



NATIONAL INCEPTION WORKSHOP ON E-COMMERCE CAPACITY BUILDING FOR WOMEN-LED MSMEs IN SOUTH ASIA

11-12 September 2019, Hotel Marriott, Kathmandu, Nepal

1. Introduction

The world has witnessed the rapid emergence of electronic commerce (e-commerce) or digital commerce. This has brought about significant changes in the way business is conducted across the globe. The South Asian region is also experiencing substantial growth in trade through the e-commerce platforms. However, e-commerce is still at a nascent stage in the South Asian LDC members. While domestic e-commerce is on the rise, the use of an e-commerce platform for international trade is otherwise limited.

South Asia in particular faces challenges relating to access to finance, ICT as many women entrepreneurs in subregion are not able to expand their businesses and become part of a wider regional and global supply chains mostly due to lack of knowledge and limited scale of their businesses (micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME)). Access to ICT, especially to those with small e-commerce businesses can bring about additional information resources and open new communication channels, particularly in marginalized communities. Examples from other developing countries illustrate that women entrepreneurs using ICT technologies find new export markets and reach a significant number of customers, secure a higher number of orders, and significantly cut setup and overheads costs. Also, the use of ICT ensures efficient business practices, and allow for flexible working arrangements, e.g. work from home, etc. Therefore, e-commerce can be a powerful tool for bringing in greater gains to women entrepreneurs since it addresses the outmoded barriers of geographic isolation and limited access to information and financing. Therefore, to train and equip women entrepreneurs for using e-commerce platform will facilitate their business opportunities and can assist them in becoming a part of regional or global supply chain.

In this connection, ESCAP actively supports its member States in the efforts to enhance women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship as a strategy for poverty reduction, social wellbeing and sustainable economic growth, thereby achieving the SDG 5 on Gender Equality and other related goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. Aim and objectives

The overall aim of the capacity building is to enhance the knowledge and capacity of target women entrepreneurs in the application of e-commerce platforms to expand their business exports and participate in local, regional and global supply chains.

The activity thus assists the target member States in meeting their SDG 5 targets on gender empowerment, reducing inequalities and poverty due to the expansion of businesses and exports, participation of women entrepreneurs in local, regional and global supply chains and employment opportunities created in these countries. It builds on the ESCAP's 'Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship' project that was launched in Kathmandu on 25 August 2019.

The objective of this National Inception Workshop is to bring all the concerned stakeholders - women entrepreneurs, civil society organisations working on women empowerment, Government Departments/Ministries, Apex Chamber's representatives, experts etc. and share ESCAP/EIF's initiative on empowering women entrepreneurs of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal and the work plan. This workshop will discuss the training module being developed by ESCAP on how to start doing business through e-commerce platform(s), role and contribution of different stakeholders in this project, and future work programme including the nature of training modules and networking.

3. Tentative programme

Wednesday, 11 September 2019	
09.30 – 10.00	Registration
10.00 – 10.40	Opening Session Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, South and South West Asia Office of UNESCAP (ESCAP-SSWA), New Delhi</i>○ <i>Ms. Annette Ssemuwemba, Deputy Executive Director, EIF, Geneva</i>○ <i>Ms. Gitanjali Singh, UNWOMEN Deputy Representative, Nepal</i> Inaugural address <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>H.E. Dr. Baikuntha Aryal, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal</i> Vote of thanks <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Mr. Chrispin Kapinga, ESCAP-SSWA, New Delhi</i> Group photo
10.40 – 11.00	Tea/Coffee Break

11.00 – 12.30	<p>Session 1: Women empowerment, Entrepreneurship, and e-Commerce: setting the context</p> <p>11.00 – 11.20 UNESCAP/EIF project on “E-Commerce Capacity Building for Women-led SMEs in South Asia”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, ESCAP-SSWA, New Delhi</i> <p>11.20 – 11.40 Entrepreneurship as a tool of empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Ms. Sudha Gooty, Social Development Division, UNESCAP</i> <p>11.40 – 12.00 E-Commerce as an empowerment tool for MSMEs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Ms. Deanna Morris, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UNESCAP</i> <p>12.00 – 12.30 Open discussion</p>
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 14.45	<p>Session 2</p> <p>Digital marketing: Tool for empowering women through growth in business in Nepal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Presentation: Ms. Deepali Godatke, UNESCAP Resource Person</i> <p><i>Followed by Panel Discussion after tea break</i></p>
14.45 – 15.00	Tea/Coffee
15.00 – 16.30	<p>Session 3</p> <p>Panel Discussion</p> <p><i>The panel will discuss the case of Nepal women entrepreneurs with regard to use of e-commerce platforms and related problems and challenges. The panel will also discuss their experiences in empowering women and explore how the women entrepreneurs can be empowered by the e-commerce platforms. The panel will address the following questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Empowering women socially and economically, including helping them use technology are the SDG targets. What actions have been taken and what more needs to be done?</i> ○ <i>What is the status of trading through e-commerce in Nepal? What policies have been brought to promote e-commerce?</i> ○ <i>Can digital marketing and e-commerce act as a tool to promote gender equality and empowerment? What is required to be done in this regard?</i> ○ <i>What roles think tanks or international organisations can play in empowering women entrepreneurs especially for expanding their business opportunities and successfully becoming part of local, regional and global supply chains?</i>

	<p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, ESCAP-SSWA</i> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Ms. Annette Ssemuwemba, Deputy Executive Director, EIF, Geneva</i> ○ <i>Ambassador Veena Sikri, Convener, South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) & Vice Chairperson South Asia Foundation (SAF-India) (tbc)</i> ○ <i>Mr. Navaraj Dhakal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal</i> ○ <i>Ms. Mona Shrestha Adhikari, International Consultant, Trade and Gender, WTO, Geneva</i> ○ <i>Ms. Pramila Acharya Rijal, President, South Asian Women Development Forum (SAWDF)</i> <p>Open Discussion with women entrepreneurs</p>
Thursday, 12 September 2019	
10.00 – 11.30	<p>Session 4</p> <p>Developing online training and e-commerce platform for South Asian women entrepreneurs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Ms. Deepali Godatke, UNESCAP Resource Person</i>
11.30 – 11.45	Tea/Coffee
11.45 – 13.00	<p>Session 5</p> <p>Open discussion on developing e-learning module (online training and e-commerce platform)</p> <p><i>An economically empowered women will also be socially empowered and thus promoting women entrepreneurs could be one aspect of meeting SDG 5. This session will explore the stories of women entrepreneurs of South Asia about their efforts in expanding their business.</i></p> <p><i>What made them successful, what challenges they faced?</i></p> <p><i>Has adequate focus on women entrepreneurs been given? What has been the experiences so far?</i></p> <p><i>The session will then discuss the module for the e-learning and seek views from the participants what they feel should be included in the module to make it more effective and useful.</i></p> <p>Facilitators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, ESCAP-SSWA</i> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Ms. Sharada Rijal, President, Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Associations of Nepal (FWEAN)</i> ○ <i>Mr. Chanchal Sarkar, Director, SAARC Secretariat, Nepal</i> ○ <i>Ms. Tripti Somani, Managing Director & CEO-KGS Advisors, India</i> ○ <i>Ms. Monisha Shrestha, Fund Mechanism Officer, UNCDF, Nepal</i> <p>Open Discussion with women entrepreneurs</p>

13.00 – 14.45	Lunch
14.45 – 16.15	<p>Session 6</p> <p>Wrap up: Highlights of workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Mr. Chrispin Kapinga, ESCAP-SSWA, New Delhi</i> <p>Concluding Session <i>(This session will discuss the follow up action plan for the project, based on two days of discussions)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Head, ESCAP- SSWA, New Delhi</i> ○ <i>Ms. Annette Ssemuwemba, Deputy Executive Director, EIF, Geneva</i> ○ <i>Mr. Chandra Ghimire, Secretary, Women, Child and Senior Citizens, Government of Nepal</i> ○ <i>Mr Khomraj Koirala, Joint Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal</i>
16.15 onwards	Tea/Coffee