Meeting Aspirations of Inclusive and Sustainable Development

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Outline

I. SETTING THE CONTEXT

II. WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY – STATE OF PLAY

III. TRADE AND EMPOWERMENT

IV. KEY POLICY ACTIONS
Setting the Context
While the region has made progress in some areas of gender equality, inequalities for women and girls remain stark across the region on a broad range of indicators.

Gender inequality in the region is shaped by a range of broader social, economic, political and environmental trends:

- Remaining poverty and rising inequality
- Environmental pressures
- Demographic shifts
- Technological advancements
- Growing influence of extremist groups
Women and Youth Empowerment in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Gender equality a cross-cutting priority across all SDGs

Young people both beneficiaries and drivers of development
## Progress on Gender Equality in Asia

### HEALTH
- Maternal mortality ratio dropped but progress has been largely uneven
- HIV incidence increased; women are biologically more susceptible to HIV transmission putting them at particular risk
- More girls survive infancy than boys but the sex ratio is skewed for some countries

### EDUCATION
- Educational attainment has been increasing, but significant gender disparities persist
- More girls achieve proficiency in maths and reading than boys in most countries. On the other hand, girls are less likely than boys to be in organized learning before primary school
- Most countries reported integrating sexuality education at secondary level, but lack of information about its quality and content persist
- Uneven proportions of Asian students are graduating with STEM-related degrees

### EMPLOYMENT
- Falling female labor force participation rates
- Women and girls spend as much as 11 times more of their day on unpaid care and domestic work
- Women have less access than men to financial services and productive assets
- Women either concentrated in low-paying and low-skilled jobs, confined in traditional unpaid family work arrangements or in informal and vulnerable employment sectors
- Enterprises owned/managed by women are often characterized as small firms with low capital base and low productivity

### OTHER DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES
- 1 in 2 women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the last 12 months
- Highest rates of child marriage in the world in South and Southwest Asia, 1 in 3 women are married or in a union by the age of 18
- Women’s representation in decision making and leadership roles remains limited
- Girls aged under 15 are over-represented among those living in slums
- Women more likely to be the victims of trafficking than men
WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY – STATE OF PLAY
Falling labor force participation rates across Asia ad the Pacific

Female and Male Labor Force Participation Rates, 1990 and 2016 (%)

Note: Developed Member Countries refers to ADB members Australia, Japan, and New Zealand.
Source: ADB calculations using data from International Labour Organization. ILOSTAT.
http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/
Increasing female employment in services

Female Employment by Sector

World

Asia and the Pacific

Source: ADB calculations using data from International Labor Organization, ILOSTAT.
Rising female employment in wholesale and retail trade, education, health and tourism-related activities

Female Employment by Industry

Source: ADB calculations using data from International Labor Organization, ILOSTAT.
Female participation in the private sector, as employers and employees, remains low.

Female Participation in the Private Sector, Asia and the Pacific (%)

- Firms with female participation in ownership: Asia and the Pacific 39.0, World 35.1
- Firms with majority female ownership: Asia and the Pacific 17.8, World 14.5
- Firms with a female top manager: Asia and the Pacific 23.7, World 18.6
- Proportion of permanent full-time workers that are female: Asia and the Pacific 32.6, World 32.2

Note: World and regional averages are computed by taking a simple average of country point estimates. For each economy, only the latest available year of survey data are used in this computation.

Women are most represented in SMEs

Women Firm Ownership and Employment in Asian SMEs

Firms with a female top manager
- Small: 20.7
- Medium: 15.0
- Large: 11.2

Firms with majority female ownership
- Small: 15.4
- Medium: 10.0
- Large: 7.2

Firms with female participation in ownership
- Small: 35.3
- Medium: 34.4
- Large: 35.5

Note: World and regional averages are computed by taking a simple average of country point estimates. For each economy, only the latest available year of survey data are used in this computation.
Female-led firms are more digitally savvy

Digital connectivity and the development of e-commerce present promising opportunities for MSMEs—including female-owned/led firms

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Political instability, informality, and access to finance as top constraints for female-led firms in Asia

Obstacles in Business for Asian Firms (%)

- Political instability
- Practices of the informal sector
- Access to finance
- Tax rates
- Corruption
- Electricity
- Inadequately educated workforce
- Tax administration
- Access to land
- Transportation
- Business licensing and permits
- Crime, theft and disorder
- Customs and trade regulations
- Labor regulations
- Courts

Access to Finance in Asian Firms (%)

- Value of collateral needed for a loan (% of the...)
- Proportion of loans requiring collateral
- Firms with a checking or savings account
- Proportion of investments financed internally
- Firms not needing a loan
- Firms with a bank loan/line of credit
- Firms using banks to finance working capital
- Firms using banks to finance investments
- Proportion of investments financed by banks
- Firms using supplier/customer credit to...
- Proportion of working capital financed by banks
- Firms whose recent loan application was...

Note: Regional averages are computed by taking a simple average of country point estimates. For each economy, only the latest available year of survey data are used in this computation.
TRADE AND EMPOWERMENT
Female representation is higher in trading firms

Women Firm Ownership and Employment in Trading and Non-Trading Firms

Trade can contribute to empowerment primarily through the facilitation of entrepreneurship activities and absorption into the labor force.

Note: World and regional averages are computed by taking a simple average of country point estimates. For each economy, only the latest available year of survey data are used in this computation.

Trade and global value chains (GVCs) have reinforced specialization, compartmentalization, and agglomeration of economic activities—all of which can influence the employment and entrepreneurial outcomes of women and youth in a variety of ways.

Trade and participation in GVCs also holds potential to enhance inclusiveness in education and promote the expansion and quality of skills development opportunities.

Trade openness, primarily through imports, can result to lower prices and increased variety for consumers, for which women stand to benefit the most given their consumption patterns relative to men.

By and large, these mechanisms create a virtuous cycle of empowerment.
Occasionally, trade can perversely impact women and youth.

- Trade can lead to contraction in comparative disadvantage sectors, consequently affecting employment and entrepreneurship activities.
- GVCs can reinforce common forms of gender discrimination and inequalities.
- Trade can have negative impacts on women as consumers.
Key Policy Actions
ADB’s Corporate Strategy

- Gender Equity is one of the five drivers of change in ADB’s corporate strategy
- Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Operational Plan 2013–2020
  - ADB’s efforts to ensure that gender equality remains at the front and centre of its development efforts, and to accelerate progress in closing remaining gender gaps
- Nearly half, or 48%, of all ADB projects supported gender mainstreaming for the latest three-year period.
- ADB’s Digital Agenda provides the vision and roadmap for ADB’s digital transformation, critical for implementing its Strategy 2030

CA = concessional assistance.
Source: ADB (Strategy, Policy and Review Department).
Invest in economic and social infrastructure and services

Invest in physical and digital infrastructure
- transport infrastructure in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan
- water supply and sanitation project in Uzbekistan
- bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor project in the northern Pakistan city of Peshawar
- Undersea fiber-optic cable project in Tonga

Increase provision of public services and implement complementary social protection policies and programs
- provision of long-term care services for elderly in Japan and the Republic of Korea
- set up of child care facilities to help reduce and redistribute women’s unpaid care responsibilities in Cambodia
- Domestic legislation that promote greater sharing of unpaid care work in Viet Nam

- Ease the unpaid care and domestic responsibilities of women and girls
- Maximize employment and entrepreneurship opportunities
- Expand women’s and young people’s choices to engage in decent work and education
Provide integrated support through…

- Removing barriers to the formalization of economic activities
- Empowering SMEs and creating market incentives for firms promoting equality
- Implementing regulatory reforms in access to finance, tax rates and administration, business registration
- Providing capacity building through business development advisory/training services
- Promoting the adoption of new technologies and online platforms
Support for education and skills development opportunities

Sustain and scale up investments in education and training
- Basic and secondary education
- Higher education
- TVET

Implement education reforms and foster good governance and strategic partnerships
- Sector-wide policies
- Curricula harmonization
- Equal access to training programs
- Flexible pathways for graduates to continue to higher levels
- National TVET quality assurance, accreditation systems, and qualification frameworks

Leverage regional mechanisms
Cross-border program and degree or diploma harmonization
Mutual recognition of skills and qualifications
Regional TVET frameworks and institutions networks
Integrated labor market information system
Removing discrimination from legal frameworks and promoting change in social norms

- Promote gender-inclusive and transformative legislation
- Meet international standards and harmonize domestic legislation
- Ensure quality and implementation of laws
Mainstreaming gender and youth empowerment in trade facilitation initiatives and trade policy and regulations

- Promote trade and investment in labor-intensive sectors by reducing restrictions in market access
  - Facilitating services trade
- Promote labor mobility and address constraints to the movement of people
- Mainstreaming gender and youth empowerment in trade facilitation initiatives

In Asia, greenfield investment has contributed to job creation

ADB’s trade facilitation initiatives with women/youth empowerment elements

- South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Trade Facilitation Program
- Improved Sanitary and Phytosanitary Handling in Greater Mekong Subregion Trade Project
- South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation National Single Window Project
- Transport and Trade Facilitation in the Greater Mekong Subregion
Increasing financing and investment

- Make gender equality and youth empowerment a priority in domestic resource mobilization
- Introduce gender- and age-responsive budgeting
- Integrate and scale up gender equality and youth empowerment focus in other official development assistance priority areas


Gender equality focus of bilateral allocable aid, 2002-2016

Gender equality as an objective in the economic and productive sectors on average per year 2015-2016

Forging strategic partnerships and building on regional and international commitments

Promote collaboration between governments, the private sector, civil society, and international development organizations

Build on regional and international commitments
Strengthening the production, analysis and use of gender- and age-disaggregated data and statistics

- Improve the evidence base for gender- and age-responsive policy and practice through statistical capacity development
- Capitalize on new and innovative data sources
- Bridge the divide between producers and users of data
- Prioritize gender- and age-disaggregated statistics
Overview of ADB’s Aid for Trade 2019 Report

Research questions

- Trade can boost employment and incomes, but is trade alone sufficient to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth? How can the benefits from trade be shared more equitably? In particular, what are the roles of the private sector, donors/aid agencies, and multilateral development organizations in fostering trade driven growth to be more inclusive, particularly for women?

- MSMEs particularly in the agriculture sector account for a growing share of employment and output, but their engagement in international trade is more challenging. This is particularly the case for women-led MSMEs. What are some of the key barriers that constrain participation of MSMEs and women-led enterprises in international trade and global value chains, and how can these be overcome? And how can policies such as easier access to credit, information and government services help to create the best possible outcomes for MSMEs and women-led enterprises?

- The services sector contributes more than 70% of global GDP, employs 60% of the world’s workforce and over 70% of female workers. What is the role of trade liberalization, domestic reforms and digital technologies in enhancing the growth and tradability of the sector.

- While global value chains generate employment opportunities for women and unskilled workforce, they can also reinforce poor working conditions and low wages. How can labor and social protection, as well as gender equality policies, laws, and programs help ensure health and safety in the workplace and create decent jobs?

- How can education policies and skill development strategies best help to capitalize trade for economic empowerment, including through the acquisition of technical and vocational skills for employment, access to decent work and entrepreneurship, and equal opportunities for women and the vulnerable? In particular, what type of policies and interventions could provide women better opportunities for accessing higher skilled jobs, managerial roles and narrow the gender wage gap?
Thank you.
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