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TRADE INVESTMENT INNOVATION

Gender equality and empowerment of women

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PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH TRADE, INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION

During implementation of all projects, programmes, and processes the department of Trade, Investment and Innovation (TII) aims to promote a sustainable economic environment where access to economic resources and market entry are free of any form of discrimination, especially based on sex, and where the benefits of economic growth are equitably distributed. Each project integrates a gender dimension at the design phase and often carries a gender-related component throughout implementation. TII makes a significant contribution to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls in parallel to its work towards SDG 9 on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation.



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The female director general of a textile-garment beneficiary company, le Programme d'Appui au Commerce et à l'Intégration Régionale (PACIR), Cote d'Ivoire.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) promotes Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID). ISID involves, among others, realizing productivity gains and returns to scale, creating jobs and income, enhancing international competitiveness and trade, building productive capacity, supporting economic diversification, uplifting green industries, and grasping value addition. The structural transformation brought about by ISID offers an abundance of development potential with close linkages to innovation. In this context, and as the specialized agency for industrial development, UNIDO occupies an optimal position to help achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9 on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation.

Parallel to UNIDO's work on SDG 9, is a significant contribution to SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. UNIDO recognizes that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have positive impacts on sustained economic growth and social equality. The Organization's vision of ISID encourages the full integration of females and the promotion of gender equality in all industrialization policies, programmes and processes.

Within this context, the Department of Trade, Investment and Innovation (TII) offers a range of services to help countries develop competitive manufacturing capabilities, conform with market requirements, and connect to markets. Trade, investment, and innovation encompass areas of technical assistance that offer particularly

strong potential to push towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. With an overall objective of helping developing countries and economies in transition to achieve greater industrial competitiveness and innovation, TII designs and implements holistic interventions tailored to specific country needs, all of which feature gender perspectives and a contribution to the wider effort of gender mainstreaming.

In practical terms, the Department works across six strategic thematic areas which improve market access and spur economic growth, as well as create jobs.

The services are grouped into six modules as follows:

- » Improving the business environment
- » Industrial modernization and SME clustering
- » Mobilizing responsible investment and sustainable technologies
- » Boosting innovation
- » Promoting quality and standards
- » Trade facilitation

Promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are key features of each of the six modules. Specific components focus on supporting females in acquiring skills and gaining access to resources to enable them to participate effectively in the economic life of their communities. The following sections will provide more details about the work of the individual modules.



IMPROVING THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT: EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS

TII spearheads a range of technical assistance projects for the private sector to bolster its contribution to sustainable growth, employment and income generation. Private sector development can be successful in addressing and scaling up women's economic opportunities, contributing to skills development, fostering women-led businesses, and increasing access to networks as well as global markets. Nonetheless some aspects of business do not represent a level playing field for women and present many obstacles.



Fashion designers working in a textile and garment enterprise, supported by the project: Improving Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Industries in Armenia through Modernization and Market Access, Armenia

A few examples of gender inequality experienced in business are: difficulties in raising capital and offering collateral, or in obtaining finance at all, social constraints imposed on working hours as a result of domestic obligations or societal norms, lack of representation of

advisory services to set up and operationalize industrial parks and zones. Each one of these activities lends itself to gender initiatives within the technical area in question.



Women working in a peanut factory, Ethiopia

Gender mainstreaming in TII projects begins with a thorough gender analysis at the design stage and takes into account practical and strategic needs of the different sexes. When TII project Managers design a project or programme, they are supported by the UNIDO gender mainstreaming guidelines for projects. A dedicated UNIDO Gender Office provides further advice and counseling support, if required. The benefits of this holistic approach from the design phase are clearly demonstrated in Armenia where TII supported the development of the textiles sector. The project included key gender dimensions from the

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