

## **JOINT STATEMENT OF APEC MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN AND MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRADE**

The Joint Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministers for Women and Ministers Responsible for Trade was held on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in Arequipa, Peru. The meeting was co-chaired by Mrs. Angela Teresa Hernandez, Minister of Women and Vulnerable Populations of Peru, and Mrs. Elizabeth Galdo, Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru. We welcomed the participation of the Chair of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), Ms. Julia Torreblanca, the participation of the Executive Director of the APEC Secretariat, Dr. Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, and the participation of Ms. Angela Paolini Ellard, Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization.

Supportive of the APEC 2024 theme “Empower. Include. Grow.” and priorities, and recalling the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, the Aotearoa Plan of Action, the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth and its Implementation Plan, and the San Francisco Principles on Integrating Inclusivity and Sustainability into Trade and Investment Policy, we:

Reaffirm our commitment to inclusive economic growth and realizing the full and equal participation of women of diverse backgrounds in the economy and trade, including women facing socio-economic challenges, Indigenous women as appropriate, women in poverty, women with disabilities, older women and women living in remote and rural areas.

Recognize that women’s access to markets, technology, capital and assets, skills and capacity building opportunities, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, and leadership positions, as well as their transition from the informal to the formal economy, will contribute to women’s economic empowerment and inclusive and sustainable growth in the Asia-Pacific region.

Acknowledge that women's full and equal participation in the economy and in leadership positions in all levels of decision-making, the growth of women-owned and women-led enterprises and entrepreneurship, and the improved access to and ownership of economic resources, will further contribute to women’s economic empowerment and to the broader prosperity, competitiveness, and well-being of society.

Recognize the importance of developing and implementing policies, strategies and structural reforms that address gender inequalities and the multiple and disproportionate barriers, faced by women of diverse backgrounds, including by reducing biases, for women’s greater participation in the labor force and in trade.

Recognize that work-life balance, support for easing the burden of unpaid care and domestic work as well as equal access to social protection systems and accessible child care facilities are essential to women’s economic empowerment and participation in the economy and trade.

Seek to advance concrete actions that promote equal opportunities and women's economic empowerment through trade, driving greater inclusive economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region.

Building upon previous APEC commitments and aiming to enhance women's participation and leadership in regional and global trade, and ensure the benefits of trade are widely realized by all, including women, we encourage collaboration and continued work in the following key actions:

- Fostering conducive environments that support women's integration in regional and global value chains and trade, bolstering women's representation in leadership and decision-making positions in trade and business.
- Sharing best practices for the collection, analysis, dissemination, and utilization of disaggregated data, including sex-disaggregated data to identify existing barriers to women's economic empowerment and inform effective responses.
- Increasing efforts and actions to reduce barriers and provide opportunities so that more women can participate in STEM fields and careers, thereby increasing the participation of women in the high-tech and services sectors.
- Promoting capacity building programs for increasing resilience and competitiveness, and supporting access to global value chains for women workers and women-led and women-owned businesses from the APEC region, particularly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).
- Promoting experience and knowledge sharing on trade-related financial inclusion initiatives, including improving women's access to financial assistance and capacity building programs and services.
- Sharing experiences and best practices on digital inclusion initiatives, including improving women's equal access to educational and capacity building programs, and facilitating women's equal access to digital infrastructure and a safe digital environment, literacy, skills training, and technologies.
- Sharing best practices to enable women to utilize digital technologies to enhance their participation in trade, including by leveraging cross-border e-commerce opportunities, and measures to address digital challenges faced by women-led and women-owned MSMEs.
- Sharing best practices to support development of policies that foster inclusive trade and facilitate the transition of women in the workforce and women-owned and women-led businesses from the informal to the formal economy, considering the work to develop an APEC roadmap to promote the transition from the informal to the formal and global economy.
- Promoting the development and delivery of capacity building programs to support the capacity of trade officials and stakeholders in promoting women's economic empowerment and advancing inclusion and gender equality through trade.
- Sharing experiences on how trade arrangements and agreements may advance inclusive outcomes, such as through the incorporation of chapters or provisions related to inclusivity or women's participation in trade.

To implement these key actions, we encourage the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) and its sub-fora, and the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) to continue their work to strengthen and promote women's economic empowerment, including through trade and entrepreneurship, working collaboratively and identifying areas for further research or studies on these key actions. Furthermore, we encourage member economies to utilize the APEC Women and the Economy Sub-Fund to help empower women further.

We underscore the importance of stakeholder engagement, dialogue, cooperation and partnerships across the APEC region, and encourage further collaboration across APEC fora, ABAC and other relevant stakeholders, so as to foster an enabling environment for women's participation and leadership in the economy and in trade.

We task the CTI and PPWE Chairs to report on progress on the key action areas through existing reporting mechanisms of La Serena Roadmap on Inclusive Growth, and the Aotearoa Plan on Action.

We thank Peru and the city of Arequipa for hosting this Joint Meeting of APEC Ministers Responsible for Women and Ministers Responsible for Trade.