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SEMINAR ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN ADMINISTRATIONS IN TRADE FACILITATION AND REVENUE COLLECTION

(January 30th and 31st, 2017, Ministry of Trade, Cairo)

Background and description

Recent experiences in trade liberalization and their impacts on gender equality thus make a strong case for the need to incorporate gender perspectives into overall trade policy design and implementation. Incorporating (mainstreaming) gender considerations in trade policy means assessing the impacts of such policy on the wellbeing of men and women, evaluating how trade policies affect gender relations, for example by widening or closing the gender wage gap, and formulating and implementing trade policy in a gender-sensitive manner. This is done with a view to: (i) better understanding the specific challenges and opportunities that women and men face from trade policy; (ii) designing and implementing trade and other macro-economic policies to maximize opportunities for all; (iii) facilitating the successful integration of women into more technologically advanced and dynamic sectors of the economy; (iv) avoiding the increase of gender disparities and mitigating the existing; and (v) facilitating women's empowerment and well-being.

There are also positive trends in women's participation in the economic life, in politics and decision-making (from 3.8% in 2000 to 12.8% in 2013). In the public sector, women tend to be well or even overrepresented (e.g. 56% of public employees are women in Egypt, 52% in Jordan) as it tends to offer better benefits, higher job security, shorter and more flexible working hours than the private sector. Yet women are still under-represented in the central government workforce (the OECD countries' average is 50%), and in percentage in senior positions. They also tend to generally earn lower salaries than men.

Empowerment of women has been identified as one of the prioritized areas of the global development agenda in achieving the 2013 Sustainable Development Goals. Women play an eminent role in the public sector and contribute substantially to inclusive growth in Arab countries and in many parts of the world. As being mothers responsible for wellbeing and welfare of families, communities, they witness ups and downs in the economic life in their locality as well as in the country and are always creative in finding practical solutions. Increasingly, they gain more and more recognition in all social and intellectual works. World Development Report (2012) documented the share of female directors in boards of directors of 40 percent in Norway to 21

percent in Sweden, and lower in other countries such as Korea, Japan and a number of GCC countries.

Egypt and several Arab countries are in the transition to a new path of economic development and democracy in which women act as equal citizens in public policy making as well as in the decision-making. This process brings in new momentum in term of job creation as women get very involved in the local production and SMEs as the main generator of jobs in the region. Several UN Agencies have been supporting Egypt and various Arab countries in the promotion of gender equality for poverty alleviation and for the economic authority of women. This mandate remains also true for efforts under initiatives of Aid for Trade being implemented by UNDP.

World Development Report of 2012 pointed to the fact that female participation in the labor market in the Middle East and North Africa stood at 26 percent, compared to 35 percent in South Asia and 64 percent in East Asia and Pacific. In Egypt, 65 percent of women aged 15 to 24 were jobless compared with 33 percent of men.¹

By fact, women are already actively engaged in informal cross-border trade for economic survivals through gaining a small profit to reward their efforts and status of inhabitants that live in common border areas. With these, they assist in sustaining the livelihood of their families and communities. The composition of goods being subject to this particular trade varies from one region or one country to another; it depends on much on market demands, necessities of households, and level of profits traders may earn in daily transactions. Studies documented estimates of goods being traded of US\$ 50 to 1000. In accordance with findings of baseline surveys and with information from UN Development Fund for Women (UNDFW), the majority of informal cross border traders² are women who accounted for approximately 70 percent. In the Western and Central parts of Africa, women constitute nearly 60 percent of informal traders.³A good understanding of roles of women in Arab informal trade is essential to design of corresponding policies to promote their wellbeing and make them agents of more inclusive growth.

In addition to that, women are active in public policy in several countries and promotion of their roles in administrations and public institutions in charge of revenue collection will effectively support the introduction of modern practices, included in Arab countries. According to statistics from the World Customs Organization (2013), 87.5 percent of all heads of customs administrations are men. There was a total of 22 women in that position – seven are from developed countries (representing less than 20 percent of all developed countries), and 15 are from developing countries (representing less than 10 percent of all developing countries). In the Egypt Customs Authority (ECA), the position of Chief of Staff of the Commissioner is a dedicated senior female officer. All these point to substantial progress in acknowledging the role and potential of women in public sphere against the situation a few decades ago.

¹ The Economist, August 6th – 12th 2016, Look forward in anger, page 17.

² Informal Cross Border Trade generally refers to trade in processed or non-processed merchandise which may be legal imports or exports on one side of the border and illicit on the other side and vice-versa, on account of not having been subjected to statutory border formalities such as customs clearance.

³ African Development Bank, Jean-Guy K. Afrika and Gerald Ajumbo, Informal Cross Border Trade in Africa.

Arab countries and its revenue collection administrations, included the Customs, are embarking on a comprehensive programme of modernization and restructuring aimed at better effectiveness in the collection of revenues as well as the adoption of corresponding measures to sustain national fiscality. This goes accompanied by activation of new practices while taking into account requirements of trade facilitation and economic development. Realization of these tasks demand important efforts of all public servants and stakeholders in various capacities; in this process, the role of women is essential.

With a view to achieving a good understanding of the contribution of women in public policy making and particularly in administrations in charge of trade facilitation and revenue collection in Arab countries, a seminar would be organized by UNDP in collaboration with Trade Agreements Sector of the Ministry of Trade. Similar activities would be held in a near future in other countries in the region.

Objectives of the seminar:

Objective 1: To raise awareness of the role of women in senior leadership position in the trade administrations, customs, and revenue collection, particularly in the introduction of new facilitation tools.

Objective 2: To understand challenges women encounter in the conduct of informal trade across borders in the region.

Objective 3: To consult on the potential contribution of women to the modernization of practices in the pursuit of better performance of trade facilitation and revenue collection administrations.

Objective 4: To formulate recommendations for more empowered women in economic activities (introduction of new practices and reform), promotion of good governance and active involvement in the design of public policies for consideration by senior officials of concerned authorities in Egypt.

Expected outcomes:

1. Initial analysis of challenges women face in decision-making in the public sector as well as informal trade.
2. Identification of modalities of mainstreaming gender for better performance in trade facilitation and revenue collection administrations.
3. A set of recommendations by participants to the senior management of trade facilitation and revenue collection administrations (Ministries of Trade and Finance) for decisions.

Audience

Participants are representatives of Trade Facilitation Division of the Trade Agreements Sector of Egypt Ministry of Trade, Egypt Customs Authority and Egypt Internal Revenue Administration and

with preference given to woman officials. Representatives of the private sector will also be invited as per the recommendation of Trade Agreements Sector.

Resource persons:

1. High level representative from the World Customs Organization.
2. Mrs. Nguyen thi Khanh Hong, Counselor (Customs), Mission of Vietnam to the EU (Commercial Section)
3. Ms. Nermeen Elmlegy, Head, Trade Facilitation Division, WTO Central Administration, TAS, Ministry of Trade and Industry.
4. Dr. Nesma Naguib, Director of Modernization Division, Egypt Customs Authority.
5. Dr. Eng. Rana Raouf Farag, Co-Founder, and CEO at SoukCom and CEO at TecSabio
6. Senior expert of Egypt Customs Authority.
7. Senior expert of Egypt Tax Authority.
8. Technical team of UNDP.

Working language:

The seminar will be held in English and Arabic.

Indicative time and venue:

January 30th and 31st 2017 in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt.

Coordinator: Mr. Amr Radwan, Junior Expert, UNDP

Email: amr.radwan@undp.org

Cell phone: +2 01008852065

DAY ONE: – WOMEN AND LOGISTICS AND TRADE FACILITATION

Opening session

9:15 to 9:25

1. Introductory remarks by the Regional Coordinator, UNDP.

9:25 to 9:55

2. Opening remarks by H.E the Minister of Trade of Egypt
3. Opening speech by H.E Mr. Said Abdallah, Head of Trade Agreements and Foreign Trade Sector.
4. Opening speech by H.E Dr. Magdy Abdel Aziz, Commissioner of Egypt Customs Authority.

Group Photo

10:00 to 10:15

5. Coffee break

Session 1: Modern Public Practices for trade facilitation (Moderator: Mr. Tamer Mahmoud, DG of Regional Agreement)

10:20 to 10:40

6. **Authorized Economic Operators** – presentation by the high level representative of World Customs Organization.

10:45 to 11:05

7. Authorized Economic Operators – Experiences from Asia and Pacific – presentation by Mrs. Nguyen thi Khanh Hong, Counselor (Customs), Mission of Vietnam to the EU (Commercial Section)

11:10 to 11:30

8. The role of female public officials in the implementation of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement – presentation by Ms. Nermeen Elmlegy, Head, Trade Facilitation Division, WTO Central Administration, TAS, Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Questions and Answers

9. Coffee break

12:00 to 12: 45

Session 2: Women and their contribution in the business – presentation by Dr. Eng. Rana Raouf Farag, Co-Founder and CEO at The e-portal for the Common African Arabic Market – SoukCom and CEO at TecSabio

Questions and Answers

12: 45 to 13:30

Wrap up session to be chaired by Mr. Tamer Mahmoud, General Director of Regional Agreements

End of Day One

Lunch

DAY TWO: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR REVENUE COLLECTION

Session 1: Contribution by Women in improving practices in the public sector (Moderator: Dr. Nesma Naguib, Director of Modernization Division)

09:30 to 10:05

10. Women in the leadership in law enforcement and revenue collection administrations – presentation by the high level representative of World Customs Organization.

Questions and Answers

10:10 to 10:45

11. Egyptian Female Customs Officers in the modernization of customs practices – presentation by Dr. Nesma Naguib, Director of Modernization Division, Egypt Customs Authority.

Questions and Answers

10:50 to 11:25

12. Egyptian Female Customs Officers for Good Governance - presentation by a senior representative of the Egypt Customs Authority.

Questions and Answers

11:30 to 12:05

13. Contribution of Women in the Egypt Tax Authority - presentation by a senior representative of the Egypt Tax Authority (invitation by Trade Agreements Sector)

Questions and Answers

Session 2: What is next?

12:10 to 13:30

14. Group discussions
15. Formulation of recommendations

13:30 to 14:00

Presentation of recommendations to high level policy makers by Mr. Tamer Mahmoud, General Director of Regional Agreements, Trade Agreements Sector.

End of the Programme