



EVENT BRIEF



## ETHIOPIAN PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITS TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES (WEPs)

### South-South Experience Sharing Workshop with UN Women Kenya

*(Above) The workshop participants actively contribute. (Photo © UN Women/Fikerte Abebe)*

The two-day training on Gender and Macroeconomics and Experience Sharing on WEPs implementation was held on 4-5 April 2019 at the Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa. A total of 49 participant (27 Female and 22 male) from government, development partners and private sectors attended the workshop. From the government, National Bank of Ethiopia, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC), Ethiopian Investment Commission, Development Bank of Ethiopia and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia participated. The rest of participants represented Private banks, insurances, micro-finance institutions and chamber of commerce as well as industries operating in manufacturing and agricultural sector.

The purpose of the workshop was to create common understanding about Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE), to increase knowledge on Gender and Macroeconomics and its intertwined and complementarity nature, to enable the private sector to understand the positive impact of gender responsiveness to their respective business and to familiarize the participants with the concept of Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and how it is being implemented in other countries.

Anna Parini, UN Women Ethiopia Deputy Representative, in her opening speech said that ensuring Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) is one of the key strategies to attain economic growth, gender equality and sustainable development and a coordinated effort is critical.



*Anna Parini, UN Women Ethiopia Deputy Representative. (Photo © UN Women/Fikerte Abebe)*

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“Women’s challenges in accessing decent employment, job opportunities, limited access to key resources and services such as gender responsive financial and non-financial services, land, access to non-traditional cooperatives, extension services, technologies, market opportunities etc. require a committed and coordinated effort by all actors engaged in the economic sector of Ethiopia including the private sectors.”

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*Simegn Kuma, WEE Program Analyst at UN Women Ethiopia presents on gender and macro economics. (Photo © UN Women/Fikerte Abebe)*

Simegn Kuma, WEE Program Analyst’s presentation on Gender and Macro Economics focused on the importance of gender mainstreaming as a strategy to realize women's economic empowerment in all development endeavors and/or businesses practices; which set a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. It pointed women enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home.

Yelfigne Abegaz, National Program Coordinator at UN Women Ethiopia explained that macroeconomic policy deals with economic aggregates, typically without any reference to gender.



*Yelfigne Abegaz, National Program Coordinator at UN Women Ethiopia explains on micro and macro-economic issues and Gender. (Photo © UN Women/Fikerte Abebe)*

“It is often thought to be gender-neutral. But broad-based economic policies such as fiscal, monetary or trade policies have different impacts on women and men. They matter for gender equality because they shape the overall economic environment for realizing women’s rights by affecting opportunities for paid employment, resources for policies aimed at reducing inequalities, and the demand for women’s unpaid labor.”

During the session on “Women Empowerment Principles”, Banu Khan, WEE Program Analyst at UN Women Kenya Country Office, indicated that empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential to build strong economies, establish more stable and just societies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development, sustainability and human rights, improve quality of life for women, men, families and communities and push businesses’ operations and goals. Yet, ensuring the inclusion of women’s talents, skills, experience and energies requires intentional actions and deliberate policies.



*Banu Khan, WEE Program Analyst at UN Women Kenya Country Office explains on Women Empowerment Principles. (Photo © UN Women/Fikerte Abebe)*

“The Women’s Empowerment Principles, a joint initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact (UNGC), provide a set of considerations to help the private sector focus on key elements integral to promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. These principles are the result of collaboration between the UNGC and UN Women and are adapted from the Calvert Women’s Principles. They are informed by real-life business practices and input gathered from across the globe. These Principles also can inform other stakeholders, including governments, as they engage with business.”

Sharing experiences in implementing the principles by the private sectors in Kenya, Anna Njoki Amasinde, Manager for Women Banking at the Gulf African Bank (GAB) Limited mentioned that GAB has embarked on an exciting and innovative journey in partnership with UN Women to open business opportunities for Women-Owned Businesses (WOBs) in their supply chain. According to her GAB seeks to be a leader in promoting supplier diversity and inclusion under the Annisaa (For women by women) program, through Women’s Entrepreneurship and Networking Workshops (WENW).



*Anna Njoki Amasinde, Manager for Women Banking at the Gulf African Bank (GAB) Limited shares experience. (Photo © UN Women/Fikerte Abebe)*

Another experience shared was from Nestle Kenya that plays a strategic role as part of the Nestlé East and Southern Africa Region. As explained by Judy Mwangi, Head of Corporate Responsibility, Nestle Kenya, a diverse and inclusive culture is part of their program. In 2013, they signed up to the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEP). On their journey of adaptation of WEP, they designed on going initiatives and discussions around women empowerment - workplace, market place, community. Nestle committed to achieving a gender-balanced workforce by 2018, as a result they have as many women working in senior management roles as men.

Representatives of companies from Ethiopia also shared experiences regarding gender mainstreaming in their programs. According to Mustefa Jamal, General Manager of Kombolcha Textile Share Company (KTSC) their establishment has incorporated gender in its strategic and operational plans, organized gender office at division level as well as established women association in the company.



*Mustefa Jamal, General Manager of Kombolcha Textile Share Company (KTSC) explains on gender mainstreaming activities in the company. (Photo © UN Women/Fikerte Abebe)*

According to Abeba Tesfaye, Enat Bank’s Director for Women Financial services Department, the bank initiated by a group of 11 powerful Ethiopian women had a vision to create a new bank that was open to everyone, with a special focus on women. Such a focus was necessary to help women access credit, among other products. According to her the establishment of this bank marks a unique point in Ethiopian and African banking history. Women own 64 percent of the bank and compose many major leadership positions from the senior bank management to the Board of Directors. The founders believe after Enat succeeds in Ethiopia, the practice can be expanded across Africa.

During the workshop five companies namely; Kombolcha Textile Share Company, Enat Bank, United Bank, Oromia International Bank and Vision Fund MFI have committed to become signatories and promote women empowerment principles. In addition, those who were skeptical about affirmative actions before the workshop have confirmed that they are agree with the need for such actions after the thorough discussions and practical examples presented during the workshop. They have committed to work on gender equality at their level best even if they need additional time to become WEP signatories.

The workshop and engagement with private and public financial institutions and companies was a successful endeavor for UN Women Ethiopia to gauge commitment of the institutions to work on mainstreaming gender and in implementing WEPs. The workshop was received with great enthusiasm and the participants were impressed by the changes WEPs implementation has brought to companies in Kenya in terms of women’s economic situation within relatively short period of time. Representatives of companies have also shown interest in working with UN Women beyond being signatories and implement WEPs, they further requested UN Women’s support in building the staff capacity on gender mainstreaming.



*Participants of the workshop. (Photo © UN Women/Fikerte Abebe)*

### Women Empowerment Principles

- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality;
- Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination;
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers;
- Promote education, training and professional development for women;
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women;
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy;
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

## About the Program

Aligned to UN Women Ethiopia Strategic Note (2017-2020), Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) interventions focus on creating opportunities for women living in rural and urban areas by promoting women's access and control over productive resources such as land, climate resilient agriculture and agricultural technologies, finances and know-how to ensure that they are economically empowered and increasingly benefit from economic development initiatives, programs and reforms in Ethiopia. These strategic focuses have also been translated through its Joint Program on Women Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) and the newly designed program on Climate Smart Agriculture and Agri- Business (CSAAB). UN Women through WEE program has also been implementing different projects to reach women and build institutional capacities for gender responsive approaches and interventions in collaboration with government and development partners.

The WEE program engages multiple strategies including building capacity of financial and non-financial service providers on gender mainstreaming and capacity building to women and their organizations (groups, enterprises, cooperatives, associations etc.) as well as strengthening gender equality advocates and their networks to enhance women's agency and advocacy on women's economic empowerment. Deconstructing the existing gender relations at the community and household level by working with men/boys/male partners/husbands, community leaders, to remove structural and social barriers to women's economic empowerment has also been critical intervention areas for the program.



Planet 50-50 by 2030  
Step It Up for Gender Equality

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