

### Chairperson's Message

Dear All,

Today perhaps the woman's awakening to an understanding of her own identity and individuality is the biggest change that has played out between the sexes.

Both sexes need to understand that a woman's independence is a natural evolution and not a direct challenge to men's traditional role. The role of a protector that falls on men is more about responsibility rather than authority. His role completes and balances the role nature has decreed for her. Neither men nor women want each other to change their role from their original basic one - the role of protector, provider (the paternal- male role) and nurturer, nourisher (the maternal - female role).



However, the need to change attitudes and make space for the "new woman" to spread her wings within the relationships is required to be understood. The way the sexes interacted with each other has to change, as do expectations. The most important requirement that does need to change is attitude. This is solely possible through opportunities to share and speak.

"In our information age, words have become devalued and degraded and are reduced to empty signs and ciphers". He further agrees with the observation of French scientist and essayist Albert Jacquard that "Information Science supplies only communication canned or frozen. It is incapable of evoking the bursts of creativity that came naturally in the course of dialogue comprising moments of silence as well as words". Interactive exchanges touch hearts, bring great joy, a sense of fulfillment, and evoke a great response. "The multihued tapestry woven of such tireless striving for dialogue enables us to develop and enrich all minds and souls," remarked Soka Gakkai International President Daisaku Ikeda in the UN earlier this year.

This attempt of CACCI - CWEC may seem a very slow way forward, but it is the surest way. Through this process we will be able to see ourselves in others and feel an inner sense of unity. This represents a fundamental revolution in the way we view life and the first step in this direction is our commitment to engage in dialogues among ourselves under the CACCI-CWEC banner in a collective form in member countries.

I would request all to think and deliberate on the above and respond with their suggestions.

With warm regards,

**Mukta Nandini Jain**  
Chairperson - CACCI- CWEC

## CWEC Holds Special Breakout Session in Istanbul, Turkey

Members of the CACCI Women's Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC) convened a special breakout session on March 3, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey in conjunction with the 25th CACCI Conference. The session aimed at providing the participants the opportunity to discuss current trends and developments in women entrepreneurship and to explore possible areas of cooperation among women entrepreneurs in CACCI member countries.

Ms. Zuhul Mansfield, Member of the Women Entrepreneurs Board, Chairperson DEİK/Turkish-Egyptian Business Council; President, TMG Mining Co. served as Moderator of the session. Ms. Zamira Akbagysheva, President, Congress of Women of

the Kyrgyz Republic / Member of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic, was a speaker.

During the session, Ms. Mansfield made a presentation on the status and prospects of

women entrepreneurship in Turkey. Ms. Akbagysheva shared with the participants her views on the role of women entrepreneurs in the country's economy, the various challenges and problems they face, and her recommendations to address these problems.

Participants of the breakout session also discussed the following issues: (i) Membership expansion and networking; (ii) Training programs - to be announced through e-mail; and (iii) Publication of the newsletter - to be sent to all members of CACCI.

Following the breakout session, Ms. Akbagysheva presented a summary report of the discussions to the 79th CACCI Council Meeting held later that day. ■



# CWEC Holds Teleconference

Key officers of the CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC) held a teleconference on August 23, 2011 to discuss activities to be undertaken by the CWEC within the next year.

The teleconference was chaired by Ms. Mukta Nandini Jain, Chairperson, CWEC and Former National President, FICCI Ladies Organization. The other participants included Ms. Tsevegrash Erdenechuluu, President, Gandirs Co., Ltd and Chairperson, Women Entrepreneurs Council, Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Dr. Maria Socorro M. Malitao, Ph.D., President & Chief Executive officer, Association for Righteousness Advocacy in Leadership (ARAL) and Standout Group of Companies; and Mrs. Shipra Chatterjee, Executive Director, FICCI Ladies Organization.

CACCI Secretariat executives also joined the teleconference led by Dr. Webster W. Kian, Director-General; Mr. Amador Honrado, Jr., Deputy Director-General; and Ms. Wendy Yang, Senior Officer.

## Summary of Discussions/Action Plans:

Among the items discussed and/or agreed upon during the teleconference were the following:

▲ As suggested by Ms. Erdenechuluu, Ms. Jain requested the CACCI Secretariat to prepare a Membership Directory for CWEC, which can be sent to CWEC members for information exchange after completion.

▲ To enhance the interaction among CWEC members, Ms. Jain suggested set up an official CWEC website, with links to CACCI and other member chambers, and agreed to initiate the study of this project from her side.



*Ms. Tsevegrash Erdenechuluu*

▲ Dr. Maricor shared her experience of joining CACCI Presidential Visits to Vietnam and Indonesia with other participants, which gave her the opportunity to network with women and representatives in the two

countries and explore possible areas of cooperation.

▲ The CACCI Secretariat was requested to send the tentative program of the upcoming CACCI Presidential Visit to Nepal in early September 2011 to all teleconference participants for their consideration.

▲ Regarding training programs, Ms. Jain proposed to organize a workshop on women entrepreneurship in the Philippines in March 2012, and requested the Secretariat to convey the proposal to Dr. Maricor with a request that she takes the lead in organizing it.

▲ For the next issue of Grow, both Ms. Jain and Ms. Erdenechuluu agreed to contribute articles.

▲ As the International Women Entrepreneurial Challenge Awards (IWEC Awards) are presented annually, Ms. Jain suggested that representatives from CACCI member chambers and CACCI Secretariat should attend the event should there be any awardee nominated from CACCI members. Ms. Jain agreed to provide more information on the IWEC Awards which will be presented in Barcelona, Spain in 2012.

▲ Ms. Jain also accepted the proposal from the CACCI Secretariat to organize a CACCI regional award on women entrepreneurship among member chambers. The said regional award would be launched in 2012 and presented in 2013. The CACCI Secretariat was requested to provide Ms. Jain the mechanics and nomination schedule of the 3rd YEGAP Award to serve as her reference for the proposed award.

▲ For future teleconferences, Ms. Jain suggested inviting representatives from Australia, Malaysia, Turkey and Vietnam as participant.

CACCI held its first breakout session on women entrepreneurship during the Tbilisi meeting in Georgia on October 27, 2005 with the view to formally organizing a CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC). The idea of forming the CWEC was broached by CACCI President Mr. K. K. Modi during the CACCI Planning Committee meeting held in April 2005. ■



*Ms. Mukta Nandini Jain*



*Dr. Maria Socorro M. Malitao*



## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ASIAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: AN OVERVIEW

*The following article was contributed by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).*

As in other parts of the world, women's entrepreneurship development in Asian developing countries has also a tremendous potential in empowering women and transforming society in the region. Yet in many countries, especially where the level of economic development, reflected by the level of income per capita and the degree of industrialization, is still low, this potential remains largely untapped. There are basically three categories of women entrepreneurs, that is: "chance", "forced" and "created" entrepreneurs.

### **CATEGORIES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS (BY REASONS / MOTIVATIONS FOR STARTING THE BUSINESS) IN ASIAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Category	Main reason / motivation
Chance entrepreneurs	-to keep busy -was hobby/special interest -family/spouse had business
Forced entrepreneurs	-financial/needed the money -control over time/flexibility -challenge, try something on one's own -show others I could do it.
Created or pulled entrepreneurs	-to be independent -self satisfaction -example to children -employment to others /do something worthwhile

These different categories are based on how their businesses got started, or the main reasons or motivations behind starting their own businesses. Chance entrepreneurs are those who start a business without any clear goals or plans. Their businesses probably evolved from hobbies to economic enterprises over time. Forced entrepreneurs are those who were compelled by circumstances (e.g., death of a spouse, the family facing financial difficulties) to start a business, their primary motivation, hence, tend to be financial. Created entrepreneurs are those who are "located, motivated, encouraged and developed" through, for instance,

entrepreneurship development programs.

Although, within the developing countries, the degree varies by country, depending on many factors, including level of economic development, reflected by the level of income per capita, and social, cultural and political factors. Gender equity has many dimensions and it is not easy to measure, due to the lack of accurate, gender discriminated social indicators in many countries, especially in the developing world.

Two indices often used to measure gender equity are Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) constructed by UNDP. GDI is human development index (HDI) adjusted for gender inequality, and HDI measures the average achievements of the country in terms of the extent to which people lead a long and healthy life, are educated and knowledgeable, and enjoy a decent standard of living. GDI measures achievements in the same basic dimensions as HDI but in addition captures inequalities between women and men.

The GEM is concerned with the opportunities available to women vis-à-vis men as regards participation in the economic and political life of a country. Together GDI and GEM attempt to capture the level of development of women and the extent to which women are free from discrimination in building their capabilities and in gaining access to resources and opportunities.

Based on the Human Development Report 2007/2008 from UNDP, in the category of high human development (based on HDI rank), there are only three Asian developing countries led by South Korea with the highest GDI rank (no data available for Singapore). Other important Asian developing countries are found in the middle human development category, with three countries from South Asia are in the lowest rank. For the GEM rank, Singapore is the highest as compared to Nepal with the lowest rank. With these indices, it can thus be expected that in Singapore women would have more freedom than their counterparts in Nepal and other Asian developing countries to become entrepreneurs. Similarly, in South Korea, for instance, more women entrepreneurs can be found in modern businesses than those in Nepal, since women education in the first country is better than that in the second one.

**GENDER DEVELOPMENT INDEX (GDI) AND GENDER EMPOWERMENT MEASURE (GEM) IN SELECTED ASIAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 2007 / 2008.**

Country*	GDI Rank	HDI Rank - GDI Rank**	GEM Rank
<b>High Human Development</b>			
Singapore	.....	.....	16
South Korea	26	-1	64
Brunei Darussalam	31	-2	.....
Malaysia	58	1	65
<b>Middle Human Development</b>			
Thailand	71	0	73
China	73	1	57
Philippines	77	4	45
Sri Lanka	89	-1	85
Vietnam	91	3	52
Indonesia	94	1	.....
India	113	0	.....
Lao PDR	115	-1	.....
Cambodia	114	1	83
Pakistan	125	-7	82
Bangladesh	121	1	81
Nepal	126	4	86

Notes: \* based on HDI rank; \*\* the HDI ranks used in this calculation are recalculated for the 157 countries covered by the survey for the Human Development Report 2007/2008 with a GDI value. A positive figure indicates that the GDI rank is higher than the HDI rank; a negative the opposite.

Source: UNDP (2008)

In order to contribute to the understanding of genderbased inequities and to monitor the status and its evolution, Social Watch (Social Watch is an international network informed by national citizens groups aiming at following up the fulfilment of internationally agreed commitments on poverty eradication and equality) has also developed an index, called the Gender Equity Index (GEI). This index is based on internationally available comparable data and it makes it possible to position and classify countries according to a selection of indicators relevant to gender inequity in three different dimensions: education (literacy rate gap, primary school enrolment rate gap, secondary school enrolment rate gap, tertiary education enrolment rate gap), participation in economic activity (income gap, activity rate gap), and empowerment (% of women in technical positions, % of women in management and government positions, % of women in parliaments, % of women in ministerial posts). The index has a maximum possible value of 100%, which would indicate no gender gap at all in each of the three dimensions.

The GEI measures the gap between women and men, not their welfare (Thus, for example, a country where both boys and girls have equal access to university studies would rank 100 in this aspect, and a country

where both boys and girls are equally unable to complete primary school would also rank 100. This is not to imply that the quality of the education should not be improved. It just says that boys and girls suffer from the same lack of quality. Education is the only component in the index where many countries have actually reached parity level. When parity is achieved no further progress is possible. But beyond the fact that many countries do not progress, the GEI education component reveals that too many of them are regressing. In the two other dimensions, related to women's integration into economic and political life, no country shows complete parity yet).

**GENDER EQUITY INDEX 2008 FOR SELECTED ASIAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Country/Economy	GEI 2008	Dimensions		
		Education	Economic activity	Empowerment
Philippines	76	100.0	63.5	65.5
Hong Kong	72	98.5	66.0	51.8
Viet Nam	71	88.6	81.2	44.0
Thailand	70	98.7	71.7	39.7
China	69	95.1	73.3	38.2
Singapore	66	89.6	58.6	48.7
Brunei Darussalam	63	98.7	48.4	41.2
Cambodia	60	76.3	83.5	21.0
Malaysia	58	98.1	46.6	29.1
Korea, Rep.	54	84.2	53.9	23.5
Sri Lanka	53	83.7	42.9	32.1
Indonesia	52	91.7	52.8	12.4
Bangladesh	51	82.3	53.5	17.6
Nepal	44	61.1	57.0	15.3
Pakistan	42	73.2	34.2	17.5
India	40	77.5	36.6	6.3

Source: Social Watch ([www.socialwatch.org](http://www.socialwatch.org)).

In 2008, the GEI ranks the 2008 situation of 157 countries, based on the most recent statistics available, and is able to determine evolution trends in 133 by comparing their present index with that of five years ago.

World Economic Forum (WEF) also produces annual report on global gender gap ranking, based on gender gap index (GGI). The index is based on four critical areas of inequality between men and women:

1. Economic participation and opportunity: outcomes on salaries, participation levels and access to high-skilled employment.
2. Educational attainment: outcomes on access to basic and higher level education.
3. Political empowerment: outcomes on representation in decision-making structures.
4. Health and survival: outcomes on life expectancy and sex ratio.

**SOME EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTH ASIA**

Several different providers, including governmental, non-governmental, international and membership organizations, are already providing support the development of women entrepreneurs in South Asia.

The following examples aim to provide an insight into some initiatives to promote women entrepreneurs and professionals in South Asia, in particular as regards providing opportunities for networking, training and support:

### **FICCI Ladies Organization: Promoting Entrepreneurship and Professional Excellence**

#### ***India***

The FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO) is a wing of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the apex body of Industry and Chambers of Commerce in India. It was established in 1983 with the basic objective of “women empowerment”, to encourage women to exploit to the maximum their own human potential as entrepreneurs, business women and professionals and serve the community and nation at large through activities of social welfare on the cultural and social fronts (FICCI Awards, 2003-04).

As an all India organization for women, FLO has around 1000 members comprising entrepreneurs, professionals and executives. It currently has five chapters – in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Coimbatore. In order to intensify operations and extend its reach, FLO seeks to eventually open a chapter in each State.

The primary objective of FLO is to promote entrepreneurship and professional excellence in women and society at large. FLO works on three levels. At the basic level, it holds entrepreneurship development programmes for women, working with them in advising on how to start a business and following it through with some help in vocational training. At the middle level, it holds seminars and workshops for women who run small-scale businesses, such as computerization and financial management. At the senior level, FLO has sophisticated programmes for women at the helm in areas such as marketing and finance.

Besides this FLO has an active Business Consultancy Cell where free professional guidance is offered and which serves as a single window stop for all information on diversified statutory compliances, procedures and obligations in its Hyderabad chapter. It advises women entrepreneurs on subjects such as company incorporation, registration, preliminary documentation, taxation and policies of Governments.

FLO has recently launched Young FLO (YFLO), a forum/community of career women between 20 and 39. In discharge of its functions, FLO has also started giving awards to recognize outstanding women in various walks of life. It presents the “Outstanding Woman Entrepreneur” award for establishing and successfully running a business unit, bringing product innovations and providing employment.

### **First Women’s Bank Limited: Disbursing Credit to Women Entrepreneurs**

#### ***Pakistan***

The First Women’s Bank Limited (FWBL) was established in 1989 in Pakistan, as a nationalized commercial bank to cater solely to the financial needs of women entrepreneurs. It is one of the only two commercial banks in Pakistan disbursing credit to women.

The FWBL has 38 branches all over Pakistan and a head office in Karachi. It also set up a Regional Development and Training Institute in Islamabad in 1995, and later in Lahore and Karachi. These were later renamed and re-launched as Women Business Centres (WBCs) in March 1999.

FWBL offers a number of loan schemes ranging from PKR 5,000 to PKR 25,000 (US\$ 84 to 220) with an interest rate of 12 per cent per annum to help women entrepreneurs. Under its small loan schemes, women can borrow up to Rs. 25,000 by using a group guarantee, NGO warranty or personal surety from two government officials.

The services offered by the Bank include:

- Loans on easy terms for women entrepreneurs;
- Advisory and consultancy services for investment;
- Identification of agricultural and industrial projects for potential women entrepreneurs;
- Training in technical and managerial skills;
- Market development for the products of women entrepreneurs;
- Promoting and sponsoring displays of clients’ products in national and international exhibitions.

Approximately 12,000 women have already benefited from the various credit schemes of FWBL with emphasis on women and interventions beyond just credit provision, making it successful in creating a real impact in women’s lives. FWBL also has a high recovery rate of 90.5 per cent and the WBCs are owned completely by women (HDR, 2000).

### **Bangladesh Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

#### ***Bangladesh***

Bangladesh Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) is a non-profit and non-political organization with the aim to bring about women’s economic development and empowerment. Set up in June 2001, the Bangladesh Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry is among the few business chambers for women in the world, other ones being in Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

The Chamber’s founder, Selima Ahmad, points

out that the Chamber's members are not confined to the traditional women-dominated sectors. Currently, the BWCCI is supporting sectors like agriculture and agro-processing products, handicrafts, boutique, home textiles and herbal products.

The main objective of the Chamber is to provide support to women entrepreneurs to undertake business and trade activities. It acts like an incubator nurturing the business skills of the budding women entrepreneurs by providing valuable support to members in terms of training, market access, and access to finance, networking, business awareness and capacity-building.

As a joint initiative with SEDF (South Asia Enterprise Development Facility) of the IFC, the Chamber also offers business counselling services on a one-to-one basis, for developing new business ideas, selling a product; drawing up business contracts, etc.

Furthermore, it has established a "Biz Center" at its Dhaka office where members can, for a small fee, access services such as telephone, fax, computer, E-mail, internet, printing, etc. There is also an information booth, which provides information on legal matters, upcoming trade fairs, seminars, trainings, marketing programmes and other events.

### **Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal**

#### ***Nepal***

In 1987, Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (WEAN) was established as an autonomous association formed by and for women entrepreneurs in Nepal. Its objective is to draw out women entrepreneurs and encourage them to work toward excellence in their businesses. WEAN's initial effort created a network for women business owners from all regions of Nepal to meet, share experience, develop their businesses, exchange expertise and distribute information.

The founders of WEAN chose to organize themselves as an independent association instead of joining the existing mainstream business association, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI). Twelve years later, and as a direct result of their building a separate organization, WEAN is represented on the executive board of FNCCI.

Starting with three founders and a few full-time members, the organization has grown to more than fifty members led by an executive board of seven. Today, WEAN offers a substantial number of training packages, networking activities, advocacy initiatives, a retail cooperative, savings programmes, and a formal credit programme with the assistance of the Women's World Bank. WEAN provides a complete package of training in order to upgrade the basic skills of startup women-owned enterprises to make sure that their businesses suit the market.

WEAN has implemented a four pronged strategy

to guide its future activities. Those key areas are membership, marketing, organizational development, and financial sustainability.

### **Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka: Entrepreneur Guiding Entrepreneur**

#### ***India***

The Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka (AWAKE), founded in 1983 in Bangalore, India, is one of the pioneers in the field of providing business development services. AWAKE's mission is "to empower women through Entrepreneurship Development to improve their economic condition." To achieve this mission, AWAKE conducts various activities, such as business counselling, entrepreneurship awareness, entrepreneurship development training, management development training, business incubator, etc.

With a membership base of about 700 women entrepreneurs, AWAKE promotes women entrepreneurship development to its clients through its various activities. An affiliate member of Women's World Banking, WWB, AWAKE's activities are formulated and managed by a 15 member executive committee comprising voluntary members who design and ensure the successful implementation of all AWAKEs various programmes with the support of a team of dedicated staff and consultants.

AWAKE provides peer group support and handholds new entrants in various aspects of entrepreneurship. Apart from motivating potential women entrepreneurs, it conducts growth-oriented programmes for sustaining the businesses of existing entrepreneurs. AWAKE has developed its own 4S module of Stimulus, Start Up, Sustenance and Support.

### **Meadow Rural Enterprises Private Ltd**

#### ***India***

The district of Dharmapuri in Tamilnadu in southern India is drought prone. The State Government has promoted industrialization of the Hosur area of this district as part of an "industrial dispersion programme".

Myrada is a NGO working with rural women from poor households. Titan Industries is a watch company which is part of the TATA Group, India. The collaboration between Titan and the women organized by Myrada into self-help groups (credit and lending groups) first began in 1992, with a contract given to a group of women to launder uniforms of the Titan factory workers. This collaboration stimulated Myrada and Titan to work together on more programmes that could employ the rural poor productively.

In 1995, discussions between Myrada and Titan led in the direction of a possible collaborative venture that could engage girls from poor households in the assembly

of watch straps (metal straps, referred to as watch bracelets). MEADOW (Management of Enterprises and Development of Women) started informally in 1996 with a small group of women identified by Myrada. It was registered as a private limited company in 1998, and MEADOW Rural Enterprises Private Limited took legal birth.

### **SEWA Trade Facilitation Centre**

Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a trade union for poor, self-employed women workers, established in 1972. SEWA Trade Facilitation Centre (STFC) is a unique company, owned and managed by more than 15,000 women artisans pursuing craft activities, in particular intricate traditional hand embroidery, in the drought affected and disaster prone districts of Gujarat, India.

STFC was established by the artisan members of SEWA to turn their activity in to a commercial venture with the main objective of promoting access to national and global markets, through capacity-building and product development.

The Company has been incorporated with a planned turnover of INR 62.5 crores (US\$ 27,000 million). The main promoters of the Company are SEWA, The Kutch Craft Association and The Banaskantha DWCRMA Mahila SEWA Association. The STFC pilot phases in Gujarat have been supported by IFC and CIDA.

## **RECOMMENDED STEPS FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

### **1. Education, Training and Socialization**

A. Recognition that education and training were essential for women's economic empowerment, particularly for poor women, but inadequate, by themselves, to ensure that goal;

B. The provision of legal literacy training and awareness-raising for women in the labour force, focusing on their rights as employees;

C. Programmes for women to encourage self-confidence, advocacy and negotiation skills;

D. Educational and training policies should address women's needs by providing flexibility in courses and schedules to take into account their domestic and professional responsibilities;

E. Publicizing the central role of women in national economies and of "success stories" of female entrepreneurs through a wide range of media, to assist in changing public attitudes towards women's involvement in economic decision-making.

F. In the new economic environment of globalization, liberalization and increased competition; (i) provision of gender-sensitive training of officials and representatives in the governmental, non-governmental

and private sectors to promote women's interests in relevant regional and international forums; and, (ii) provision of training in marketing, export development and joint venture promotion to female entrepreneurs and relevant associations.

### **2. More Improved Access to Credit and Finance**

A. Policies to encourage existing financial institutions to extend credit to women in all sectors of the economy;

B. Development of mechanisms to provide collateral for loans for women without individual resources.

C. Reform of property and land rights to guarantee women's basic economic rights; and

D. Promotion of microfinance schemes, including group financing without collateral and savings/credit facilities, within the framework of experience about the need for careful planning, well-trained scheme staff and effective monitoring to ensure success.

### **3. Building and Strengthening Networks for Women empowerment**

A. Formation and strengthening of networks of female entrepreneurs in influencing all levels of policy formulation.

B. Advocacy and promotion to ensure inclusion of women's economic empowerment as a goal of all major international economic agreements.

C. Recognition of the effectiveness of modern information technologies in developing and promoting cooperation, particularly regionally and internationally.

D. Increased participation of female entrepreneurs in existing networks, such as chambers of commerce and industry, Government structures, major regional and international trade and financial structures.

### **4. Improving Access to Management and Marketing Skills and Appropriate Technology**

A. Promotion of improvements in technologies to prepare, process and preserve food to aid women as the primary food producers and significantly improve their economic conditions.

B. Provision of mechanisms to assist women to use modern information technology, including appropriate technological know-how, to access essential global information and market their businesses internationally.

C. Establishment of the "incubator centres" as single places where the female entrepreneurs can obtain a wide range of training, information and services and at which their businesses can be nurtured.

D. Mentoring of younger and less-advantaged women.

E. Enhancing women's existing technological capacity and utilize local research. ■



# Women Entrepreneurs of Pakistan

*Arjumand A. Qazi  
CEO, SME Leasing Ltd.*

For a change from the usual depiction of the 'glass is half empty' and the dismal outlook portrayed across the world about women in business, which by no means is meant to undermine the hardships faced by entrepreneurs, be it men or women, let's look at the 'filled' half of the glass by looking at those women who have succeeded.

A lot of people, among them women as well, opt to start their own business. The reasons might be for the sake of being one's own boss or for women to have an additional income while being able to look after household duties. At times women need to start their own business to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families as the sole provider. The fact remains that despite known hurdles people start their own business and while some fail others are able to do exceedingly well.

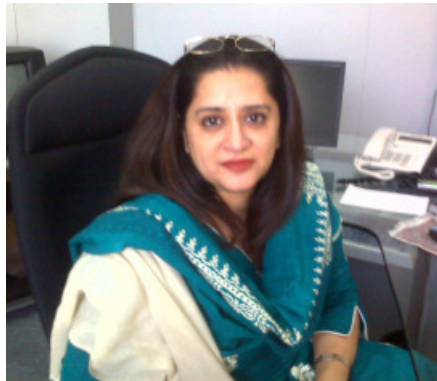
## **Favorite Niches of Women Entrepreneurs**

A number of women entrepreneurs of Pakistan have managed to do well in their selected fields and it has taken them years to reach where they are today. Most of these entrepreneurs have certain favorite niches – the largest being garments, designer clothes, designer Lawn Prints, home textile – mostly hand-crafted and items of home decor. This is followed by health and beauty through salons and spas. Another field also patronized by women entrepreneurs is jewelry.

The very vast field of designer garments has become a lucrative area with intricately designed and embroidered clothes forming a part of the trousseau for a number of brides. These garments are in high demand both locally and internationally for Pakistanis residing in other parts of the world.

## **ePortal for Women Entrepreneurs**

In order to provide a platform to showcase the wonderful products made and businesses being pursued by women entrepreneurs of Pakistan, an ePortal by the name of MizLink Pakistan for Women of Pakistan – Entrepreneurs, Professionals and Corporate Executives - was launched in 2007. The portal displays products made by and for women of Pakistan. It has cultural and traditional products like Ralli (patchwork quilts) and Ajrak – the traditional block print cloth of Sindh, Swati Embroidery on Shawls and Sindhi stitch on Cushion Covers, Kashmiri embroidery on Pashmina Shawls and so on. The new styles that are quite popular among the young ladies of the country are mostly on the 'Lawn Prints' pages where a number of women designers of the fabric, known as 'Lawn' in Pakistan,



are displayed for the year. The designers outdo each other in developing new and more stylishly crafted outfits for the summer season while the marketing cells of the companies engage the best local and international talent in the fashion industry to model these outfits.

The portal is an entrepreneurial venture that provides a leverage point to let the global visitors have a view into the skill set of the women entrepreneurs of Pakistan as well as the highly talented artisans – also mostly women – operating their businesses successfully in Pakistan. Most of their goods are absorbed in the local market, while several are able to sell internationally albeit in smaller quantities.

Developing an ePortal provides an opportunity to all the women entrepreneurs to post their products on the web portal from the comfort of their homes. As the portal develops; the potential for finding online customers increases multifold. The need remains for the entrepreneurs to produce high quality goods that can be sold internationally without any complaints. The Web 2.0 capability to post the products and their information along with pictures provides a unique opportunity to promote the name of Pakistan and the associated women entrepreneurs to brand it.

The website is already being visited by people from more than 90 countries, with an average traffic of around 300 visitors per day. This is still in the pre-marketing stage. The best part is that it is all free!

The portal also provides the possibility to link with global partners without having to travel extensively. The need is to further develop their skill sets into producing standardized quality goods that are acceptable globally with quantities that are required in international markets. That brings the question of access to finance to build exportable volumes.

## **Contributions as Professional and Corporate Executives**

As one writes about the achievements of women in Pakistan despite the tremendous socio-economic constraints, one would be remiss to not to take into account the contributions of women as professionals and corporate Executives.

There are thousands of women who have made their mark in the fields of professions such as medicine and are successfully running their own hospitals and clinics. To run a profession such as medicine, law firm or accounting & audit firms requires as much of entrepreneurial talent as that of a business person. The general administration and management of various segments like finance,

marketing and human resource management is equally hard for the professionals. However, the huge advantage that professionals have is the education that they have acquired which not only makes them self reliant and independent but also enables them to command respect in their field and community.

Similarly, the contribution of women in the corporate sector has added tremendous dimensions to women empowerment as well as access to knowledge-base to women in business. Corporate leaders have enabled the breaking of the gender barrier and created an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs to enter the business world.

For more information about MizLink Pakistan, please visit <http://www.mizlink-pakistan.com>

### **Programs initiated by the Government**

The Government since the past few years has taken a keen interest in developing the segment of women entrepreneurship as it is seen as a major part of the economy that has remained severely under-utilized. For this purpose SMEDA – Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority and the SME – Business Support Fund (BSF) have offered several schemes to assist in the development of the segment through establishment of Business Incubators, Business Centers, Training programs and market development support schemes.

In order to provide access to finance, the First Women Bank Limited (FWBL) was established as a Government owned financial institution for women. The Bank has catered to the financial needs of women for over a decade now. SME Leasing Limited (SLL) – a subsidiary of SME Bank Limited - offers lease finance solutions to women entrepreneurs providing access to finance that otherwise gets tied up in capital assets, thereby affording a solution for more working capital availability.

A bilateral donor led institution by the name of PEFGA – Pakistan Export Finance Guarantee - was established with credit enhancement features offering guarantee that was double the value of the security provided to facilitate exports. However, the paucity of resources in terms of security constrained women from taking advantage of such a facility and most of the facility was utilized by men.

Khushhali Bank provides micro-finance for micro and women owned businesses. Poverty Alleviation Fund also assists women in rural areas to have access to finance.

### **Private Sector Initiatives**

Keeping in line with the Governments' stance on women entrepreneurship development, the private sector via the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry – FPCCI, the apex trade body and the regional chambers established specialized Committees for women entrepreneurs. These committees on the one hand provided a platform for women entrepreneurs to develop their business through interaction with the main stream businesses and also were provided with customized training programs to suit the models pursued by women in particular.

As a result of the consolidation of women

entrepreneurs under the FPCCI's Committee several regional women Chambers of Commerce have been established over the past few years.

As the FPCCI's Committee also collaborated with the Export Promotion Bureau (now Trade Development Authority – TDAP), SMEDA, and other SME driven initiatives, the synergies thus created assisted the members in gaining insights into the main stream business with training modules aimed at developing the export related potential of these businesses. The several training modules then resulted in the WEXNET Exhibition which stands for - Women Exporters Network – that was one of the most successful events of its time. Visitors were invited through the several Chambers of the World that resulted in a daily turnout of 40,000 visitors. The presentation and quality of goods exhibited by women were found to be of world class level that are otherwise not seen in the international exhibitions where women-owned business's participation is low.

Other than the above mentioned initiatives there are hundreds of NGOs that are working for the development of women entrepreneurs in the rural areas. There are many NGOs that now have Micro Finance Institution status and provide financing for micro-level women owned entities.

In order to finance a micro-finance community, there are Group Lending programs that enable women to guarantee each other against defaults thereby raising finance from the concerned financial institution.

A very popular means of raising finance through community support systems are called Business Councils or Committees where women pool-in their resources to collect a sizeable amount that each contributes towards on a monthly basis thereby raising interest-free loan owed only to the members of such Committees.

### **Conclusion**

The change that the women entrepreneurs have brought into their lives have enabled them to provide better education to their children and improved the overall standard of living for themselves and their families.

The journey ahead to move most of these home based entrepreneurs towards export orientation is still a steep one with standardization of product quality coupled with larger quantities still requiring overcoming the hurdles of learning and reaching the global markets. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm in the face of adversities is in itself the driving force that continues to propel these enterprising females forward. ■

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### **About the Author**

*The author of this article is Mrs. Arjumand A. Qazi – CEO, SME Leasing Limited. As a representative of the NBFIs & Modaraba Association of Pakistan, she is an Executive Committee Member of FPCCI and heads the SME Committee for 2011. She was the Founder Chairperson of FPCCI-Women Entrepreneur Committee and is the Permanent Representative of FPCCI on the Women Entrepreneurs' Council of ECO. She is the Founder of the ePortal MizLink-Pakistan.*

## The Women's Business Council of the Philippines



The Women's Business Council of the Philippines (WBCP) was established in 1997 through the endorsement of then President Fidel V. Ramos and then Trade Secretary Ernesto V. Ordonez. It was formed to provide a platform to hear about women's issues in business and to discuss possible policies that could be endorsed to government bodies to help women in general, through business-focused solutions.

As an advocacy group composed of the country's top women business leaders and entrepreneurs, the WBCP is an active force in looking for solutions to challenges women generally face in the conduct of their business. Further, it seeks to promote women-led and women-owned enterprises through networking and through the use of technology.

Principal Purpose - The Council was established to serve businesswomen in the following areas:

1. To influence economic policies and advocate programs to address women's business concerns in such areas as technology development, training, and access to markets and finance.

2. To monitor the status of women in the economy and to advocate or undertake programs to advance the status of women workers, entrepreneurs, owners or executives.

3. To forge business alliances and establish commercial networks among women-owned, women-led or managed business and with other business groups.

Objectives - Its primary objectives are as follows:

1. Enhance women's access to finance
2. Generate benchmark data on women in business
3. Entrepreneurship development
4. Policy advocacy
5. Networking and business matching
6. Membership expansion

Vision - To be the premier Advocate and Resource for Filipino women in business.

Mission - To influence business in the country, to be the voice of Filipino Women in business and to be a major force in global networking.

The WBCP was cited by the Bureau of Gender Equality, International Labor Office, Geneva Switzerland, as among best practices in the workplace on "Enabling Women's Businesses to Flourish." and trailblazed the generation of benchmark data on Asian women in business through the conduct of a Three Country Study

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## FCEM Unites Women Entrepreneurs from the World Over



"Les Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises Mondiales" (FCEM) – translated in English as World Association of Women Entrepreneurs - was founded in France in 1945 at the end of World War II. It brings together in solidarity and friendship, like-minded women who share a common bond, that of entrepreneurship. Today, the FCEM network includes over 70 different countries from the five continents.

FCEM is non-profit, non-governmental, non-political and non-sectarian organization whose activities at the national and international level, are aimed at promoting women's entrepreneurial initiative and reinforcing national associations of women business owners through:

- (1) Creating awareness and reinforcing the visibility of women business owners\

- (2) Lobbying and advocacy, before public and private institutions, policymakers and governments, on issues that impede women's entrepreneurial potential;

- (3) Promoting solidarity, friendship, cultural understanding and the exchange of experiences and ideas;

- (4) Facilitating the development of business, partnership, and trade; and

- (5) Fostering professional growth and business skills perfection and encouraging women to create enterprise.

For national associations of women business owners, FCEM is an ideal environment for reinforcing the exchange of ideas and best practices among associations from the world over. For the individual woman entrepreneur, FCEM presents an enriching experience to meet other like-minded women from the world over.

FCEM has consultative status (Roster category) with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission (ECOSOC) and with the Council of Europe as well as representation before the European Union, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the International Labor Organization. ■



## WCEI National Conference 2011 Successfully Held in Sydney, Australia

Women Chiefs of Enterprises International (WCEI), a global grouping for businesswomen, organized its 2011 National Conference in Swissotel, Sydney, Australia on September 7-9, 2011. The three-day event attracted an active participation of women entrepreneurs around the world.

Focusing on the theme “Inspiring Women Leaders”, the WCEI National Conference 2011 featured many outstanding women leaders as speakers and panelists, such as The Hon Patricia Forsythe, Executive Director, Sydney Business Chamber, Ms. Anna Pollock, CEO, Desticorp and Ms. Bernie Brookes, Managing Director and CEO, Myer, among others.

Key issues discussed during the Conference included:

- 1) Drivers of Change – Sustainability of People and Planet;
- 2) Perspective on Women in Leadership;
- 3) Defining Leadership in the Context of Change;
- 4) Technology of Leadership;
- 5) Creating a Legacy of Leadership;
- 6) Social Leadership for True Sustainability;
- 7) Changing Circumstances for Women Leaders;
- 8) Pitching Success – Getting noticed by the ‘Big End of Town’;
- 9) Fashionable Retail Success Stories;

- 10) Leading with Determination: Achieving the Unachievable;
- 11) Leadership in Non Traditional Environments;
- 12) Women in a Man’s World;
- 13) The Voice of Leadership;
- 14) The Relevance of Social Media to Leadership; and
- 15) FCEM – Women Leading Internationally.

Women Chiefs of Enterprises International (Australia) has its origins in France where “Femmes Chefs d’Enterprises” (FCE) was founded in February 1945 by a French industrialist, Madame Yvonne Foinant. The Australian affiliate organisation (now WCEI) was formed in 1985 with a small group of founder members in Victoria.

WCEI provides its members with both national and international connections; an online community; state events and national conferences; and numerous learning and leadership development opportunities. They are also members of “Les Femmes Chefs d’Entreprises Mondiales” (FCEM), Network of Entrepreneurial Women Worldwide (NEWWW) and United Success.

For more information on WCEI, interested parties may wish to visit its official website at <http://www.wcei.com.au/>.

### WBCP

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(Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines) in partnership with the Asian Institute of Management, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office of Project Services.

In collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) WBCP developed modules on entrepreneurship training, i.e., the Business Start-up Course (BSuC) and the Business Improvement, Survival, and Expansion Course (BISEC). These modules, first given in March 1999, at the Women’s Center in the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA helped crystallize TESDA’s Program of promoting entrepreneurship.)

According to the WBCP, majority of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) are run by women.

The Department of Trade and Industry figures revealed as many as 900,000 businesses in the MSME category, with about 60 percent registered by women. As the population grows, so do the number of women entering the workforce either as employees or as entrepreneurs getting into business.

Every local government has a Gender and Development (GAD) Fund, an allocation of 5 percent of their local budgets that go to women projects and activities. This is a law, and local governments do enforce it.

Today, the WBCP has 40 members, all business owners, and business leaders. Its current Chairperson is Mely Nicolas, who now heads the Commission on Filipino Overseas. Most of the members are also in the Institute of Corporate Directors, who are independent directors advocating good governance. ■

*Published by the Secretariat, Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry  
Dr. Webster Kiang - Director-General*

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