Women, Trade and Poverty Reduction in Africa

Paul Brenton, World Bank
Trade can be a key mechanism for women in their fight against poverty

- Women heavily involved in trade as
  - Cross-border traders
  - Producers of traded goods and services
  - Entrepreneurs who manage export/import firms
but contribution and challenges often overlooked by policy makers

- Lack of data and awareness
- Lack of analysis
- Lack of representation in trade policy discussions
Women face specific barriers to their participation in trade

♦ Policies and procedures that overtly discriminate against women
  – Gender based restrictions of access to trade/distribution networks
  – Restrictions that limit the access of women to trade-related finance
  – Barriers to entry into trade-related activities and occupations – eg freight forwarding
  – Barriers that result from lack of gender informed trade related investments

♦ Trade barriers that impinge particularly heavily on women
  – Lack of transparency and awareness of rules
  – Difficulties in obtaining required documents
  – Lack of access to trade information
  – Poor conditions and harassment when crossing border
Strong negative correlation between small-scale trade and conflict

Trade disrupted most by violence against civilians
- Hence local level interventions likely to be most effective

Violence against women particularly important
- more than 3 times the average effect of violence against civilians.

More trade with surrounding regions is associated with less conflict
- especially strong in regions with more ethnic fractionalization

Strong case for border level interventions with gender focus


Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project
Steps to facilitate trade for women

- Recognise role that women play in trade – change perceptions
- Clear and transparent regulations governing trade
- Simplify trade requirements
- Effective gender sensitive design of interventions to facilitate trade
- Assist women to address the risks they face as producers and traders
Priorities for data, analysis and operations

♦ Revisit monitoring indicators of trade and regional integration
  – Identify appropriate gender disaggregated data – eg time to cross border, costs of obtaining required documentation
  – Measures of connectivity to markets for women (Opportunities from big data)

♦ Analysis and advocacy to increase representation of women and trade issues
  – in SCDs, DTISs, TPRs??

♦ Support gender and trade issues in WBG and other donor operations
MIND THE GAP:
Gender Equality and Trade in Africa
Thank you

www.worldbank.org/afr/trade