

Mainstreaming Gender in Trade Agreements

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Gender equality is a trade issue

- “Governments don’t trade, people do.”
- Women represent half the population.
- Women are discriminated against and face inequality of opportunity because of barriers and inadequate supports
- 63% of women vs 94% of men participate in labour mkt
- Women more than 2X as likely to work in vulnerable, informal jobs, as men
- Wage gap = 23% between women and men

Impact in developing countries is greater

- Women have difficulty accessing credit; may be prohibited from opening bank accounts
- Digital divide affects women disproportionately
- 2.7 billion women are prevented from choosing the same jobs as men
- 100+ countries, women are prevented from working in certain jobs

Trade agreements affect women's ability to participate in the economy

- Economic and trade agreements address many areas of government regulation, including trade in services, regulation of professionals, health and safety standards, investment, the environment, and labour, which directly affect the ability of women to participate in the economy.
- Gender equality should be addressed in trade agreements in order to eliminate discrimination and trade barriers, and provide equal economic opportunities for women.

WTO progress on trade and gender

- 2017 WTO Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment
- Share experiences and best practices, share data-collection methods, work together to remove barriers to women's economic empowerment and increase their participation in trade
- Government procurement; trade facilitation
- Seminars and workshops
- Explore next steps

Moving from principles to rules

- First approaches in trade agreements were gender chapters (Can-Chile, Uruguay-Chile, Can-Israel, CETA)
 - Principles not rules
 - Transparency/consultations
 - No dispute settlement
- Mainstreaming gender throughout a trade agreement
 - e.g. MERCOSUR-Canada
 - GBA – tool for analyzing gender implications of specific policies in chapters or sectors
 - Policy responses and negotiating proposals can then be designed, after the GBA is done.
 - Preamble, dispute settlement, exceptions – normal rules.