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# Standards and Gender Conference: Insights from ITC's SheTrades Initiative

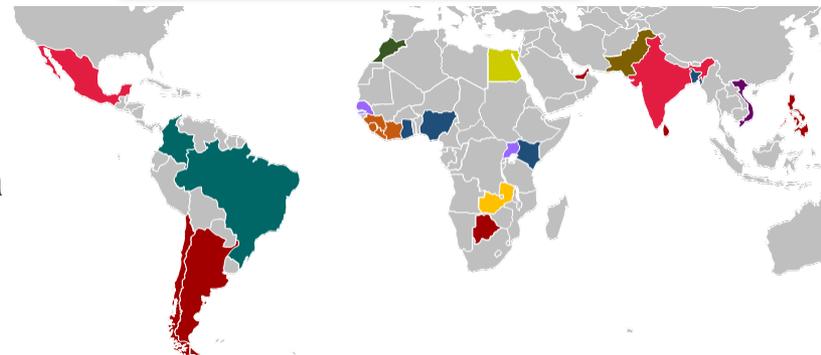
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8 December 2020



# SheTrades Initiative: Highlights

- 1 Connecting **3 million women** to markets
- 2 **US\$140 million** in trade opportunities generated for women
- 3 **30,000** women-led businesses directly supported
- 4 Global network of **350 partner organisations** from 65 countries
- 5 Presence in **25 countries** to achieve poverty reductions
- 6 **Technical expertise** in facilitating trade, improving the competitiveness of women and integrating the business sector of developing countries into the global economy
- 7 Partners with private sector and governments to improve services and policies for women, build a **conducive ecosystem** for women to trade and foster gender equality



# Today's presentation

1

**Support women-owned businesses' compliance to standards**

2

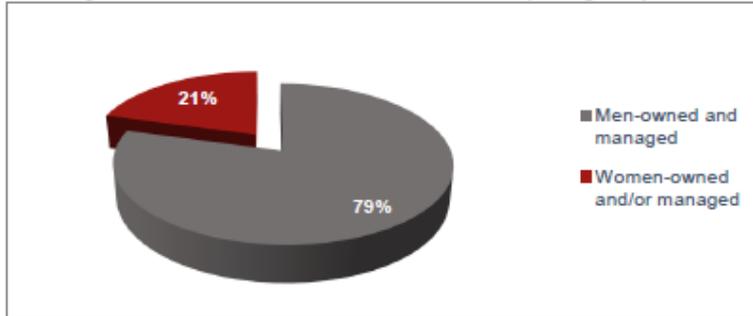
**Supporting women's participation in trade policy design and implementation**

3

**Developing an ISO international workshop agreement for women in trade**

# Women in Trade: Standards

Figure 1: Share of women business leaders in exporting companies



Source: ITC business surveys on NTMs, 2010-2017, [www.ntmsurvey.org](http://www.ntmsurvey.org)

## Women-owned businesses:

- tend to be smaller → fewer in-house resources to dedicate to export and import procedures
- trade smaller consignments → trading costs are higher fixed costs as % of unit costs
- concentrated in more fragmented value chains, such as agro-processing → SMEs face higher compliance costs

## Challenges specific to standards

- Limited awareness and knowledge of selecting the right standards
- Lack of finance, technical capacity, language and human resources
- Lack of infrastructure, e.g. poor access to processing and storage units, transportation, marketing, and technologies
- Cost of conformity assessments
- Limited of knowledge on how to leverage standard compliance to unlock market opportunities (marketing)

# SheTrades and AfCFTA



The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) could bring a



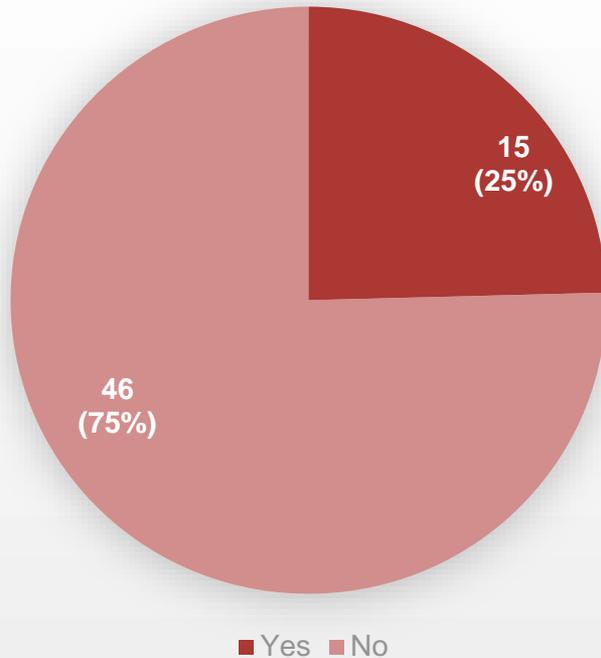
**52.3% increase**  
in intra-African trade by 2020



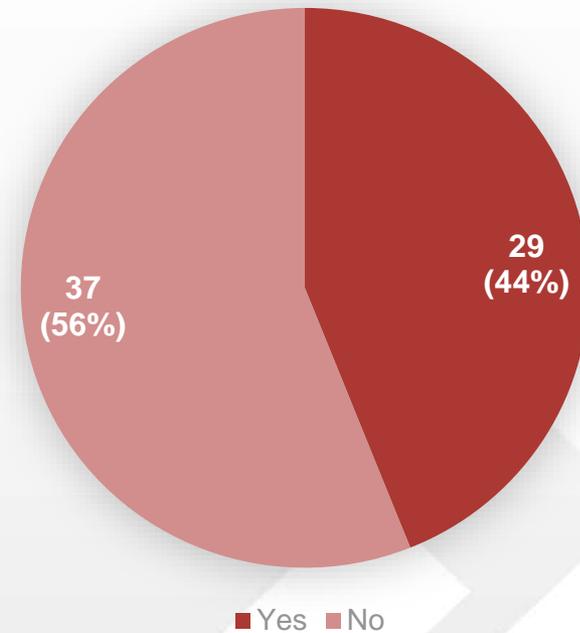
- Scarce technical and policy knowledge on leveraging AfCFTA for women's economic empowerment
  - Low engagement of women's business associations on AfCFTA processes
  - Need for high-level political leadership
- 
- Network of 50 Women's Business Associations, representing one million women
  - Technical inputs, including on standards
  - Tailored institutional-strengthening capacity building
  - Gender mainstreaming into national AfCFTA strategies
  - Collaboration with AUC, UNECA, WIPO, Tralac, COMESA and ECCAS
- 
- Operationalizing a Network of Africa-wide WBAs
  - Recommendations on Phase II issues: IPRs, Competition, Investment Protocols
  - Dialogue with AU Trade Ministers
  - Tailored institutional-strengthening capacity building
  - Online resources
  - Deepening and broadening collaborations

## What do the women's business associations say?

Since 2019, has your organization been consulted on the negotiation and implementation of the AFCFTA?



Are most of your members taking advantage of regional trade agreements?



# Key Recommendations on Standards



## Opportunities

- A common language between producers and consumers, ensuring quality and safety
- Harmonization of product specifications, measurement, labelling, packaging, management, evaluation, etc.
- Development of regional value chains
- Reduced costs of compliance

## Recommendations



1. Facilitate women's **participation in national and regional committees on standards**
2. Establish a **quality infrastructure** at national, regional and continental level to facilitate product upgrading
3. Accelerate the **harmonization of standards** at regional and continental level in order to facilitate market access
4. Establish technical and financial support mechanisms for women entrepreneurs in terms of **compliance with standards**;
5. Provide the necessary information through simple and accessible tools to facilitate the **mastery of procedures and rules in standards**.

# ISO International Workshop Agreement 34 on definition(s) of women's entrepreneurship



## Problem

- Lack of universally agreed upon definition(s) of women-owned/-led businesses.
- No comparable sex-disaggregated data
- Fragmented and sometimes delayed implementation of programmes and policies for access to capacity building, finance, and markets.

## Progress



- Jointly with SIS and supported by Sweden
- Collaborative, multi-stakeholder process with actors from across the women entrepreneurial ecosystem
- First online IWA, first on gender
- 18 informal consultations, 342 stakeholders, 49 countries
- 2 three-day IWA Workshops in Oct and Dec 2020
- Multiple definitions to cater to different objectives and needs
- “Women-owned” (>51%), “Women-led” (>30%), “Women-governed”, etc
- Extension to women in the informal sector, cooperatives and dilution by investment

## For more information



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