positive impact on the environment in any sector, be it energy, water, waste, retail and others, to take advantage of financial technology to become attractive to investors. There are three reasons fintech will work for green SMEs:

1. TECHNOLOGY CAPTURES THE FULLNESS OF THE GREEN SME GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY.

SMEs can represent up to 95% of an economy while providing up to 70% of jobs and delivering on average 50% of GDP. In developing countries fintech innovations leapfrog traditional SME finance. Crowdfunding, crowd-lending, mobile payments, deal-sourcing platforms and other financial technologies get entrepreneurs closer to their funders, diversify the type of funding and multiply the channels through which funding can be assessed and allocated.

Green SMEs have a huge untapped potential to create sustainable livelihoods and deliver economic growth. If green SME finance is not available locally, significant amounts are available to access internationally, especially through impact investment.

Traditional financing involves a 1-1 relationship between investor and investee. Fintech connects entrepreneurs and investors across borders, with little intermediation and lower transaction costs. One can just look at mobile payments to see the expanded opportunities that technology brought to both individuals and entrepreneurs.

2. THERE IS NEW VALUE TO UNCOVER IN GREEN SMES.

There are numerous organizations around the world that work with green entrepreneurs. They help design business plans, coach founders, provide seed funds, organize competitions and raise awareness on green products and services, their impact and their viability.

By themselves, these activities are incredibly helpful to SME entrepreneurs. However, there is a missing link between good business information about an SME and the decision-making processes that investors follow to allocate capital to certain enterprises. As we said before, green SMEs do not fit into a well-defined asset class.

Fintech disrupts the traditional flow of information and decision-making processes by bringing information closer and faster to many more investment decision-makers at the same time. Take for example crowdfunding platforms or mobile payment platforms. By standardizing information, lowering transaction cost, and spreading risk across many funders, they increase and diversify the opportunities available to both entrepreneurs and funders at the same time.

3. THERE IS GREAT POTENTIAL IN AGGREGATION.

By themselves, SMEs are often too small considering the transaction costs that the investment process entails. Many investors have a hard time sourcing good quality green SMEs with attractive returns. Given the lack of comparable data and benchmarks, project origination and due diligence can be time consuming and costly.

Fintech addresses this problem by standardizing information. Fintech platforms create the necessary conditions for aggregation. From establishing a dedicated country program that responds to the needs of local SMEs, to structuring a financing instrument with the full knowledge of the type and quantum of funding needed, standardization and data aggregation can provide a more accurate guide for scaling investments into green SMEs.

Later this spring, The Ground_Up Project aims to unleash the full potential of technology to aggregate and connect portfolios of green SMEs that have viable projects in energy, agriculture, tourism, transportation, water, waste, retail and other sectors. This will be a useful and valuable tool for investors looking to deploy capital towards financial returns and positive environmental impact.
Empowering Madagascan women with environmental know-how

ANN-KATHRIN ZOTZ, Associate Expert, International Trade Centre

Support for women’s associations in Madagascar to enhance raffia production is also helping the conservation of biodiversity in the country.

It is somewhat ironic that with more than 3 billion people, the rural poor, who have very little in the way of personal resources, constitute the largest group of natural resource managers. Within this group, women have a key role in sourcing natural resources as farmers and household providers. They are responsible for harvesting, collecting of fuel and water and cultivating subsistence crops.

Despite providing in large measure for their family needs, women are often denied natural resource governance functions within their communities. By contrast, men are dominating governing roles such as commercializing land, water, plants and animals and thus generating income for their community.

Due to degradation of natural resources caused by climate change and biodiversity loss, women are dedicating an increasing amount of time to sourcing natural resources, such as walking longer distances for collecting fuelwood and water and harvesting wild plants.

However, women can act as effective agents of change in relation to the conservation of biodiversity as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation. Their role as stewards of natural and household resources positions them well to advocate climate-smart strategies to build resilient communities.

As yields decline the women’s associations must improve harvesting practices and upgrade processing and quality to meet the exacting standards of international buyers.

Madagascar makes a good example. According to the World Bank, two-thirds of the country’s population is living in rural areas. With more than 40 protected areas accounting for around 2 million hectares of land, the livelihoods of the majority of rural people depend on sourcing natural resources from the buffer zones surrounding those areas.
Biodiversity Hotspots

Madagascar’s forests are biodiversity hotspots, home to species found nowhere else. At the same time, the country faces stern development challenges: high poverty rates, population growth and slow economic development. Its unique forest habitats face grave threats from slash-and-burn agriculture and illegal logging, exacerbating the fallout from changing temperature and rainfall patterns.

Fibres from raffia palms have long been used for making traditional handicrafts, twine, rope and clothing. More recently, woven hats and bags made from raffia have started to find favour in the international fashion industry. However, this has not yet translated into a payoff for the women’s cooperatives that typically process raffia and sell it on to traders as raffia yields have been battered by deforestation and climate change.

Climate Resilience

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is working with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) to build climate resilience, improve sustainability practices and raise incomes in communities reliant on raffia for their livelihoods.

As yields decline the women’s associations must improve harvesting practices and upgrade processing and quality to meet the exacting standards of international buyers. To maximize the prices they receive, they need to complement increased productivity with improved product design and direct sales to international buyers.

In areas surrounding the WCS-managed Makira National Park, ITC is training women’s associations on climate-change adaptation and climate-smart raffia harvesting and processing techniques as well as organizational management.

By increasing incomes for households near the park, one of the country’s largest remaining mid-elevation tropical forests, the programme aims to reduce dependence on unsustainable exploitation of natural resources while engaging local communities as collaborative managers in the 372,000-hectare park’s conservation activities.

ITC and WCS conducted training workshops in 2015 for around 200 women from six women’s associations in the Makira area, on raffia harvesting, sorting, drying, tanning, quality improvements, product design and planting aimed at ensuring climate resilience and long-term profitability.

This capacity building was implemented in two stages. First, 24 women representing six individual federations in total were equipped to train fellow association members in the long run. Next, week-long training workshops were held in multiple villages for some 180 women from the six associations.

‘During the training, we learnt a lot about raffia and we are now crafting better-quality items,’ said Florine Zafijery, a member of one of the associations benefitting from the project.

As a result of the workshops the women in the buffer zones of Makira Park are now following more sustainable techniques of raffia sourcing. For instance, they learned to source raffia leaves only during the dry season. Furthermore, the associations learned to harvest leaves of a minimum length of 120 centimetres to reach the maximum length. They were also trained in reforestation techniques to ensure long-term raffia sustainability.

The programme’s training activities will expand in 2016 to cover eight additional women’s associations in the Makira Park area, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 450. Furthermore, two women from each of the participating groups will receive intensive training on product design and manufacture for the international market, enabling them to train their peers with the goal of better equipping the associations to sell value-added products.

For its part ITC will build on its market-connecting work to create a network of potential raffia purchasers. Together with WCS, ITC will help the associations enhance their legal status so they can more easily strike contracts with international buyers. ITC will also assist the associations in leveraging its Blue Number initiative, a global online network and tracking system for farms and agro-industry, to garner increased visibility on the raffia value chain.

Bolstering Livelihoods

The raffia project is the first step in broader collaboration between ITC and Madagascar’s trade and environment ministries to promote exports of sustainable natural resources to bolster rural livelihoods and while conserving biodiversity.

Empowering rural women with environmental knowledge and market intelligence is the key to giving them a voice in community based natural resource management. It enables them to source, manage and trade their produce locally and internationally, thus generating additional income for their communities and improving livelihoods.

1. Women harvest and prepare raffia for processing.
2. Learning the secrets of raffia.
3. Women receive training on climate resilience.
A journey through a fellowship at ITC

VIVIENNE KATJIUONGUA, Mo Ibrahim Fellow 2016, International Trade Centre

A fellowship winner offers a first-person reflection on her time in Geneva

The Mo Ibrahim Fellowship has been described as a programme designed to mentor future African leaders. For example, fellows receive mentoring from the current leaders of key multilateral institutions: the International Trade Centre (ITC), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

The Mo Ibrahim Leadership Fellowship Programme prepares the next generation of African leaders by providing them with unique work opportunities in prominent African institutions or multilateral organizations. It allows talented individuals to increase and enhance their professional capacity with the intention of contributing to the governance and development of their countries.

I somehow landed a fellowship at the ITC and to date I can confirm that, like many things in life, what you get out of an event or opportunity is not determined by others but by what you put into it. If you want to grow you must seek growth opportunities. Being part of the Cabinet of the Executive Director (ED) has indeed been such a growth opportunity.

I recall my participation at the World Trade Organization’s Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, and can only smile with fond and rich memories. Running around like a headless chicken, I became a protocol officer at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, which provided some unusual experiences.

For example, I enjoyed a wild taxi ride which ended with a burst tire on the way to a surprise birthday dinner. Instead of telling the driver he drove recklessly, an ever-so-eloquent colleague said: ‘It is not your driving that we are concerned about, but that of the other driver whose driving skills we are not familiar with.’

NETWORKING
The flexibility of my supervisors, allowing me to work in the operational departments of ITC, has been a great advantage. It has allowed me to learn more about the work of ITC while getting my hands dirty doing the actual work. Accomplishing tasks ranging from working with teams developing project proposals at national and regional level to items specifically geared towards executing the mandate of the ED has surely enriched my networking and stakeholder engagement skills.

Schedule allowing, I have been able to engage in one-on-one mentoring sessions with the ED, the deputy ED, chief adviser to the ED and the heads of various ITC divisions. Here again, curiosity in asking for advice or probing has helped me gain the most from limited opportunities.

I can only say that I have a broad spectrum of knowledge on the past, current and future work of ITC. What is most valuable to me is the institution’s ability to adapt its agenda to focus on current world issues or challenges. That makes ITC engagements unique and extraordinary. They’re always geared towards finding solutions to real and current world issues impacting small and medium-sized enterprises the world over.

NO REGRETS
It has been both a privilege and a journey of many sacrifices, which to date I have no regrets about. However, like any human being there are those things which one wishes were not part of the package. The greatest of them all is to leave your offspring in a faraway land believing that what you are doing is worth the sacrifices they must make.

There is also the interruption in your career development, especially where you practice a certain profession and the work you do on the fellowship is not directly related to your area of expertise. The gift though is that you get to learn what you did not know and you can also improve on a certain skill set you thought you already possessed.

As I approach the end of my time at ITC I am certain I will dedicate the rest of this period to participate in leadership enhancing activities which I have not had the opportunity to experience during the first part of my time here. I pause to say ‘thank you’ to all and continue on my journey, determined to grow to the extent possible.
## Agenda

### from 11 January 2016

### Upcoming ITC events

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<td>14-24 March</td>
<td>Sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, New York</td>
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<td>15 March</td>
<td>Swiss Research Institute on Commodities (SRIC) Annual Trading Forum, Geneva</td>
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<td>11-12 April</td>
<td>First UNGA High-level Thematic Debate – sustainable development, climate change, and financing, New York</td>
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<td>11-13 April</td>
<td>Global African Investment Summit, London</td>
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<td>2-6 May</td>
<td>World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Geneva</td>
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<td>World Economic Forum on Africa 2016, Kigali</td>
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<td>17-18 May</td>
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<td>23-24 May</td>
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<td>21-22 June</td>
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<td>5 July</td>
<td>ITC Joint Advisory Group meeting, Geneva</td>
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<td>17-22 July</td>
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<td>27-28 August</td>
<td>TICAD VI 2016, Nairobi</td>
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<td>31 August</td>
<td>ITC Trailblazers Summit on women and trade, Istanbul</td>
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<td>1-2 September</td>
<td>ITC Women Vendors Forum and Exhibition, Istanbul</td>
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<td>1-10 September</td>
<td>IUCN Congress, Honolulu</td>
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<td>13 September</td>
<td>Seventy-first General Assembly, UN, New York</td>
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<td>24 September</td>
<td>CITES 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP), Johannesburg</td>
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<td>11-13 October</td>
<td>ITC World Export Development Forum 2016, Colombo</td>
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<td>7-18 November</td>
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<td>14-18 November</td>
<td>UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, Geneva</td>
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<td>24-25 November</td>
<td>ITC WTPO Conference, Marrakesh</td>
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<td>30 November - 2 December</td>
<td>Women’s Forum Global Meeting, Deauville</td>
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New technical papers

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**NATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEES**

Developing countries can benefit from trade facilitation reforms by establishing a well-run national trade facilitation committee (NTFC). This guide provides a step-by-step approach to evaluate policy, organizational and funding options to create a detailed roadmap to set up NTFCs, which is an obligation for countries implementing the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement. This is a joint guide by the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, including the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business.

http://www.intracen.org/publication/National-Trade-Facilitation-Committees---Moving-towards-implementation

**SMEs AND THE WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT**

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can extend their reach in regional and global markets by understanding how to make the most of the Trade Facilitation Agreement. This guide will enable businesses to make border clearance faster, simpler and cheaper; resolve customs disputes fairly; obtain information on regulations and customs procedures easily; and become trusted partners of government in implementing and monitoring trade facilitation reforms. It contains clear descriptions and practical exercises.

Available in Spanish, available in French soon.


**INTERNATIONAL E-COMMERCE IN AFRICA: THE WAY FORWARD**

African enterprises can be successful in international e-commerce provided they are supported in addressing financial, infrastructure and socio-political barriers. In Africa, there is enormous potential – the e-commerce market is projected to soar to US$ 50 billion from US$ 8 billion in 2013. This report outlines common concerns of African small and medium-sized business owners based on surveys, interviews and literature review. The report recommends public-private sector initiatives, institutional and corporate capacity building, shared structures and technology and improved access to transport and logistics as the way forward.


**UNLOCKING MARKETS FOR WOMEN TO TRADE**

Charting a roadmap to boost women’s participation in trade is the focus of this report. The report shows where women-owned businesses are operating, based on new ITC data, as well as data and case studies. It explains cultural and regulatory barriers as well as ways to facilitate access to finance, market information and networks. It outlines a roadmap for action based on better data, trade policy, corporate and public procurement initiatives, a better business environment, financial services and ownership rights.

Available in French and Spanish soon.

http://www.intracen.org/publication/Unlocking-markets-for-women-to-trade

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