



Message from the CWEC Chairperson

Dear CWEC members and friends,

We are pleased to publish the Third Volume of GROW, the Newsletter of the CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC).

This issue features brief reports on the Special Session organized by the CWEC on May 31, 2009 in Yokohama, Japan in conjunction with the 23rd CACCI Conference; the marketing workshop conducted by the CWEC in Jakarta, Indonesia on December 1, 2008 jointly with the Indonesian Business Women Association; and the IWEC Awards 2009.

In addition, this issue also contains reprints of articles outlining the activities of various international women's organizations established primarily to promote the economic and social welfare of women entrepreneurs and professionals. These organizations are doing great things to help alleviate the living and working conditions of women around the world, and should be commended for their inspiring efforts

It is our ardent hope that this publication will serve as an effective platform for an effective exchange of ideas and information not only among CWEC members but among business women in the CACCI region as a whole.

We would also like to take this opportunity to invite all members to contribute articles (with accompanying photos if possible) for the next issues of GROW. Kindly send your materials to the CACCI Secretariat through our Fax No. (886 2) 2725 5665, or our e-mail address at cacci@cacci.org.tw. May we look forward to hearing from you?

Thank you for your continued support of CWEC.

MUKTA NANDINI JAIN
Chairperson, CWEC

CWEC Holds Special Session in Yokohama

The CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC) organized a Special Session during the 23rd CACCI Conference held on May 31-June 1, 2009 in Yokohama, Japan. The Special Session was held from 17:00 pm to 18:30 pm on May 31, 2009 at the Executive Room located on the 8th floor of the Yokohama Chamber of Commerce and Industry (YCCI) Building.

CWEC Chairperson opens session

Chaired by **Mrs. Mukta Nandini Jain**, Chairperson of CWEC and Former President of FICCI Ladies Organization, the Special Session attracted more than

20 Japanese and foreign participants. In her opening remarks, Mrs. Jain welcomed all participants and expressed her happiness in seeing so many female business leaders gathering together. She then invited everyone to do a short self-introduction to allow all participants to know each other more before the meeting formally kicked off.

Given that the participants came from different countries, Mrs. Jain pointed out that in the pursuit of the promotion of women entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific region, overcoming the language barrier

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CWEC Holds Special Session

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remains the biggest difficulty. She believed that good communications would contribute much to the success of the development of women's status. Mrs. Jain also stressed that there should be more opportunities for women entrepreneurs from different countries to meet or conduct interaction in order to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.



Participants in the CWEC Special Session in Yokohama pose for group photo after the session.

Presentations by Japanese businesswomen

Following the self-introduction were three presentations made by three successful businesswomen from different sectors in Japan. They also took the opportunity to share with the audience their experiences on the current state of women entrepreneurship in Asian countries, especially in Japan.

The first speaker was **Ms. Hiroko Suehiro**. Ms. Suehiro is a famous calligrapher who has been in the industry for about 48 years. Her works were widely collected by many Japanese families and even sold to overseas buyers. Local newspapers in Japan also carry reports on her works once in a while.

To give the audience a better idea about her creation, Mrs. Suehiro and her assistant demonstrated several calligraphic works during the presentation. For example, she expressed the Chinese characters of butterfly, horse and dancing in the shape of a real butterfly, horse and ballet dance. In addition, she also combined her calligraphic works with a scarf.

The second speaker was **Ms. Kaoruko Sugimoto**. As a floral designer with a specialty on wedding floral arrangement, Ms. Sugimoto displayed her business by giving all participants a collection of her past works. She started her career as a floral designer about 25 years ago when she got married. Her wedding ceremony inspired her in creating her own business as she thought that since wedding ceremonies meant so much to girls, they should be given with the opportunity to choose their own flowers and designs for the special occasion.

Being a pioneer in bridal flower arrangement in Japan, Ms. Sugimoto has tried to combine the Japanese identity with her works and also conducted lectures in a

Japanese bridal organization. In addition, she would like to expand her business to other countries in the hope of making contributions on arts as well as making fusion between eastern and western cultures.

Ms. Hitomi Fukai, a face/body paint designer and an event organizer who helps organize successful parties or events, was the third speaker. Through her Powerpoint presentation, she demonstrated to the audience some of the works her company accomplished at different occasions, such as birthday celebrations, company outings, anniversary parties and so on.

Ms. Fukai further explained that in terms of target customers for her company, kids, men and women are all included. The goal of her company is to bring happiness to people anytime, anywhere. She also elaborated on the philosophy of her company and that is to take care of the welfare of female workers, especially those who are married and having children. Ms. Fukai expressed her hopes that she could provide a comfortable and safe working environment for all the employees in her company.

Experience sharing and membership expansion

After the three presentations, CWEC Chairperson Mrs. Jain indicated that she enjoyed the reports very much and would love to share the stories with other women entrepreneurs via the CWEC Newsletter. Therefore, she encouraged the speakers as well as other participants to contribute related articles to the Newsletter to share different information with others.

In terms of membership expansion, Mrs. Jain said that she would like to recruit more members for CWEC from the local community and therefore asked if anyone was interested in attracting new members. Responding to her request, the head of the women department of the Yokohama Chamber of Commerce and Industry (YCCI) raised her hand and volunteered to introduce more Japanese female leaders to join CWEC.



Ms. Hiroko Suehiro shows her calligraphy creation during the special session.

Open Forum

During the session of Open Forum, the participants raised several issues for discussion, such as how to aid start-ups, how to help successful businesswomen strike

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CWEC Successfully Conducts Marketing Workshop in Jakarta

A sizeable number of participants turned up for the marketing workshop conducted by the CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC) in Jakarta, Indonesia on December 1, 2008. Some 52 local delegates listened to the presentations, exchanged views, and shared experiences on topics related to the workshop theme, namely, "Effective Marketing Strategy: Domestic and International."

Workshop Objective

The one-day event was organized by the CWEC under the auspices of CACCI, with the cooperation of the Ikatan Wanita Pengusaha Indonesia (the Indonesian Business Women Association) of KADIN Indonesia, and the financial support of the Hans Seidel Foundation from Germany.

The workshop was aimed at presenting new opportunities for interaction between business communities and developing business cooperation and partnership between and among business women of the region.

Workshop speakers

The primary workshop speaker was **Mr. Aseem Bhatia**, Director at the Foreign Trade Development Center in New Delhi, India. Mr. Bhatia, who is a marketing expert and also manages his own export business, talked on topics that were selected by the local participants themselves. His presentations included the following:

- Marketing in the 21st Century: Analyzing Opportunities
- International Marketing: Recent Trends

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a balance between work and family, how to introduce Japanese cultural or economic inputs to other countries, how the three speakers survive the difficult times facing the current global economic crisis and how to attract more young businesspeople to join CWEC. Mrs. Jain, the three speakers as well as other delegates all contributed their thoughts and suggestions regarding the above-mentioned subjects. ■



CWEC conducted a marketing workshop in Jakarta, Indonesia on December 1, 2008.

- Brand Building: A Culture of Discipline

The subjects were well received by the workshop participants. There were lively discussions and sharing of views – based on their experiences – on the necessary skills and strategies to succeed in moving outside of their countries and compete in the international markets.

Mrs. Mukta Nandini Jain, Chairperson of CWEC and past President of the FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO), delivered the Welcome Address. Both FICCI (the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and KADIN Indonesia (the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) are Primary Members of CACCI.

About the CWEC

The CWEC is one of the Product and Service Councils of CACCI. It was formally organized in November 2006 during the 40th Anniversary of CACCI in Taipei, with the primary purpose of providing a forum for women entrepreneurs of CACCI member countries to network with each other, explore possible areas of cooperation and business ventures among its members, and promote the growth and development of women entrepreneurship in the region.

The Jakarta workshop was the second such activity conducted by the CWEC. In November 2007, the Council organized an International Women's Conference on Retail Marketing in Taipei. Some 60 business women from India, the Philippines, Malaysia and Taiwan gathered in the capital city of Taiwan for a dialogue on how to effectively conduct retail marketing both in the domestic and international markets. ■

Grow Grow Grow Grow Grow



Fifteen Outstanding Women Entrepreneurs Receive IWECA Awards 2009

Fifteen women entrepreneurs from nine countries received the 2009 International Women Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWECA) Awards in recognition of their outstanding achievements in the field of entrepreneurship. The awardees were honored during a formal ceremony held on February 5, 2009 in New Delhi, India.

2009 Winners

The 15 distinguished winners of the 2009 IWECA Awards were the following: 1. **Maria del Carmen Mur**, Country Manager, Manpower Team (Spain); 2. **Núria Vilanova**, Chairwoman and Founder, Inforpress (Spain); 3. **Rosa Maria Esteva**, CEO and Founder, Grupo Tragaluz (Spain); 4. **Rachel Allgood**, Chief Creative Officer, Isocurve (USA); 5. **Nancy Johnson**, Chief Executive Officer, Optimyze LLC (USA); 6. **Kalpna Patel**, President & CEO, Unique Comp. Inc. (USA); 7. **Millicent Warigia Gathuthi**, Managing Director, Mills Baker Ltd. (Kenya); 8. **Margaret Nkem Orakwusi**, Group Managing Director, United Fisheries Ltd. (Nigeria); 9. **Irene Ivy-Schuurmans**, Co-Founder, The Cape Herb and Spice Company (South Africa); 10. **Poonam Sagar**, Owner, PT Infotech Solutions (Indonesia); 11. **Kanthi Ramya Manel Weerakoon**, Chairman & Managing Director, Ramya Holdings (Sri Lanka); 12. **Yupin Macleod**, Owner, The Best Group of Beauty Salons (Thailand); 13. **Dipali Goenka**, Director, Welspun Retail Ltd. (India); 14. **Vasundhara Mantri**, Professional Jewelry Designer (India); and 15. **Anita Lal**, Creative Head, The Goodearth Company (India).

Dr. Ashwani Kumar, Honorable Minister of Industry and Commerce of India, presented the awards to the winners. A panel discussion on “Lifestyle: revolution o Evolution”, moderated by Ambassador Ruth Davis, followed the award presentation.

The nominees for the 2009 IWECA Awards were required to fulfill the following criteria: (a) Company turnover should be approximately US\$1 million; (b) the company should have a minimum of 50% ownership by a woman; and (c) the company should have been in existence for at least three years.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Ladies Organization (FLO) hosted the 2009 Awards ceremony. The event was “a proud occasion for India and particularly for the FICCI Ladies Organization and its supporters and partners,” the FICCI-FLO said in a statement.

About the IWECA Awards

The IWECA Awards are a joint project initiated by the Chamber of Commerce of Barcelona in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI-FLO) and the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce in 2006. The idea of the project is to promote



The 15 proud winners of the 3rd IWECA Awards pose with the organizers and guests following the presentation ceremonies.

a global dialogue on women’s entrepreneurship, exchange experiences; forge partnerships among enterprises and potential costumers worldwide and build personal contacts and networks among women’s business associations and individual entrepreneurs.

The Barcelona Chamber of Commerce was designated as organizer and host of the first edition of the IWECA Awards. The three winners of the first IWECA Awards came from India – Ms. Suchita LK Ella, President of Bharat Biotech International; Ms. Preeti Sharma of Pragati Software; and Ms. Nishi Gupta of Advance Products Lts. The three women received their awards during a grand gala evening in Barcelona in February 2007.

In 2008, the IWECA Awards were presented to 12 women entrepreneurs from the US, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Spain and India. The 12 women were selected by an independent jury from a list of high achievers.

2010 Awards

For 2010, three women for-profit business owners/awardees will be chosen from India, Barcelona, Africa, East Asia, Brazil and New York City. The awardees will be chosen based on their successes in importing or exporting their goods or services to the overseas marketplace. Winning companies are invited to attend the 2010 IWECA presentations in Cape Town, South Africa on September 19-22, 2010.

The criteria for nomination for the 2010 IWECA Awards include the following; (a) Woman-owned for-profit business must be actively involved in importing or exporting goods or services; (b) Business must be 51% owned by a woman (or if handed down through a family, a woman must be the president, CEO or managing director) actively involved in the day-to-day running of the business; (c) Business must be in existence at least three years; (d) Business must have a minimum annual revenue equivalent to US \$1.0 million ; and (e) Business must be in services or manufacturing (excluding performing arts)■

Networking for Women's Leadership

By Kristin Engvig
Founder and CEO

W.I.N. (Women's International Networking)



Bringing women together to share skills, contacts and positive attitudes could help us all to navigate through these uncertain economic times.



The past months have been a turbulent time. Markets have collapsed around the world and we are left with huge economic uncertainties. Whether in our offices or our homes, it has had an effect on all of us. By gathering women to share inspiration and knowledge, meet potential clients and find solutions to big and small challenges, Women's International Networking (WIN) is developing ways to navigate through these uncertain times.

Over the past ten years, almost 6,000 women from 70 nations have gathered at WIN's global leadership forum to discuss leadership of the future and how to make a positive contribution to the global economy. By exchanging business cards, ideas, ways of operating and actual contracts, the participants are developing strategies for incorporating humanity into business operations and policy decisions.

How women contribute in the economic sphere can make a difference. The organization was founded in Milan (Italy) in 1997, with a vision to facilitate the situation of women working internationally. Over the years it has become known as a forum for change, inspiring women worldwide to develop, empower and connect with a more feminine, authentic and global leadership.

"The conference really inspired me to work harder for a positive leadership in Cameroon: for women's empowerment, women's rights and leadership," says **Yotchou Tzudjom Anne Pelagi**, programme officer and director of New Human Rights in Cameroon.

The organization has continued to gather women working internationally, propelled by the diversity of the women and the challenges they meet.

Gabrielle Kluck, a field administrative officer for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the Syrian Arab Republic, has attended several WIN forums as a participant, speaker and workshop leader. "It empowers women to open their eyes, to be inspired and to take action," she says. "Every year I hear new things that I am able to bring to my work, and create awareness of what is going around globally in equality, diversity and focus of businesses and entrepreneurs to make the world a better place by including women."

New values for governance

Reflecting on our collective and individual journeys, we encourage people, now more than ever before, to develop global awareness and contribute through

compassionate values. Caring has a strong quality, implying the quality of both nurturing and defending what we commit to. In the current political and economic climate, WIN has chosen to address and promote the "feminine" or integrative qualities such as empathy, integrity, receptivity, intuition, caring, sharing and resilience, which we hope will provide a balance within the current leadership paradigm.

Developing the future so that it benefits everyone is not only a great chance; it is our responsibility as conscious human beings. Governance needs to be revisited in executive committees, boardrooms, strategies and human resource policies alike. A new set of ethical regulations is needed. How was it possible for leaders of the world's major banks to take out billions of dollars in options and salaries just before the banks went bankrupt? And what about empathy? What if lenders really put themselves in the shoes of a client when granting credit? What would be different?

Most women we know work hard towards reaching future goals and building a life for tomorrow - the horizontal dimension. While we encourage this, we also support an awareness of the need to let life unfold and to work on yourself in a vertical dimension: on who you are and how you act.

These times, challenging as they may be, are interesting and if we can commit to what is important it is possible to thrive on this uncertainty. Listening to our minds, hearts and intuition may all be equally important as we move into the future. At the basis of WIN is the knowledge that we are constantly in relationships - that is the basis of networking. By looking at how we network, we can create an environment that allows women entrepreneurs to succeed.

Women's International Networking

WIN's main event, the annual global leadership forum, stages more than 40 workshops and plenary sessions. There have been 11 such events, the next one will take place in Prague in October. Participants benefit from the inspiration and company of hundreds of women and some men, and a web of contacts that helps them succeed. WIN also hosts a Mobilizing Women programme and a corporate networking group that meets four times a year.

Note: W.I.N. is an independent social and international women's leadership organization located in Lausanne, Switzerland (www.winconference.net). This article is reprinted from International Trade Forum, Issue 3&4, 2008, pp. 40 (© Trade Forum Magazine, International Trade Centre). ■

ADVISING POLICY; ALLEVIATING POVERTY



**By Ritu Sharma Fox
Co-Founder and President
Women Thrive Worldwide**

In the current financial crisis, governments need to provide opportunities for women living in poverty by including them in policy dialogue.

In the current economic climate, forward movements in market access and trade capacity building for developing countries can seem unlikely. But at both bilateral and multilateral levels opportunities exist to create policies that would increase access to global markets, credit and technical skills for women living in poverty around the world.

Women Thrive Worldwide (formerly the Women's Edge Coalition) is a non-profit organization focused on making United States policies foster economic opportunity for women living in poverty. Women Thrive brings together over 50 organizations and 25,000 individuals, united in the belief that empowering women is not only right, but also the most effective long-term solution to world poverty.

In this unique trade environment, Women Thrive advises policymakers in the United States on how preferences help women in developing countries and their economies as a whole, while having positive impacts on the United States economy. It also strives to extend gender integration in trade policy, capacity-building efforts and sustainable development programmes. By holistically linking the approach to these programmes, 2009 can be a productive year in global trade.

Global trade, the financial crisis and women

The last decade has seen some of the world's poorest regions begin to climb out of poverty. In just the last six years, for example, Africa's exports have jumped by about \$240 billion, which is far more than either humanitarian assistance from wealthy countries or remittances from the 16 million Africans working abroad. More than 100,000 new jobs have been created on the continent in the export-based textile industry alone, with up to 90% of these jobs going to women living in



poverty. It's estimated that each woman employed in the textile sector supports up to seven family members.

But as Americans and Europeans rein in their spending due to the global financial crisis, these exports from Africa will fall, putting thousands of new manufacturing jobs in danger. Women are most likely to have jobs in the informal sectors of the economy with virtually no job security and are the first to be laid off. Even when they have jobs in the formal sector, women are disproportionately affected: they are more likely to be unskilled in comparison to their male counterparts in factories and are more likely to be made redundant first.

But the financial crisis will affect more than just export levels. Women in low-income countries will also have to piece together food and shelter with fewer remittances from relatives living abroad. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, money flowing into Latin America has already slowed.

The last decade has also seen the coming of age for microcredit, which created new opportunities for millions of the world's poorest women through small loans to start businesses and gain access to global markets. Predictions place small, unsecured loans under as much threat as other credit, if not more. And unlike many other borrowers, these women have few alternative sources of financing.

As producers of food and providers for their families, women across the developing world are already feeling the brunt of another crisis: rising food prices. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, women produce up to 80% of basic foodstuffs both for household consumption and for sale. The economic slowdown will delay investments in agriculture and infrastructure projects that are vital for the long-term outlook of these societies.

Of course, all of this is occurring as developed nations set aside billions of dollars to rescue their banks and financial systems, and these same countries are likely to slash their international assistance budgets.

Increased local, regional and global trade can play a pivotal role in providing the economic sustainability women need to support themselves, their families and their national economies. Accordingly, policymakers in the United States and elsewhere must consider women's role in the global economy when devising solutions and

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Good Business - The Potential of Women-Owned Enterprises

By Elizabeth Vazquez
Executive Director
WEConnect International

and

By Joan Kerr
Executive Director, Supplier Diversity
AT&T

Global corporations are learning that buying from businesses owned by women is vital for economic growth. Initiatives like WEConnect International are providing the essential link.



corporations that purchase over \$1 billion each per year from diverse suppliers) spend only 2.2% on women-owned businesses.

WEConnect International estimates that less than 5% of corporate or government spending in any country goes to women-owned businesses. This clearly identifies an area of underutilized economic growth potential.

WEConnect International is leading the strategy for unleashing the economic potential of women business owners through certification and market access. This initiative is led by global corporations including Accenture, AT&T, Cisco, IBM, Intel, Manpower, Motorola, Pfizer, Wal-Mart and other companies. Its mission is to develop and monitor global opportunities

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The contribution that women business owners can make to the growth of the global economy was recognized at the ITC's World Export Development Forum in 2008. The event included a panel on the business case for why corporations and governments should increase the level of participation of women owned businesses in their supply chains.

Although a great deal has been done to support women's entrepreneurship at the start-up level, the "Billion Dollar Roundtable" (the top 13 multinational

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future international trade policies.

Women have a disproportionately high risk of being poor and yet, in many cultures, they are responsible for providing for the well-being of their families. This makes investing in women an effective strategy for reducing global poverty.

Take women into account in policy dialogue

While the United States needs to stabilize its markets, this is not the time to halt all movement on market access and increasing economic opportunity around the world. How the nation's newly elected administration will engage international partners on trade and economics is still unknown.

But some facts are certain. Leaders in the United States in both the House of Representatives and the Senate have signaled that they will review all United States trade preference programmes, which could either be an opportunity for positive advancements or for increased United States protectionism. Committing to increasing environmental and labour protections should help the administration to find common ground with Democratic leaders in Congress who have had hesitations about extending trade. The improved consensus, as well as the new protections themselves, should be beneficial for women labourers, farmers and entrepreneurs. In addition, working together on priorities for domestic trade adjustment assistance for workers would increase space for

discussion on how trade can benefit developing countries.

Despite the financial crisis or fears that the United States will be less aggressive in its approach to global trade, there is an opportunity to explore how certain aspects of trade can help economies both at home and abroad. Our view is that the current United States tariff and quota system inadvertently hits least developed countries (LDCs) the hardest, and United States trade preference programmes designed to remedy this often leave out the very poorest countries. The solution is to extend better coverage to these LDCs, expanding duty-free, quota-free product coverage to 100% so that it includes sectors that are largely populated by women, such as agriculture and textiles, while providing permanent benefits to encourage long-term investment and sustainable growth. The time is right for a full dialogue in the United States on this issue.

Finally, the sheer scale of the financial crisis requires a more collaborative and multi-stakeholder approach to solutions. This engagement could result in a more synchronized approach to other pressing trade issues, namely a more robust and coordinated take on the "Aid for Trade" agenda.

Note: Women Thrive Worldwide (formerly the Women's Edge Coalition) is the leading non-profit organization shaping U.S. policy help women in developing countries lift themselves out of poverty (www.womenthrive.org). This article is reprinted from International Trade Forum, Issue 3&4, 2008, pp. 38-39. (© Trade Forum Magazine, International Trade Centre). ■

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for women's business enterprises.

Like all business people, what women entrepreneurs want most is to sell their products and services. They need better access to models for growth, including how to sell into large corporate and government supply chains. Working with women business owners to increase their capacity to network and scale up their operations is the critical missing link for real job creation and economic impact.

Many multinational corporations want to diversify their global supplier base to reflect their market and customer base, increase shareholder value and enhance competitive advantage. Of the Fortune 500 companies, 97% have supplier diversity programmes to source from historically underutilized businesses. With the trend towards contract bundling, over 80% of these corporations now require supplier diversity efforts from their tier one and tier two suppliers.

Women as suppliers

Large corporations want straightforward access to the best of everything. Small businesses are a good source of innovation, creativity, competitive pricing and quick and agile business practices. Their participation in supply chains introduces new competition to existing suppliers. Including women-owned businesses in this arena brings particular value, as women make the majority of consumer decisions and understand the market requirements. In addition, women are particularly loyal to corporations that understand their needs. Buying from women-owned businesses unlocks not only women's potential, but also the potential of corporations and governments.

It's essential that organizations and governments collaborate to ensure the pool of women suppliers can keep pace with demand. Technology will play an increasingly important role in enabling access to the large number of excellent diverse suppliers, in a sustainable and cost-effective way. WE Connect International is providing that important link.

Case study: AT&T

AT&T is the largest telecommunications holding company in the world by revenue, and prides itself on its Supplier Diversity programmes. In 1989 it implemented the Prime Supplier programme, which has expanded opportunities for women's businesses by requiring AT&T prime suppliers to join them in meeting supplier diversity goals. In 1990, it began partnering with university business schools to establish and promote executive training programmes specifically for diversity-owned companies to help them improve their competitiveness. Today AT&T continues to increase diversity through contracting in low utilization areas such as wireless, advertising, legal, finance and other professional services.

AT&T spends over \$2 billion with women-owned companies each year and can trace \$26 billion in annual revenue to its Supplier Diversity programme, making this an integral part of its business. AT&T measures and tracks how diversity suppliers help them meet the needs of their diverse customer base and maintain their competitive edge by providing products and services of quality. Promoting the participation of a diverse supplier base not only provides better business solutions, but it cultivates greater customer loyalty, bidding advantages and public policy support in the communities AT&T serves. Supplier diversity advantages are tracked to key metrics such as increased revenues, speed to market and cost reduction.

Supplier to AT&T: Himanshu Bhatia

Himanshu Bhatia co-founded Rose International in 1993. Before launching Rose International, she held management roles in information systems and technology. Ms Bhatia saw her parents struggle and always wanted to own a business that she could grow. When she first launched Rose International, the market was dominated by men. Today, the market is more mixed, allowing greater opportunities for all.

Rose International is now one of the top information technology (IT) consulting and business service firms in the United States, providing services to commercial organizations and government agencies nationwide. They made their first sale by marketing to the United States Government, and AT&T became one of their first private sector customers. Today Rose International employs 1,500 associates with 2008 revenue projected at \$130 million.

Rose International first worked with AT&T in 1999 and, in a very competitive market, has continued to expand its business with the corporation. As an AT&T Prime Supplier, Rose International was required to establish its own supplier diversity initiatives and include other diverse suppliers in its business with AT&T. Today, over 100 registered women-owned vendors are now qualified to do business with Rose International. Almost 50 of these vendors generated revenue from Rose International in 2008. Its current spending on women-owned businesses is close to 15% of total expenditure. Several of these vendors have offices in India, bringing opportunity to women in two continents.

With client demand for competitive prices and 24-hour service, Rose International opened a wholly-owned subsidiary for offshore operations in India, Rose IT Solutions Ltd, which offers IT solutions and services at competitive cost. WE Connect International and the programme it will bring to India (WE Connect India) will make it easier for Rose International to find certified women business owners that can become qualified suppliers.

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NETWORKS TO BUILD LEADERSHIP IN TRADE

**By Yvonne Grandbois
Executive Vice-President
Geneva Women in International Trade**

By connecting women around the world, the Organization of Women in International Trade is fostering powerful networks that help them to grow as leaders in business.

More than ever before, we are witnessing the transformative power of women in business and trade, through our networks and our capacity to share, to collaborate, to learn and to lead. Networking has become a way of life.

The Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) operates at a global level to help women do business locally and internationally. OWIT chapters around the world bring women together to form a powerful network that helps them to grow personally and professionally as leaders in business.

The organization's values and philosophy embrace the mission statement, "United around the globe to foster international trade and the advancement of women in business". In pursuing these goals, it strives to stay at the forefront of trade developments and to establish alliances with partners.

In the mid-1980s, a few women in several distant locations formed local groups with similar goals to advance trade opportunities and promote leadership. OWIT was officially established in 1989.

Today, with 3,000 members and 20 chapters, OWIT is recognized worldwide for building trade relationships in global communities. Its website, www.owit.org, provides a networking forum for its members in international trade, a job bank, a speaker's bureau and many other services. The organization's executives are asked to participate in top-level global meetings such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Peru, and ITC's Expert Round Table on the Gender Dimension of the Enhanced Integrated Framework in Geneva and the World Export Development Forum in Montreux (Switzerland).

Delivering results

OWIT helps women to develop direct business opportunities, whether it is consultancies in their professional expertise, import and export business connections, learning from best practices or receiving expert advice from contacts made as a result of links between chapters or attendance at the annual world conference.

The Nairobi chapter reports that local OWIT workshops have provided skills-building and actual business contracts, as well as much-needed knowledge of global markets. Nairobi is now helping women in Ethiopia set up a chapter there.

The Toronto chapter spearheaded a successful trade mission for Canadian women to Mexico to coincide with OWIT's international conference in Monterrey this year. Participants developed new business contacts and leads from the high-level business matching meetings and networking events.

The Mexican chapter reports that membership facilitates the development of global business contacts. Members have been able to access information from the countries with which their members are interested in doing business.

OWIT's strength is its person-to-person approach. Connections are easy, informal and continuous. The missions are accessible, affordable and easily replicated in all countries. It assembles women who are just starting out, women who have reached a high level of success, and all levels of achievement in between.

Note: The Organization of Women as International Trade (OWIT) is a non-profit professional organizational designed to promote women day business in international trade by providing networking and educations opportunities (www.owit.org). It is based in Washington D.C., U.S.A. This article is reprinted from International Trade Forum, Issues 3&4, 2008, pp. 42-43. (© Trade Forum Magazine, International Trade Centre). ■

Join Us . . . Be a member of CWEC now!

The CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC) invites you to be a part of the most dynamic group of women entrepreneurs from Asia and the Pacific.

Membership in CWEC will provide international exposure and networking opportunities with colleagues and potential business partners from other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Membership and nomination forms are available at the CACCI Secretariat Office with headquarters in Taipei, Taiwan through telephone numbers (886 2) 2725-5663 or (886 2) 2725-5664 You may also email us at cacci@cacci.org.tw

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Providing the link

Quantum Leaps Incorporated, a non-profit organization, which helps to fuel the global growth of women's enterprise development in partnership with a network of global corporations, is assisting the development of WEConnect International. The mission of WEConnect International is to develop and monitor global standards for women's business enterprise certification and promote the standardization of databases so that buyers, sellers and partners can easily find each other. The certification process ascertains that a business is primarily owned, managed and controlled by one or more women. WEConnect International coordinates the certification of women's business enterprises where certification is unavailable and conducts international research on women business owners and their access to markets.

Connecting India

Launching in 2009, WE Connect India will help large corporations such as AT&T and their suppliers such as Rose International find certified women-owned businesses in India. Product development and training in packaging are foreseen - areas of competency of ITC. Interest in connecting ran high - both from MNCs and women's business organizations present at a recent meeting hosted by Accenture in Bangalore, that ITC and WEConnect convened to test interest. Once certified, Indian women-owned businesses can tap into established networks in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. An affiliate will be launched in China in 2009.

For more information, please visit www.WEConnectinternational.org

Effecting Change

WEConnect International works closely with each new affiliate to:

1. Provide knowledge transfer, training and technical assistance on how to conduct certification that will be recognized by the international business community
2. Facilitate the exchange of standards, templates, technology, tools, methodologies, benchmarks, scorecards, research, best practices etc. among affiliated certification organizations
3. Play a leadership role in analyzing and disseminating global trends in women's entrepreneurship as they relate to supply chain development and inclusivity
4. Train affiliates on how to help the women-owned businesses they certify to scale and become more effective suppliers to corporations and governments
5. Train affiliates on how to conduct effective advocacy campaigns and build a strong local network
6. Facilitate access and business linkages among affiliates, certified businesses, corporations, governments, NGOs non-governmental organizations and other

'GIRL EFFECT'

By Laure Modesti
Coordinator, Communication Marketing & Membership Services
The Consumer Goods

Investing in young women is at the heart of any country's long-term development and prosperity, according to leading voices that emerged at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January.

Women are particularly vulnerable during times of economic downturn - they're at greatest risk of losing their jobs and, in many developing countries, girls are taken out of school to help support their families. Yet, paradoxically, females hold the best hope for improving local economies, according to leading voices that emerged at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January.

The premise that young women hold the key to economic recovery has been referred to as the 'Girl Effect', a reference to www.thegirleffect.org, an initiative of the Nike Foundation. In a nutshell, evidence states that extra years of education for girls result in higher salaries for working women; that women reinvest far more of their salaries into their families than men; and that the children of working women are healthier and better educated themselves.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director of the World Bank in Washington DC, told the Forum: 'Investing in women is smart economics. Investing in girls - catching them upstream - is even smarter economics.' In her experience, investing in girls will have tremendous impacts on the Millennium Development Goals and will help resolve poverty, population, family welfare and climate change issues.

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stakeholders at the global level

7. Ensure that each new affiliate will have a sustainable revenue stream from diversified sources, and will target multinational and local corporate members, as well as certification and registration fees, training fees, event fees, research, grants, public support, etc.

Note: WEConnect International is an independent non-profit-membership organization that aims to provide opportunities to women-owned business to compete in the global value chain, thereby improving sourcing options and facility sustainable economic growth (www.weconnectinternational.org). It is based in Washington D.C., U.S.A. This article is reprinted from International Trade Forum, Issue 3&4, 2008, pp. 28-29. (© Trade Forum Magazine, International Trade Centre). ■

Girl Effect

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Session panelists agreed that allowing women to access elementary rights would make a huge difference to their own condition and those of their families, but more so, would positively impact the world's economy. Key areas proposed to maximize this effect would be for governments to implement firm legal protection and the right to property for women - as an essential base on which enterprise could be developed - as well as specifically tailored health and education programmes for women and girls.

Mari Pangestu, Indonesian Minister for Trade described how women in power become role models in society and are essential to inducing a cultural shift in values away from women solely getting married and having children. She underlined the importance of women in decision-making roles, stressing that they do not make the same type of decisions as men: when a woman is made into a local leader, 'she's going to pick clean water rather than a satellite dish in your village ... If only men are making decisions in reconstruction, they will not be making the decisions that absorb the women who have lost their jobs.'

Nobel Prize-winning economist **Muhammad Yunus** concurred with Pangestu's emphasis on property rights for women. His impetus behind establishing the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh was to provide small loans to women who, without land title or other forms of collateral, could neither establish nor grow businesses. Recently, the bank has introduced incentives that encourage land title to be in the wife's name. He mentioned that there had been some early concerns that women's increased financial independence might lead to higher divorce rates. To the contrary, however, the bank has found that men are far less inclined to divorce women who have title over the family home.

Of course, literacy is a key factor in business development, and the theme of education was central to the debate and raised by all panelists. Okonjo-Iweala told the panel, '70% of children removed from the educational system are girls. It is critically important for family welfare, country welfare and global welfare that girls are placed at the centre of education.' Pangestu stated governments should ensure girls are not taken out of school, particularly during times of crisis. Further, she added, specific incentives should be implemented, such as the conditional cash grant scheme in Mexico 'linked to girls staying in school'.

Health services and health education specifically tailored to women and young girls will also have remarkable impacts, according to Muhammad Yunus and **Melinda French Gates**, Co-Chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in the United States. She explained how these services need to be tailored to local needs, especially in rural areas where most women don't have

access to health facilities. Health information and family planning should target girls as young as 10, which would not only prevent maternal mortality but also improve infant health. 'Our society is changing,' she said. 'Young girls need to have these messages earlier. If we can get these messages out, we can be hopeful these girls will learn how to protect themselves and learn how to plan the birth of their children.'

Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) went further: 'Women and young girls are also subjected to sexual violence from a very early age in many parts of the world in absolute impunity. This has to stop! Not only do we need to protect girls, we have to change the attitude of men and boys and how they treat women.' Sexual violence can indeed have dramatic implications on health, notably on the spread of HIV/AIDS and impacts on education and, poverty.

In concluding the debate, **Mark G. Parker**, President of the Nike Foundation, acknowledged that much remained to be done. The 'Girl Effect' campaign, which links empowering the girl-child to the future of humanity, is one contribution. A bigger catalyst for change within our reach is for world leaders to leverage the global economic crisis to question some of the social foundations on which the economy is based. In crafting solutions to the crisis that help realize the potential of the 600 million girls around the world, investments can be redirected to 'the most neglected, at risk, unsupported part of the world's population, (which) also happens to be the part...that can make the biggest impact': the girl.

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Happy New Year !!!

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