



National Consultation on Creating an Enabling Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in India

19 February 2013
Federation House, Tansen Marg
New Delhi

Aide-mémoire

I. Background of the National Consultation

Women's entrepreneurship has great potential to empower women as well as contribute to the economic development of Asia and the Pacific. By setting up and having control over a business, women can develop their economic independence, overcome poverty through asset building and improve their well-being as well as that of their families. At the same time, economic empowerment also paves the way for women to take up leadership roles in other spheres, thereby highlighting the importance of economic participation as a potential driver of other forms of women's leadership and socio-economic change. However, legislative, institutional, financial and cultural obstacles continue to impact and disadvantage women, particularly in comparison to their male counterparts, in setting up and running their own enterprises, managing assets and achieving control over resources. Women entrepreneurs continue to be represented in a limited number of sectors, such as retail and service sectors, and their businesses have a lower growth rate compared with those of their male counterparts.

In view of this untapped potential and unmet need, ESCAP, in partnership with Goldman Sachs, is implementing a regional programme to promote women's economic participation and empowerment in Asia and the Pacific. Key components of the regional programme include: a) National studies to examine key trends, obstacles as well as socio-cultural and policy environments with regard to women's entrepreneurship, and b) National consultations and a regional forum on creating an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship through legislative, policy and institutional frameworks.

II. Organizational arrangements

As part of the above-mentioned regional programme, a one-day National Consultation on Creating an Enabling Environment for Women's Entrepreneurship in India will take place on 19 February 2013 at the Federation House, Tansen Marg, New Delhi. It is being co-organized by ESCAP and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Ladies Organization, in partnership with Goldman Sachs.

III. Participation

The Workshop will bring together senior-level decision-makers from Government, the private sector, as well as experts and women entrepreneurs themselves in India.

IV. Objectives and expected outcomes

The objective of the National Consultation is to identify strategies that can inform policy-making in promoting access to better opportunities for women entrepreneurs, as well as to promote multi-ministerial coordination and partnerships to enhance policy impact. The consultation will also review the policy findings and recommendations of the research conducted under the ESCAP-Goldman Sachs project. The outcome of the national consultation will feed into a regional forum to be held in April 2013 to strengthen regional efforts to promote women's economic participation in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Specifically, the consultation aims to achieve the following:

... To inspire

To showcase successful women entrepreneurs and the positive impact they have on the economy and society.

... To inform

To review and validate policy findings and recommendations of the National Study, which would serve as a basis to help inform policy-making in creating an enabling environment to empower women entrepreneurs and multi-ministerial coordination in enhancing policy impact.

... To share

To share knowledge, ideas and analysis on experiences, challenges, solutions and policies.

... To collaborate

To strengthen dialogue and partnerships between governments, businesses, civil society, together with women entrepreneurs to maximise efforts to bring about change and development.

V. Format

The active participation of participants in open floor discussions and group work is expected, in order to draw on their experiences and expertise in the area of enterprise development, women's entrepreneurship and policy-making. Furthermore, a roundtable discussion will be conducted to engage expert panellists and participants in a focused discussion to stimulate ideas on practical strategies to advance women's entrepreneurship. The discussion will also provide input to the working group sessions in the afternoon to develop findings and recommendations on the various topics discussed.

Participants are also invited to bring any material they may wish to distribute at the consultation, which will be shared at a knowledge management table.

VI. Expected contribution of participants

Participants will be expected to actively engage in discussions and group work to share knowledge and experiences on successes and challenges of policies and practices in promoting women's entrepreneurship. Participants will also be expected to identify strategies and policy recommendations, drawing on the findings and recommendations from the national research, for follow-up at the national level.

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