

Women's economic empowerment event during UNIDO@50

During UNIDO's 50th anniversary week, Director General LI Yong made an inspiring speech at the opening of the Scaling Up Women's Economic Empowerment through Innovative Approaches high-level event. The DG reiterated that women's economic empowerment is a key strategic cornerstone for UNIDO as it is a prerequisite for prosperity and for achieving the interlinked Sustainable Development Goals. He also stressed UNIDO's role in promoting women's economic empowerment over the last five decades through its technical cooperation activities and the positive impact it has had on women's lives.

During his speech the DG spoke about one of UNIDO's success stories: the Entrepreneurship Development and Investment Promotion (EDIP) Programme, implemented by ITPO Bahrain and replicated in 48 countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

The DG praised the personal involvement of the King of Bahrain and the role of the main sponsors of the EDIP programme. Awards of recognition were presented to the King of Bahrain, represented by HRH Salman Ben Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and to the sponsors.

Panel discussion

As part of the UNIDO@50 event, the BBC's Zeinab Badawi moderated a discussion between H.E. Shaikha Hessa Saad Abdulla Al Sabah, President of the Arab Businesswomen Council; Rajni Aggarwal, President of the Federation of Indian Women Entrepreneurs; Nadiya Cherkasova, Head of the Russian Committee on Women's Entrepreneurship Development; Fatou Diaw, President of the African Business Women Association; Katarzyna Greco, International Coaching Expert, Women In Business, and Helen Hai, UNIDO Goodwill Ambassador. The panellists provided the audience with innovative approaches and proposals to strengthen the role of women based on their personal experience.

Sharing experiences, networking among women entrepreneurs, strengthening the strategic partnership between the different stakeholders - such as governments, national institutions, the public and private sectors, banks and UN entities - were cited as essential for paving the way for successful business and inclusive development. UNIDO's action was commended and there was a clear request that UNIDO plays a catalytic role among the different stakeholders by facilitating information-sharing on

best practices and replicating those deemed relevant, providing statistics on women and industry, continuing to provide technical cooperation activities and supporting women's entrepreneurship programmes.



Third Donor Meeting

As part of the Third Donor Meeting, which took place on 22 November 2016, one of the panel discussions focused on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Panellists included ambassadors from donor countries, Finland, Italy and Norway, as well as beneficiaries and an industrial designer.

Two initiatives related to [creative industries](#) and [skills enhancement in the area of the forestry industry](#) financed by Italy and Finland respectively served as the basis for discussions. Interventions recognized the fundamental role women play in sustainable economic development and the importance of utilizing women's untapped resource as a potential "antidote to migration". The need to further invest in women's talents, creativity and skills in order to generate new jobs and income opportunities was at the core of the debate.

Among the challenges women are still facing are those linked to working in a domain that is usually male-dominated, procuring materials for the functioning of their businesses, accessing training and upgraded technologies, sustaining and progressing businesses, and getting into leadership position. For instance, in the design field, even though it seems that things are changing towards women's greater involvement, male designers are still holding most managerial positions, while women are mainly employees in design companies.

The meeting concluded with recommendations from panellists to measure the effective impact of projects on women and the societies in which their live. They also reiterated the need to increase women's technical skills in entrepreneurship, designing, branding and machinery.

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

As in previous years, UNIDO participated in the United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign and the 16 Days of Activism, initiated by UN Women. This year's campaign, under the theme "Orange the World: Raise Money to End Violence against Women and Girls", ran from 25 November to 10 December 2016. UNIDO participated in this campaign through speeches, the production of commemorative orange pins, and the exhibiting of advocacy material to raise awareness and inspire action.

In his speech on the occasion of the visit of the President of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly on 25 November 2016, Director General Li Yong highlighted "UNIDO's commitment to supporting women's economic empowerment as the major contribution to counter gender-based violence". He also stressed "the need for the international community to take the necessary steps to end violence against women, which is the most common and widespread human rights violation in the world."



International Gender Champions

A network of senior leaders working to advance gender equality in the executive management of their institutions and their programmatic work through concrete and measurable commitments, the Geneva Gender Champions initiative has proven its merits. With emergence of a new sister network in New York, the network is now known as the International Gender Champions. The addition of a Vienna chapter in 2017 would contribute to the drive to change organizational culture, including recognition of the importance of gender-balanced panels. One example of the Champions' work is the pledge to support gender balance on conference panels.



Read the International Gender Champions Geneva Annual Report here:

<http://genderchampions.com/first-annual-report/>

The Gender Office takes this opportunity to wish you the warmest season's greetings and all the best for the New Year!

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