



## CONCEPT NOTE

# PRIVATE SECTOR PIONEERS DRIVING GENDER EQUALITY IN TRADE WITH WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES IN AfCFTA VIRTUAL TRAINING DATES: 30 NOVEMBER 2023-29 FEBRUARY 2024

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### Background

Women make major contributions to trade in ESAR through their involvement in the production of tradable goods as cross-border traders and as managers and owners of firms. Approximately two thirds of women in ESAR are employed in the informal sector<sup>1</sup> predominantly in the small-scale agriculture and women make up an estimated 70% of intra-Africa trade through informal cross border trading and thus, women play a key role in trade and are essential to exploiting Africa's trade potential. Research demonstrates that instead of helping to empower women, trade can exacerbate gender inequalities and negatively affected women's livelihoods.<sup>2</sup> Trade affects women and men differently depending on their location in the economy, and their access to and control over: (a) resources; (b) capabilities; and (c) security. The information and skills gaps among women traders to benefit from AfCFTA opportunities, remains a pertinent concern and must be addressed to ensure women are well entrenched to benefit from AfCFTA<sup>3</sup>

Limited access to decent work has been identified as a major impediment for the advancement of women's rights in many parts of the world and hinders the possibility for women to live as dignified human beings enjoying equal rights with men and engaging in decent income generating opportunities. At the workplace, women are often challenged with sexual harassment and violence, unsafe standards and lack of safety measures and equipment for work, unequal pay for equal work, limited leadership opportunities. All these coupled with unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities at home impact women's potential for growth and realizing their full economic potential.

To advance women's rights on decent work UN Women and UN Global Compact established the [Women's Empowerment Principles](#) (WEPs). These set of Principles offering guidance to business on how to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community. The WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment.

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<sup>1</sup> South Africa women in informal section average approximately 35 percent while in other countries almost women's employment is in the informal sector (e.g., Burundi 99 percent; Mozambique 98 percent; and Madagascar 96 percent) (Statistics provided by ESARO analysis)

<sup>2</sup> UNCTAD, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> UN WOMEN: Improving women's and young women's access to the opportunities created by the AfCFTA: opportunities and key action areas, 2022.



It is on this background that the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT), requested UN Women to build the capacity of private sector entities, women's organizations and women owned businesses on the AfCFTA and responsible business practices with a focus on the Women's Empowerment Principles through a virtual training. OWIT's membership comprises of corporate, mid-sized, small business and individual members and is a platform to reach as many women business associations as possible in the East and Southern Africa region to build their capacity, share ideas and brainstorm including on how they can utilize the AfCFTA for their advancement of intra-Africa trading. The virtual training will also be open to women's business networks, private sector companies working with ESA UN Women country offices among other networks.

This initiative is anchored within the Global Affairs Canada funded project whose objective is to empower women entrepreneurs and stakeholders to engage and promote women's economic rights, meaningful trade, and business opportunities for women within the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

### **Objectives of the webinars.**

UN Women Regional Office for East and Southern Africa is organizing a virtual training for women business associations and women in private sector at regional and country level to:

- Engage on gender responsive policy environment for the AfCFTA.
- Foster stakeholders' understanding of women's economic rights and responsible business practices through the Women's Empowerment Principles.
- Provide a training of trainers on women's economic rights through responsible working environment.
- Share good practices, experiences, learnings, and practices on promoting decent work for women.

The expected result is that women's networks and organizations have the capacity to identify WEE related issues within the AfCFTA and use their voice, leadership, and agency to advocate for the promotion of women's economic rights at the highest levels of companies and organizations.

### **Audience:**

The virtual capacity building initiative will bring together women entrepreneurs and those working or leading small and medium enterprises, women's trade organizations, women's business associations at regional and country level and will include ESA WEPs signatories, non-WEPs signatories and unstereotype alliance companies from the East and Southern Africa region.

Certificates will be offered following completion of the virtual training.



**Proposed agenda.**

Register in advance for the training:

<https://unwomen.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJltcOmvpzMiGNfV6DPJAAPZcrQc7gKe4QvT>

Topic 30 November 2023	Time (EAT - UTC (+3))
<b>SESSION 1</b>	
Introduction and opening UN Women (5 min) OWIT (5 min) Global Affairs Canada (5 min)	3:00-3:15 p.m.
Presentation-AfCFTA History and the AfCFTA Feminist Analysis research	3:15-4:10 p.m.
Q&A	4:10-4:25 p.m.
WEPs background and WEPs Principles 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality	4:25-4:50 p.m.
Q&A and closing	4:50-5:00 p.m.
Topic 7 December 2023	Time (EAT - UTC (+3))
<b>SESSION 2</b>	
Recap	3:00-3:05 p.m.
WEPs Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination	3:05-3:25 p.m.
Group exercise & plenary on WEP 2 - Questions to be provided	3:25-4:00 p.m.
Presentation of the Care Economy, Gender Pay Gap highlights, with examples from the ESA region	4:00-4:25 p.m.
Q&A	4:25-4:45 p.m.
Closing	4:45-5:00 p.m.
Topic 25 January 2024	Time (EAT - UTC (+3))
<b>SESSION 3</b>	
Recap	3:00-3:05 p.m.
WEPs Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers	3:05-3:20 p.m.
Group discussions & plenary on WEP 3 - Questions to be provided	3:20-4:00 p.m.
Presentation on Convention 190 (prevention of violence and sexual harassment Convention)	4:00-4:30 p.m.
Q&A session	4:30-4:50 p.m.
Closing	4:50-5:00 p.m.
Topic 1 February 2024	Time (EAT - UTC (+3))
<b>SESSION 4</b>	
Recap	3:00-3:05 p.m.
WEPs Principle 4: Promote education, training, and professional development for women	3:05-3:20 p.m.



<b>Group exercise &amp; plenary, on WEP 4</b>	3:20-4:00 p.m.
- Questions to be provided	
<b>Experience sharing</b>	4:00-4:35 p.m.
- Support to women in non-traditional sectors (Kenya and Mozambique experience)	
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	4:35-4:50 p.m.
<b>Closing</b>	4:50-5:00 p.m.

**Topic 15 February 2024** **Time (EAT - UTC (+3))**

<b>SESSION 5</b>	
<b>Recap</b>	3:00-3:05 p.m.
<b>WEPs Principle 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.</b>	3:05-3:20 p.m.
<b>Group discussions on WEP 5</b>	3:20-4:00 p.m.
- Questions to be provided	
<b>Presentation on Gender Responsive Procurement</b>	4:00-4:30 p.m.
-with examples from ESA region	
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	4:30-4:45 p.m.
<b>Closing</b>	4:45-5:00 p.m.

**Topic 22 February 2024** **Time (EAT - UTC (+3))**

<b>SESSION 6</b>	
<b>Recap</b>	3:00-3:05 p.m.
<b>WEPs Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy</b>	3:05-3:20 p.m.
<b>Group discussions &amp; Plenary</b>	3:20-4:00 p.m.
- Questions to be provided	
<b>Experience sharing by WEPs signatories on WEP 6 (Mozambique and Uganda)</b>	4:00-4:35 p.m.
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	4:35-4:50 p.m.
<b>Closing</b>	4:50-5:00 p.m.

**Topic 29 February 2024** **Time (EAT - UTC (+3))**

<b>SESSION 7</b>	
<b>Recap</b>	3:00-3:05 p.m.
<b>WEPs Principle 7: Measurement and reporting</b>	3:05-3:20 p.m.
<b>Group discussions &amp; Plenary on WEPs 7</b>	3:20-4:00 p.m.
- Use of the WEPS Gap Analysis tool	
<b>Experience sharing by WEPs signatories (Kenya and Tanzania)</b>	4:00-4:30 p.m.
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	4:30-4:45 p.m.
<b>Closing</b>	4:45-5:00 p.m.