

**"Unlocking Trade for Women's Empowerment
through Innovation and Sustainability"**

**Talking Points
Shishir Priyadarshi**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen

Greetings on the occasion of the International Women's day, and a very warm welcome to the WTO.

We have not gathered here for a symbolic event. We are here today to assess the progress we have made towards the objective of mainstreaming 'trade and gender' in our work in the WTO.

And in particular, during the course of the day we will be focussing on the way trade can empower women in an innovative and sustainable manner.

I can with some confidence say that 'gender' is now placed centrally in the work of the WTO. Today we have come a long way from feeling contented that trade rules are 'gender neutral' to the feeling that the way we facilitate trade ideally must be positively-gender biased'

In the last few years, we have achieved some key milestones but we are looking to accomplish much more.

Every cause needs a champion and we have had one in the WTO in the form of our Director General who personally champions this issue at every opportunity.

As the result of his guidance and vision, we now have an established 'gender focal point' in the WTO; we have an inter-divisional Task Force on gender which coordinates the work on gender issues across the house; and importantly, we have a biennial work plan which both guides the work we do and lays out the benchmark of what we want to achieve.

It is my honour to give the floor to the DG to deliver the keynote address on the occasion of the IWD 2019.

→ *Gives the floor to WTO DG*