



Women's Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Solutions in Europe and the Arab Region

UNIDO Interregional Forum

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Organisers

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is the United Nations specialized agency mandated to promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID). For over 50 years, UNIDO has been working with governments, business and industrial associations, financial institutions and individual companies to address industrial problems. The organization has earned a reputation as one of the world's most experienced industrial problem solvers as well as a neutral and honest broker, playing a vital role in improving well-beings and equitable development of developing countries and economies in transition.

The UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Office (ITPO) in Bahrain was inaugurated in 1996. Its mandate is to mobilize resources (finance, technology, know-how, managerial) from Bahrain and the Arab Region towards developing countries and economies in transition. In parallel, ITPO Bahrain has also developed the Entrepreneurship Development and Investment Promotion (EDIP) Programme, which aims at stimulating the emergence of new and the growth of existing enterprises that produce goods and services for trade, provide employment and income for people, and thereby contribute to poverty alleviation and overall economic growth.

The main mission of the OPORA RUSSIA Committee on Women Entrepreneurship Development is to consolidate entrepreneurs to form favorable policy, economic, legal and other conditions for business activity, which pave the way for competitiveness and prosperity. OPORA RUSSIA attempts to support Russian small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) facing common challenges in legal protection, fundraising, and achieving state support, amongst others. Furthermore, OPORA RUSSIA aids in the establishment of contacts within the business community.

Background

The mandate of UNIDO is to promote and accelerate inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) in developing countries and economies in transition by contributing to poverty reduction, economic growth, and sustainable development. A critical component of sustainable growth and poverty reduction has proven to be the economic empowerment of women, as many studies have shown that women's enhanced access to resources and employment is one of the key factors contributing to GDP growth. Not only in the developing world, but all over the globe, even in technologically- advanced societies, limited economic empowerment of women is among the major hindrances to lasting prosperity. Even though more and more women are starting businesses globally, they still manage fewer and smaller businesses than men, and run businesses that are in less profitable sectors, grow more slowly, and ultimately run at a higher risk of failure.

Women empowerment has been recognized as a vital component for sustainable development in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where the empowerment of all women and girls is a standalone goal SDG 5 that strongly interconnects with all other goals set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The global commitment to women empowerment has never been stronger and women entrepreneurship has been identified as one of the most important factors contributing to enhanced economic prosperity. Women's economic inclusion is thus a fundamental building block in creating stable, prosperous and peaceful societies. UNIDO recognizes that the economic empowerment of women has a significantly positive impact on sustained economic growth and sustainable industrial development, which in turn are drivers of poverty reduction and social integration. The Organization pursues the programmatic goal of promoting women entrepreneurship and economic empowerment and it is one of the leading UN agencies in regards to implementing and monitoring SDG 9 (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation) in particular, but also in respect to other goals set in the 2030 Agenda relevant to UNIDO's mandate such as no poverty, zero hunger, decent work, and sustainable economic growth.



Since the inception of UNIDO over 50 years ago, women's economic empowerment has been one of its recurrent priorities. The Organization has thus implemented projects and programmes that specifically target women in order to create the necessary conditions for their inclusion in entrepreneurship, manufacturing, sustainable and cleaner production, as well as trade and innovation.

The economic ties between Russia and many Arab countries are strongly attributed to the success of small-and-medium sized enterprises, amongst others. Thus the support of enterprise creation and self-employment is of crucial relevance for economic prosperity across the regions. Since training and education play an important role in providing often marginalized parts of society with the necessary tools and resources needed in order for them to be successful, a special focus needs to be given to empowering women in domestic industries. The UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Office (ITPO) and the Arab International Center for Entrepreneurship & Investment (AICEI) in Bahrain, as well as the OPORA RUSSIA Committee on Women Entrepreneurship Development work towards raising awareness in this regard. There are promising grounds for the future of economic cooperation between Russia and the Arab countries, based on inclusive and sustainable industrial development. Putting a particular focus on women empowerment will lead to a higher degree of women's inclusion in the economic sphere and result in enhanced economic growth throughout these societies.



Purpose and Goals of the Interregional Forum



The 21st edition of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) gathered high level Government representatives and top business executives from 1 to 3 June 2017 in St.Petersburg to discuss salient issues of the global economic agenda. Capitalizing on the presence of key stakeholders with a role in economic development, UNIDO organized a one-day side event on the margins of SPIEF 2017. The UNIDO Interregional Forum: “Women Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Solutions in Europe and the Arab Region” aimed at providing a cross-regional perspective on the best practices and prevalent challenges in scaling up women’s economic empowerment and outlining sustainable policy, institutional and grassroots solutions through selected case studies and experience sharing from the Russian Federation and Arab countries.

The event had a forward-looking approach through identifying actions relevant to UNIDO and its partners to contribute to economic empowerment of women across the field of inclusive and sustainable industrial development. The main questions guiding the session were: How does scaling up women entrepreneurship contribute to inclusive and sustainable development and boost economic growth? What are the most successful innovative approaches to scaling up women’s economic empowerment that are worth being replicated? How can UNIDO and its partners support the process of enhanced economic empowerment and entrepreneurship among women through its services?



Summary of Conference Proceedings

The interregional forum on “Women’s Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Solutions in Europe and the Arab Region” brought together over 220 registered delegates from 40 regions in the Russian Federation and Arab Region.

These delegates included national and regional experts involved in the economic empowerment of women, representatives of women’s entrepreneurship advocacy groups, and professional networks of men and women entrepreneurs, as well as members of other business networks.

Drawing on the international expertise and knowledge of experts, practitioners, policy makers and private sector representatives, the speakers came together on 31 May 2017 to discuss important issues in the area of women entrepreneurship, including challenges and solutions.



Topics and Issues Addressed

Keynote speakers



The forum was opened with keynote addresses presented by Ms. Galina Karelova, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Ms. Gulnaz Kadyrova, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation, Her Highness Sheikha Hissah Saad Abdulah Salem Al-Sabah, Chairperson, Council of Arab Businesswomen, Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova, Head, OPORA RUSSIA Committee on Women Entrepreneurship Development and Ms. Amita Misra, Director, Department of Regional Programmes and Field Representation, UNIDO. The opening moderator was Ms. Solomiya Omelyan, Programme Officer and project manager of the forum, UNIDO Regional Division for Europe and Central Asia.

Thereafter, the conference comprised of three panel sessions:

- Women's economic empowerment in the context of inclusive and sustainable industrial development;
- Creating solutions to the women's entrepreneurship challenge – successful approaches for supporting women's economic empowerment;
- UNIDO approach to fostering women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship.

Forum's Opening

Moderator

Ms. Solomiya Omelyan, Programme Officer,
Regional Division for Europe and Central Asia



During her moderation in the opening of the interregional forum, Ms. Solomiya Omelyan emphasized the importance UNIDO places on women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. She introduced the objective of the event to showcase concrete examples and achievements from different countries of the Arab Region and Europe.

Opening speaker

Ms. Galina Karelova, Deputy Chairperson of
the Council of the Federation of the Federal
Assembly of the Russian Federation



To start off the interregional forum, Ms. Galina Karelova, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, began by emphasizing the importance of the topic of discussion. She went on to explain that women entrepreneurs have already formed an active movement in Russia and have already organized

similar conferences. Noting the excellent opportunity to discuss the topic at such a highly prestigious platform, she stressed that the topic of women entrepreneurship is vital for the development of Russia, and the most significant resource of economic development.

Referring to the presence of Arab participants at the forum, Ms. Karelova highlighted the importance of relations between Russia and Arab countries to be strengthened.

She then drew the audience's attention to the first Eurasian Women's Forum, held in St. Petersburg in 2015 which hosted participants from over 80 countries around the world. In this context, the significance of continuing dialogue was alluded to, and on behalf of Ms. Valentina Matvienko, Chairperson of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Ms. Karelova invited all guests to take part in the second Eurasian Women's forum to be held in 2018.

She noted the significance of discussing issues pertaining to women's empowerment in an open dialogue with other countries from around the world. To finish, the Deputy Chairperson noted with admiration the position of women entrepreneurs in Russia, who work in a multitude of sectors across the Russian economy, including those which are traditionally perceived as male-dominated, such as IT and high-tech.

“The topic of women entrepreneurship is vital for the development of Russia, and the most significant resource of economic development.”

Opening speaker

Ms. Gulnaz Kadyrova, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation



The second keynote speech was given by Ms. Gulnaz Kadyrova, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation. Ms. Kadyrova recognized the forum as a great opportunity to discuss the creation of favourable conditions for supporting women’s business initiatives, increasing efficiency and building up business relations with foreign partners.

In her speech, Ms. Kadyrova stressed the importance of women’s involvement in industry and noted that a third of those who work in industry are women and occupy various positions from regular workers, to managers, CEOs and owners. Russia’s prominent role in women’s entrepreneurship was highlighted by the deputy minister who noted that Russia holds the number one place in the world for women in leading industry positions. It was explained that these positions do not only include those in textile or pharmaceuticals, but also electronics, aviation and shipbuilding, among others. The importance of the event for experience and best-practice sharing was again touched upon as a significant tool to promote the development of industries, not only in Russia, but all over the world. Ms. Kadyrova commended the vital role women have in society and their contribution to economic development, due to their attention to detail and good assessment of risks, which makes them not only the core of the family, but also the pillar of the economy.

“Russia holds the number one place in the world for women in leading industry positions”

Opening speaker

Her Highness Sheikha Hissah Saad Abdulah Salem Al-Sabah, Chairperson, Council of Arab Businesswomen



As the first keynote speaker representing Arab participants at the forum, Her Highness Sheikha Hissah Saad Abdulah Salem Al-Sabah, presented the work of the Council of Arab Businesswomen. Educating fellow participants on the history of the Council, she explained that her desire to enter the business world, after completing her studies and moving back to Kuwait from Lebanon, was seen as a taboo and that it was forbidden for women to go into business. Through persuading her father, His Highness, she was able to start her own company in fashion, which would allow her to reach out to Kuwaiti women and their needs.

During this period she realized that she was a forerunner that had broken gender barriers for other Kuwaiti women to enter the business world. In order to realize her dream for Arab women to have a voice in the business world, the Council of Arab Business Women thus came into being. Eighteen years and twenty-two countries later, Her Highness expressed satisfaction with the achievements of the Council’s mission abroad, and in bringing the voice of Arab women to governments and the private sector. In this context, she stressed that Arab women are successful as CEOs and investment bankers and work

in industry and infrastructure, among other sectors. Lastly, Her Highness identified small and medium-sized enterprises for women as the main focus of the council today. Women in agriculture, particularly the inclusion of African women into the work of the council, was additionally outlined as a focus and goal.

“... Arab women are successful as CEOs and investment bankers and work in industry and infrastructure...”

Opening speaker

Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova, Head, Women Entrepreneurship Development Committee, OPORA RUSSIA



Speaking on behalf of the Women Entrepreneurship Development Committee, OPORA RUSSIA, Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova, presented the work of the Committee and how it aids women entrepreneurs in the country. OPORA RUSSIA's representation in 85 regions in Russia was highlighted as a unique aspect of the organisation's infrastructure which allows it to reach out to as many women as possible. The Committee Head went on to explain that OPORA RUSSIA gives women the opportunity to build constructive and effective dialogue with the state and public sector. In this respect, it facilitates the ideas of women and supports them to create their own businesses. Providing statistics to illustrate the importance of women entrepreneurship for Russia, Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova noted that although 54% of the employable population in Russia is female, women make up only 30% of entrepreneurs.

In this context, it was emphasized that there is enormous potential for the development of small businesses in Russia by leveraging the economic potential of women. Referring to OPORA RUSSIA's first Russian index of the development of women entrepreneurship, Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova noted that 84% of women consider the possibility of going into business to do something they really enjoy. In terms of what motivates women, Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova referred to two primary goals: they want to earn more and to develop themselves, which they feel can be done better through the establishment of their own businesses rather than as employees. Barriers women come across in achieving their aims within entrepreneurship, are primarily to do with funding.

The OPORA RUSSIA representative also noted that according to the aforementioned index, 76% of women have commented that they would like specialized training and educational programmes. To finish, Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova emphasized that Russia has a lot to share with the world within this area. On this note, she referred to a competition organized by OPORA RUSSIA for women entrepreneurs called the APEC Best Award. She encouraged participants to get acquainted with the unique model.

“...Although 54% of the employable population in Russia are women, they make up only 30% of entrepreneurs”

Opening speaker

Ms. Amita Misra, Director, Department of Regional Programmes and Field Representation, UNIDO



Representing UNIDO, Ms. Amita Misra provided the participants of the forum an overview of the work of UNIDO, particularly in the area of women's entrepreneurship. She began by acknowledging the significance of the forum in sharing varied experiences and perspectives on unleashing the immense potential of women's economic empowerment for growth, peace and prosperity. The significance of the forum's topic was emphasized through underlying that economists and academics agree that women and entrepreneurs are the under-tapped force that can rekindle economic expansion.

The UNIDO Director discussed challenges faced by women entrepreneurs who are today more in number, but face greater impediments than men to start, grow and develop their businesses. The need for the international community to find practical solutions to these problems was stressed. Bringing in UNIDO's contribution to the topic area, Ms. Amita

Misra outlined that UNIDO recognizes that the economic empowerment of women has a significantly positive impact on sustained economic growth and sustainable industrial development, which in turn are drivers of poverty reduction and social integration. In this context, UNIDO's interventions in the area of women's entrepreneurship in Ethiopia, Iran, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Senegal, Serbia, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia, as well as in the countries from MENA and COMESA, were presented. Ms. Amita Misra explained that UNIDO's focus in the area lies on the transfer of skills and technologies to assist women to enter the formal labour market, or to create, grow and develop their own businesses. Furthermore, the organisation's policy of gender-mainstreaming in all its core programmes and activities was given as an example of UNIDO's contribution to women's economic empowerment beyond the organisation's interventions in the area of women entrepreneurship.

"...economists and academics agree that women and entrepreneurs are the under-tapped force that can rekindle economic expansion."



Panel Session One

Women's economic empowerment in the context of inclusive and sustainable industrial development

Panel session one focused on exploring the linkages between women's entrepreneurship and inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID), as well as the general effects industrialization has on women's economic empowerment. Speakers debated the challenges and market opportunities for women entrepreneurs and the economic opportunities that arise from enhanced women's empowerment.

Moderator

Ms. Lucia Cartini, Senior Industrial Development Officer, ITPO Coordinator, UNIDO Investment Promotion Division



Ms. Lucia Cartini drew the audience's attention to the rich diversity of the first panel session, with representatives from the local government, private sector and women's associations, among many other spheres of society. She underlined that the session would primarily address issues regarding the role of women empowerment to promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development: UNIDO's mandate.

Questions/issues addressed:

1. How do women's empowerment and proactive economic engagement influence economic growth and social development?
2. Women as agents for change: green, inclusive, and growing women-led businesses.
3. Why are 'women' and 'industry' often perceived as mutually exclusive?
4. The real impact of women and their economic ventures on achieving ISID.
5. What are the barriers to success and what empowers women to become thriving entrepreneurs?

The keynote speech was delivered by Ms. Gulnaz Kadyrova, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation, followed by a diversified panel discussion with representatives from the local government, private sector, and members of women associations from the Arab Region. The panelists were comprised of the following: H.H. Sheikha Hissah Saad Abdulah Salem Al-Sabah, President, Council of Arab Businesswomen, H.E. Ms. Leila Al Khayat, Honorary World President, Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises Mondiales (FCEM), H.E. Shaikha Hind bint Salman Al Khalifa, President, International Federation for Bahraini Business & Professional Women, Ms. Rawya Mansour, Chairperson, RAMSCO Group, Egypt, Ms. Nina Boer, Arbitrator, Court of Arbitration at St. Petersburg Chamber of Advocates, Mr. Sergei Morozov, Governor of Ulyanovsk Region and Ms. Faiza Lahlou, Director of Communications in Europe, Head of Corporate Reputation and CSR, P&G.



Mr. Sergey Morozov, Governor of the Ulyanovsk Region began the discussion by providing insights from his region, which he referred to as one of the most successful and developed in Russia. Mr. Morozov's presentation focused on how the region capitalizes on the economic potential of women, which make up 400,000 of the 640,000-strong labour force, within its development plan. He explained that the region plans to turn into a smart and rapidly developing region by 2030, through the use of tools such as the internet of things and augmentation technology. In this context, he explained that women lead in these spheres, and that the region has therefore prioritized the topic of women's entrepreneurship. The Governor provided participants with examples of steps the region has initiated in the area of women's entrepreneurship, including the creation of various educational projects, the dissemination of information on best example projects by women, as well as special communication platforms. Mr. Morozov went on to explain that the region encourages women entrepreneurship through providing financial support at 5% annual for a period of three years to women who wish to start businesses.



Ms. Gulnaz Kadyrova, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation continued the discussion by explaining to the audience that her Ministry regularly carries out surveys as part of its work and that one particular survey showed that 70% of women are interested in working in business. She drew the audience's attention to the economic potential for women entrepreneurs to work in socially important sectors such as rehabilitation, sports products, musical instruments, and children's goods, which are 80% represented by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).



H.H. Sheikha Hissah Saad Abdulah Salem Al-Sabah, President, Council of Arab Businesswomen presented the first Arab perspective to the panel discussion. Referring back to her keynote speech, Her Highness's presentation touched on the importance for women entrepreneurs to have support through business associations in their home countries. In the specific context of the Council for Arab Businesswomen, it was explained that the main goal of the institution was to establish a business association in each Arab country, none of which, aside from Tunisia, had a business association specifically for women. She reiterated the council's plan to branch out to African-Arab women, and to focus on agriculture. She

finished by emphasizing that the council is also looking for other alliances, such as with Russia and the CIS region.



H.E. Ms. Leila Al Khayat, Honorary World President, Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises Mondiales (FCEM) continued the discussion by introducing fellow participants and the audience to the Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises Mondiales (FCEM). During her speech, she emphasized the importance of UNIDO's work for businesswomen, and noted that she herself was assisted by UNIDO's technical support. Referring specifically to Tunisian women, Her Excellency stressed that Tunisian businesswomen are very active and engaged in many sectors including ICT and textile, but need support to access international markets. She underlined the importance for governments to recognize the economic contribution of women, particularly in social and legislative frameworks. The presentation was ended with a powerful statement that women will be the driving force of the economy in the 21st century.



Shaikha Hind bint Salman Al Khalifa, President, International Federation for Bahraini Business & Professional Women focused specifically on creative women in Bahrain and their transition from the informal to the formal economy. She credited the support of UNIDO and the Bahrain Arab

model for entrepreneurship in allowing women to develop, become independent and contribute to the business sector. Referring specifically to her own project which focusses on recycled palm tree paper, she explained to her fellow participants how women are able to use palm tree paper to produce art work, gift cards and notebooks.



Ms. Rawya Mansour, Chairperson, RAMSCO Group, Egypt presented her work on zero waste eco-villages which she plans to implement around the Mediterranean. She explained that her project focuses on the link between the environment and poverty. She further clarified that the project aims to empower women and youth and improve the standard of living in the countries where it is implemented. It was clarified that this could be done through implementing clean technologies for sustainable and green business, as well as through providing jobs, training and capacity building. Ms. Rawya Mansour explained that her pilot project currently employs thirty women in organic farming, and that they strive to work with women who have limited opportunities, economic and social rights. She noted that they focus on working with women with children, to give them a sense of empowerment and economic autonomy.



Ms. Nina Boer, Arbitrator, Court of Arbitration at the St. Petersburg Chamber of Advocates brought a legal perspective to the discussion, and informed her fellow participants that the Russian legal system provides mothers in Russia great opportunities for development, as compared to other countries. With the backing of statistical data, Ms. Boer noted that Russia occupies the 10th position in the world for career opportunities for women. However, she explained that the situation is different for women entrepreneurs who are not guaranteed maternity leave or vacations, unless they specifically join the social payment scheme.



Ms. Faiza Lahlou, Director of Communications in Europe, Head of Corporate Reputation and CSR, Procter & Gamble presented on how the business sector participates in the advancement of gender equality. She told the audience that an estimated 12 trillion USD could be brought to world economies through decreasing gender inequality among nations around the world. From the perspective of a global business, Ms. Faiza Lahlou further clarified that the topic is of vital importance for Procter & Gamble as well as other

businesses, in order to grow and contribute to the economies where they are based. The initiatives P&G has pursued to contribute to the movement were presented. This included the launch of the “We see equal” campaign which aims to fight against gender bias on a digital platform. Furthermore, the P&G representative explained the importance of working with NGOs, governments and other third parties to support the education of girls around the world. Lastly, she spoke of how P&G strives to have equal representation of women at all levels of the company, giving an example of its success in Russia, where 47% of women are in managerial positions. In the context of supporting working mothers, Ms. Faiza Lahlou used the example of India, where 30% of the company’s workforce in its plants are women who benefit from flexible working hours and have the opportunity to work from home.

Panel Session Two

Creating solutions to the women's entrepreneurship challenge: successful approaches for supporting women's economic empowerment

Panel session two explored and looked at successful methods of supporting innovative approaches to women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. The discussion highlighted the role of policies, regulations, education and training in increasing women's entrepreneurial activities. Among other topics, the panel discussed how the involvement of women in industrial manufacturing and the creation of favorable working conditions influence the overall attractiveness of engagement in the industrial sector. Panelists additionally discussed the role of increased women's economic empowerment as a key driver for the needed transformation and diversification of economies in different regions.

Moderator

Ms. Veronika Peshkova, Member of the Management Board, OPORA RUSSIA



Opened the second session and explained to the audience that it would focus on key issues related to the development of women's entrepreneurship, including the expansion of women's rights in economic development.

Additionally, Ms. Peshkova introduced guiding questions of the session including the role played by the state, NGOs,

associations and other institutions for women's entrepreneurship development.

Questions/issues addressed:

1. What is the role of government, in terms of policies and regulations, in promoting the economic capacities of women?
2. What is the role of associations in improving women's working conditions?
3. What role do education and training systems play in nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial attitudes among women?
4. What is the role of business development services, technologies, and investment promotion in strengthening women's entrepreneurship?
5. How can enhanced women's entrepreneurship in industries and trade be promoted?
6. What is the role of the private sector, and in particular small and medium sized businesses, in promoting women's economic empowerment?
7. How to attract women to technology-based areas of entrepreneurship?
8. What is the linkage between the digital economy and women's economic empowerment?
9. How can women influence the economic realities of future generations in the context of ISID?

The keynote speech was delivered by Ms. Natalia Larinova, Deputy Director General of the Federal Corporation for Small and

Medium Business Development. The panel discussion was comprised of the following panelists:

Ms. Olesya Teterina, Deputy Director, Department for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses and Competition; Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation; Mr. Stanislav Cherdantsev, Vice Governor of the Kemerovo Region; Ms. Reem Badran, President, MENA Businesswomen's Network; Ms. Anna Soshinskaya, President, Responsible for the Future Charitable Foundation; Ms. Alicia Nikitina, Chief Executive Officer, Russian Export Center School of Export; Ms. Douja Garbi, Vice President, Confédération des Entreprises, Citoyennes de Tunisie.



Ms. Natalia Larinova, Deputy Director General of the Federal Corporation for Small and Medium Business Development began by explaining that her corporation realized early on in its establishment 1.5 years ago, that it was vital to include the access of financial resources and education for women into its agenda. She went on to tell fellow participants that the work of the corporation, which deals with the development of SMEs in Russia, prioritizes sectors where a large number of women work, such as trade, advertising, publishing, tourism, creative industries and entertainment. Furthermore, Ms. Larinova talked about the corporation's programmes created specifically for women, such as special loans for women in the corporation's bank called the "The Development of SMEs". She also told participants about programmes designed for women on maternity leave, such as "Business for Mamas", created in cooperation with OPORA RUSSIA.



Ms. Olesya Teterina, Deputy Director, Department for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses and Competition provided fellow speakers and the audience with an overview of the work of the Ministry of Economic Development, specifically the department for the development of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. She explained that the Ministry works along two lines: providing financial support to SMEs, and conducting regulation. The development of socially-active businesses was stressed as a priority for the Ministry, due to the reasoning that women have historically shown much success in this sphere. Overall, the presentation demonstrated that women's entrepreneurship, special training and educational programmes are seen as of vital significance for the Ministry, and therefore, for the country's economic development.



Mr. Stanislav Cherdantsev, Vice Governor of the Kemerovo Region gave an overview of work in the field of women's entrepreneurship in the Kemerovo region of Russia. Similar to his predecessors, the Vice Governor spoke of the importance of women's entrepreneurship for the region's economic growth, where 54% of the population is female. He explained that there are special subsidies provided for starting businesses in the region, where 80% of the recipients are women. Moreover, it was clarified that between May and

September, women who work in commercial organizations and public authorities will be able to benefit from reduced working hours. The Vice Governor welcomed the possibility to implement pilot projects with a focus on women entrepreneurship in the region.



Ms. Reem Badran, President, MENA Businesswomen's Network introduced the network and how it supports women's entrepreneurship. She explained that the network assists women in Arab countries to grow their businesses, not only in the region, but also outside it. In terms of challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, Ms. Reem Badran stressed that access to financing is a big obstacle and that more needs to be done in terms of providing education to women entrepreneurs. With regards to funding, she noted that in developing countries around 70% of women receive little or no funding by financial institutions. She welcomed more action from the financial sector to provide better access to finance. Furthermore, the need for access to information, namely social events and opportunities to network, was identified as important for doing business. In finishing her presentation, the president of the network provided recommendations to her fellow speakers and participants. In addition to better access to financing and training for the enhancement of entrepreneurial skills, she noted the importance of focusing on the expansion of micro-enterprises to small and medium, in order to increase employment.



Ms. Anna Soshinskaya, President, Responsible for the Future Charitable Foundation presented the Russian federal educational programme "Mum-Entrepreneur". She explained that the main aim of the project is to promote small businesses in Russia, and in particular, women entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the significance of the project in attempting to tackle barriers which prevent women from reaching success was emphasized. Ms. Anna Soshinskaya noted that in general there has been a positive change in attitude towards entrepreneurship in Russia, and that more women are open to the idea of becoming entrepreneurs. However, she stressed that social support is important for encouraging entrepreneurs to realize their ambitions and that 68% of people are ready to start their own business if they have supporters around them. Summarizing the benefits of the "Mum-Entrepreneur" project, she explained that it was specifically designed for young mothers who wish to become entrepreneurs and present their ideas, with the winner receiving financing for her project. Their success would then produce a ripple-effect, leading to more motivation among other would-be entrepreneurs in their region.



Ms. Alicia Nikitina, Chief Executive Officer, Russian Export Center School of Export gave an overview of the work of the Russian Export Center, as well as her specific focus, which is education. She stressed that the center does not differentiate between the gender of entrepreneurs, but rather that they are all seen as potential exporters in their view. In this context, Ms. Alicia Nikitina presented to her fellow participants and the audience the services provided to entrepreneurs. The services include analytical, organizational, consultancy, educational and training support. In the context of education, she explained that the Center works with universities and provides export courses, which can also be accessed by distance learning.



Ms. Douja Gharbi, Vice President, Confédération des Entreprises introduced herself as the founder of an employment association, Confédération des Entreprises, which gives special attention to women entrepreneurs. Ms. Douja Gharbi's speech focused on the importance of non-financial aspects of entrepreneurship, namely mentoring. Fellow participants were told

about the difficulties entrepreneurs can face in accessing markets and in knowing how to manage their own companies. In this context, she spoke of her work in mentoring young would-be women entrepreneurs together with UNIDO's Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion (EDIP) programme. The significance of mentoring was backed up by statistics, such as the fact that 39% of startups fail within their first two to three years. The speaker emphasized the benefits of the mentoring programme in that it provides women with the best start to their business as well as gives them self-confidence.



Ms. Ekaterina Malandiy, Head, SME Department, Uralsib Bank spoke of the ways the SME department in Uralsib supports women entrepreneurs. In repeating her fellow participant's statements of how popularity in entrepreneurship has grown, the representative noted that according to the Entrepreneurship Index, the majority of women are ready to be involved in entrepreneurship in order to be more confident and have more time for their families. However, she stressed that barriers to this exist, and that the Uralsib Bank has tried to find solutions to common entrepreneurial problems, particularly as 54% of the bank's customers are women. Such initiatives by the bank include training programs and financial support to business owners.



Ms. Sofia Spector-Balazovskaya, Co-Founder, FARMA VAM provided an example of a successful woman entrepreneur as the co-founder of a pharmaceutical business called FARMA VAM. She introduced the audience to the types of pharmaceuticals produced by her business.



Ms. Fadia Suliman Hussein Mohamed, Entrepreneur in Education together with her sister, Ms. Fadwa Suliman Hussein Mohamed spoke about their success as entrepreneurs in education, namely their kindergarten in Sudan. Ms. Fadia Suliman Hussein told the audience of how she was inspired to start a kindergarten business after having volunteered in at the one where her children attended whilst living in Copenhagen, Denmark. She emphasized the importance of affordable daycare for working mothers, who are often unable to rely on relatives to watch over their children. Acknowledging UNIDO's assistance in developing the idea, she told the audience of how the business, which started out in her family home in Sudan, has grown so much that it now hosts 750 students. Ms. Fadwa Suliman Hussein Mohamed spoke of the global recognition of their entrepreneurial success, including having won the Global Award for Women's Empowerment.

Panel Session Three

UNIDO approach to fostering women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship

The final panel focused on the UNIDO approach of supporting women to create businesses that cater to the needs of a modern society in Europe and Arab countries. UNIDO experts from different fields debated the applicability of selected programmes in different cultural and business environments. In this panel, UNIDO presented case studies and promoted some of its best-practice examples. The panel aimed to establish grounds for future economic cooperation between Russia and Arab countries in the field of women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship by focusing on the following topics:

1. UNIDO approach and projects supporting women's entrepreneurship in different regions.
2. New trends in women's entrepreneurship in CIS countries and the Arab Region, including relevant cultural specifics and challenges involved.
3. Enterprise Development and Upgrading Programmes – the Arab model for enterprise development and investment promotion.

The session, moderated by Mr. Jacek Cukrowski, Chief, UNIDO Regional Division for Europe and Central Asia, featured a keynote speech delivered by Mr. Hashim Hussein, Head, UNIDO Investment and Promotion Office Bahrain. The following panelists took part in the session: Ms. Lucia Cartini, Senior Industrial Development Officer, ITPO Coordinator, UNIDO Investment Promotion Division; Mr. Farrukh Alimdjanov, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO Cluster and Innovation Division; Mr. Marlen Bakalli, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO Rural

Entrepreneurship; Ms. Nawal Al Sabbagh, Chief Executive Officer, Nawal Flowers; Ms. Huda Janahi, Chief Executive Officer, Global Cargo and Traveller Services; and Ms. Veronika Peshkova, Member of the Management Board, OPORA RUSSIA.

Moderator

Mr. Jacek Cukrowski, Chief, UNIDO Regional Division for Europe and Central Asia



The audience was told of the significance of the final panel discussion for the establishment of future cooperation between Russia and Arab countries in the field of women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. Mr. Cukrowski also drew the audience's attention to the gender balanced panel as a perfect example of how gender quality should be deliberated.



Mr. Hashim Hussein, Head, UNIDO Investment and Promotion Office Bahrain presented an overview of the work of the Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion (EDIP) programme. He outlined the steps of

the programme which included empowerment and preparation, where vocational schools and universities are visited to educate future entrepreneurs on how to be innovative. It was also mentioned that business counseling and mentoring is offered to help entrepreneurs access finance. The ITPO Bahrain Head then spoke about the ‘incubation’ period of the programme where the growth of enterprises is ensured. The importance of this period was mentioned in the context that 70% of SMEs die in their first three years. Next the post-incubation period was outlined, which was explained as the stage where entrepreneurs invest in and receive investments from other entrepreneurs. Mr. Hashim Hussein then spoke of the importance of the value of the programme for Russia and the CIS region in that UNIDO has worked to empower women in the Arab region for the last twenty years, and in this context, is equipped with global know-how on the economic empowerment of women.



Ms. Lucia Cartini, Senior Industrial Development Officer, ITPO Coordinator, UNIDO Investment Promotion Division gave the presentation titled “When creativity meets business: UNIDO project stories”, which informed the audience on a workshop, which took place from 14 to 15 December 2015 in Matera, Italy, the European capital of culture 2019. Ms. Lucia Cartini told of how over 30 businesswomen from 13 countries in Africa and Arab countries were brought together to present their success stories, as well as the challenges they faced in the

development of their businesses. She spoke of the results of the project, which included the establishment of many joint projects and institutional contacts between the Basilicata region and UNIDO. The project’s roadmap was mentioned, including presence at the next international EXPO in Dubai in 2020. Lastly, Ms. Lucia Cartini invited participants to the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum 2017 to take place from 31 October to 2 November 2017 in Manama, Bahrain.



Mr. Farrukh Alimdjanov, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO Cluster and Innovation Division gave a presentation on the enhancement of SME competitiveness as an effective tool for the improved socio-economic role of women. During his talk, Mr. Farrukh Alimdjanov emphasized the importance of SMEs in creating value added in exports and generating GDP. Noting the specific character of industrial SMEs, it was explained that they are sometimes easier to establish as they require simple and more affordable equipment. He outlined UNIDO’s work in the improvement of the competitiveness and industrial performance of industrial SMEs with two success stories in Armenia and Tajikistan. In regards to the latter, UNIDO’s intervention in the production of carpets and home textile resulted in long-term agreements with international hypermarkets, retail and hotel chains such as Groupe Auchan SA, Serena Hotels, and “Khonai Man”, the home deco store under the international JYSK brand.



Mr. Marlen Bakalli, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO Rural Entrepreneurship, Job Creation and Human Security Division presented the work of the Job Creation and Human Security Division within the area of women entrepreneurship and creative industries. In this presentation, Mr. Marlen Bakalli addressed the question of why it is easier to exploit creativity in cities such as London, Paris or Los Angeles, but not Amman or Islamabad. In answering this question it was explained that some countries are missing the right tools and connections which is where UNIDO's intervention comes in. It was noted that UNIDO's use of design for development was recognized by the Association Il compasso d'oro, the highest recognition in design. Giving case examples of Pakistan, Madagascar and Jordan, it was shown how the natural endowments of a country, its cultural heritage and the natural skills a territory can offer can provide a sources of inspiration, which can then be used. In the context of women entrepreneurs, all three project examples surrounded the creative work of women: wire wrapping jewelry in Pakistan, weaving in Madagascar and diamond stitches in Jordan. Mr. Marlen Bakalli summarized that UNIDO works with such women to transfer skills for entrepreneurship, teach them management, marketing and sales in order to connect them to a value chain.



Ms. Huda Janahi, Chief Executive Officer, Global Cargo and Traveler Services presented on her experience in women's entrepreneurship in the cargo sector. She spoke of how her application for commercial registration of her business was initially rejected by the Ministry of Commerce because she was a woman. However, later joining the UNIDO AICEI Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion programme in Bahrain, she applied again and was successful. Ms. Huda Janahi told the audience that her initial capital of \$4000 USD was transformed into an estimated \$25 million USD because she refused to give up. Lastly, she outlined the awards she has received for her successful entrepreneurial journey, including the Mohammad bin Rashid Award for Young Business Leaders for the: "Best Arab Start-up Business in the Arab World for the Year 2005"; and "Entrepreneurs Ambassador" by UNIDO in 2011.



Ms. Nawal Al Sabbagh, Chief Executive Officer, Nawal Flowers presented her business's success story. She explained the ups and downs of her entrepreneurship journey to the audience; but she lost

everything in 2003. Her business's recovery was attributed partly to the help of UNIDO and the entrepreneur told fellow participants of the importance of not giving up, and to take each experience as an opportunity to learn and grow. She explained that her children followed in her footsteps and also run their own successful businesses after having taken part in UNIDO's entrepreneurship programme. She noted her receipt of several awards, including an award for leading enterprise in the Arab Region by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktum, and the Indira Gandhi award for leading woman entrepreneur, as well as one of UNIDO's most successful entrepreneurs in 2016. Lastly, Ms. Nawal Al Sabbagh spoke of her aim to turn her business into a franchise.

women's entrepreneurship in Russia. Lastly, she noted that a lack of knowledge and skills create barriers for women entrepreneurs alongside a shortage of funding.



Ms. Veronika Peshkova, Member of the Management Board, OPORA RUSSIA gave the audience an overview of the work of the Women Entrepreneurship Development Committee. She explained that OPORA RUSSIA includes over half a million SMEs and 80 regions of the Russian Federation. She further noted that the committee was established in 2015 following the acknowledgment of women's entrepreneurship as one of the growing segments of Russia's economy. The key work of the committee was defined as focusing on challenges and opportunities faced by women who wish to get involved in economic activities. Ms. Peshkova then went on to talk about the Committee's index of women entrepreneurship and how it helps the committee development projects for

Speakers

(in order of appearance)



Ms. Galina Karelova
Deputy Chairperson
Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation



Ms. Gulnaz Kadyrova
Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade
Russian Federation



Her Highness Sheikha Hissah Saad Abdulah Salem Al-Sabah
Chairperson
Council of Arab Businesswomen



Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova
Head
Women Entrepreneurship Development Committee
OPORA RUSSIA



Ms. Amita Misra
Director
Department of Regional Programmes and Field Representation
UNIDO



Ms. Solomiya Omelyan
Programme Officer
Regional Division for Europe and Central Asia
UNIDO



H.E. Ms. Leila Al Khayat
Honorary World President
Femmes Cheds d'Entreprises



H. E. Shaikha Hind bint Salman Al Khalifa
President
International Federation
for Bahraini Business & Professional Women



Ms. Rawya Mansour
Chairperson
RAMSCO Group
Egypt



Ms. Nina Boer
Arbitrator
Court of Arbitration at St. Petersburg Chamber of Advocates



Mr. Sergey Morozov
Governor of the Ulyanovsk Region



Ms. Faiza Lahlou
Director of Communications in Europe
Head of Corporate Reputation and CSR
P&G



Ms. Lucia Cartini
ITPO Coordinator
UNIDO Investment Promotion Division
UNIDO



Ms. Natalia Larionova
Deputy Director General
Federal Corporation for Small and Medium Business Development



Ms. Olesya Teterina
Deputy Director
Department for the Development of
Small & Medium-Sized Businesses and Competition
Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation



Mr. Stanislav Cherdantsev
Vice Governor of the Kemerovo Region



Ms. Alicia Niktina
Chief Executive Officer
Russian Export Center School of Export



Ms. Anna Soshinskaya
President
Responsible for the Future Charitable Foundation



Ms. Sofia Spector-Balazovskaya
Co-founder
FARMA VAM



Ms. Ekaterina Malandiy
Head
SME Department
Uralsib Bank



Ms. Reem Badran
President
MENA Businesswomen's Network



Ms. Douja Gharbi
Vice President
Confédération des Entreprises Citoyennes de Tunisie



Ms. Fadia Suliman Hussein Mohamed
Entrepreneur in education
Sudan



Ms. Fadwa Suliman Hussein Mohamed
Entrepreneur in education
Sudan



Ms. Veronika Peshova
Member of the Management Board
OPORA RUSSIA
Member of the Expert Council of the OPORA RUSSIA Committee
on Women Entrepreneurship Development



Mr. Hashim Hussein
Head
UNIDO Investment and Promotion Office, Bahrain



Mr. Farrukh Alimdjanov
Industrial Development Officer
Cluster and Innovation Division
UNIDO



Mr. Marlen Bakalli
Industrial Development Officer
Rural Entrepreneurship, Job Creation and Human Security Division
UNIDO



Ms. Nawal Al Sabbagh
Chief Executive Officer
Nawal Flowers



Ms. Huda Janahi
Chief Executive Officer
Global Cargo and Traveler Services



Mr. Jacek Cukrowski
Chief
Regional Division for Europe and Central Asia
UNIDO

Key Messages

1. There is enormous potential for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in the global economy through the leveraging of the economic potential of women
2. More and more women today have the desire to become entrepreneurs, but are discouraged by barriers such as inadequate access to financing, lack of educational programmes, training and general support
3. It is important for governments to recognize the economic potential of women and include support towards women entrepreneurs in their social and legislative frameworks
4. It is important for women to have the possibility of flexible working hours, childcare, generous maternity leave, and the possibility to work remotely if they choose to have families and would like to spend more time at home
5. There is much economic potential for women entrepreneurs to establish SMEs in socially-important sectors such as rehabilitation, sports products, musical instruments and children's goods
6. The existence of business associations is vital for providing support to women entrepreneurs in their home countries
7. Special subsidies and/or loans should be provided to support women entrepreneurs in the establishment of their businesses. The financial sector should play a greater role in this respect
8. Mentoring and training programmes are important for equipping women with the necessary skills to manage their business ventures from the start

Outcomes



The one-day interregional forum was a success in:

- Raising awareness at the highly prestigious St. Petersburg Interregional Economic Forum (SPIEF) on the topic of women's entrepreneurship, including its challenges and success stories
- Exchanging success stories, best practices, challenges and solutions among Arab and European counterparts on the topic of women's entrepreneurship, including access to finance and educational programmes
- Connecting Arab and European counterparts from different sectors including institutional and business representatives, thereby facilitating networking possibilities
- Creating a foundation for future spin-off activities to raise further awareness of the issues surrounding women's entrepreneurship, including a business mission of Russian women entrepreneurs to Manama, Bahrain; planend UNIDO's participation in the Second Eurasian Women's Forum and presence at the SPIEF 2018
- Promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development, including UNIDO's interventions in supporting women

Follow-up Activities

Business mission of Russian women entrepreneurs and policy makers to Bahrain, October-November 2017

As a spin-off to the forum, women entrepreneurs and policy makers from the Russian Federation undertook a business mission to Manama, Bahrain on the sidelines of the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum on 31 October – 2 November 2017. The business mission allowed for the continuation of experience sharing among Russian and Arab counterparts, putting into practice what was discussed during the SPIEF 2017 interregional forum. For more information, please see the report “Mission of Russian Women Leaders and Entrepreneurs to Manama, the Kingdom of Bahrain”.

Participation of UNIDO in the second Eurasian Women’s Forum in 2018

The invitation extended by Ms. Galina Karelova to participants of the forum, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Ms. Valentina Matvienko, will allow for the discussions at the “Women’s Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Solutions in the Europe and Arab Region” to be continued and developed.

Session on women’s economic empowerment and entrepreneurship at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 24-26 May 2018

To establish a tradition, and continue dialogue at a highly prestigious platform, it was suggested for UNIDO to organise another side-event on the topic of women’s entrepreneurship and economic empowerment at the following year’s SPIEF 2018 entitled “Increasing the contribution of women to economic growth: creating an enabling environment” as well as a policy-makers round table both to take place on 23-24 May 2018.

Master classes, training, capacity building and networks for women entrepreneurs

Due to the fact that training and education on entrepreneurship was discussed as important for women entrepreneurs during the forum, UNIDO proposes to hold focused trainings and lectures on focused topics. These include areas such as establishing and running a business, including access to finance, information and networks. In addition B2B, networking events and fairs could be organised.

Agenda

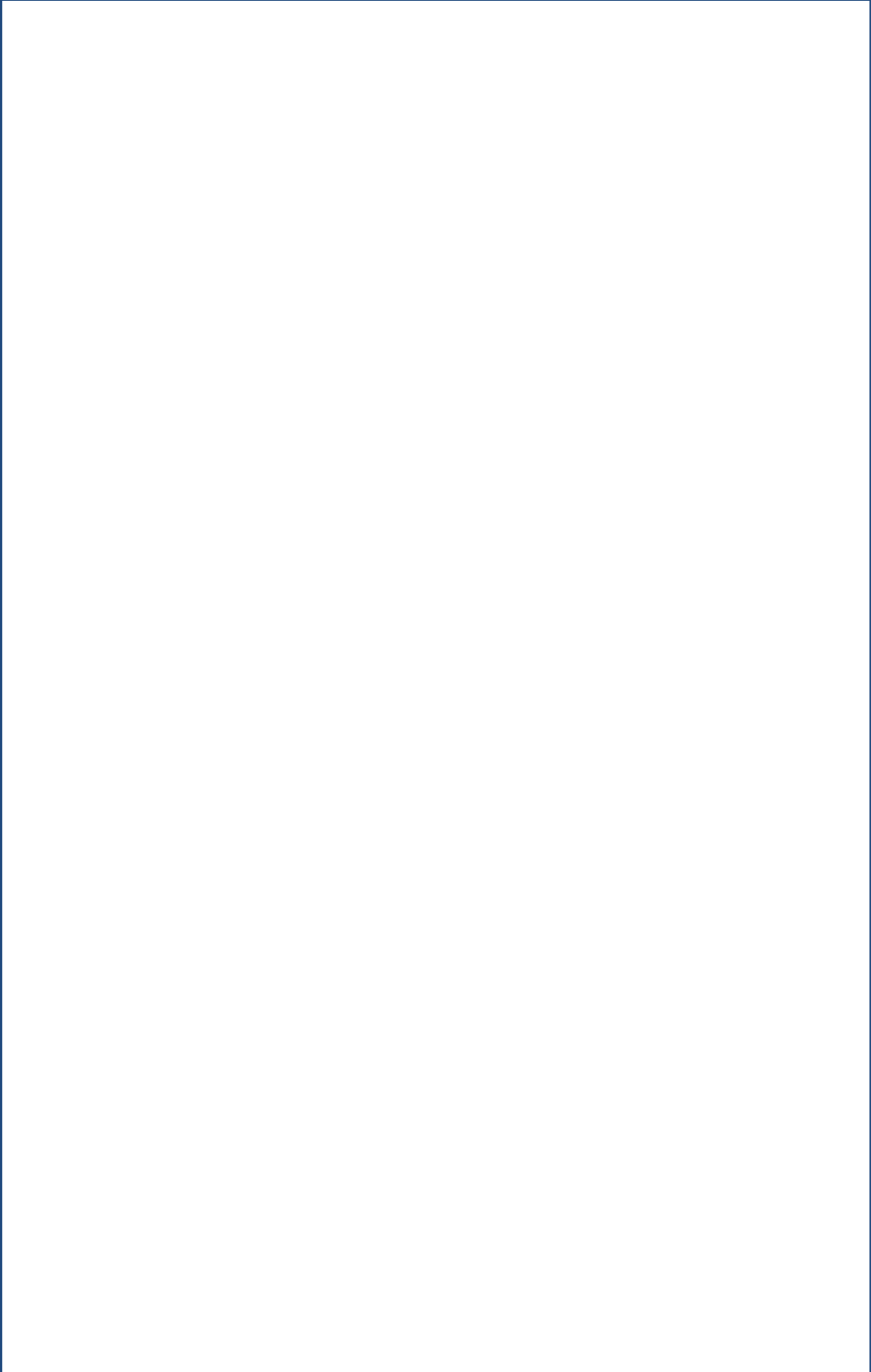
Time	Topic
08:30–09:00	Arrival of participants
09:00–09:40	<p>Welcome speeches</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Galina Karelova, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation 2. Ms. Gulnaz Kadyrova, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation 3. Her Highness Sheikha Hissah Saad Abdulah Salem Al-Sabah, Chairperson, Council of Arab Businesswomen 4. Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova, Head, Committee on the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship, OPORA RUSSIA 5. Ms. Amita Misra, Director, Department of Regional Programmes and Field Representation, UNIDO <p>Moderator: Ms. Solomiya Omelyan, Programme Officer, UNIDO Regional Division for Europe and Central Asia</p>
09:45–11:00	<p>PANEL SESSION I</p> <p>Women's economic empowerment in the context of inclusive and sustainable industrial development</p> <p>The first panel session will explore the linkages between women's entrepreneurship and inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID), and will discuss the general effects industrialization has on women's economic empowerment. The speakers will debate the challenges and market opportunities for women entrepreneurs and the economic opportunities that arise from enhanced women's empowerment. The key issues to be addressed are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do women's empowerment and pro-active economic engagement influence economic growth and social development? 2. Women as agents for change: green, inclusive, and growing women-led businesses 3. Why are 'women' and 'industry' often perceived as mutually exclusive? 4. The real impact of women and their economic ventures on achieving ISID 5. What are the barriers to success and what empowers women to become thriving entrepreneurs? <p>Keynote speech by: Ms. Gulnaz Kadyrova, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Lucia Cartini, Senior Industrial Development Officer, ITPO Coordinator, UNIDO Investment and Promotion Division</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. H.H. Sheikha Hissah Saad Abdulah Salem Al-Sabah, President, Council of Arab Businesswomen – <i>Role of the Council of Arab Businesswomen towards women Economic Empowerment</i> 2. H.E. Mrs. Leila Al Khayat, Honorary World President, Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises Mondiales (FCEM) – <i>Promoting women internationally</i> 3. H.E. Shaikha Hind bint Salman Al Khalifa, President, International Federation for Bahraini Business & Professional Women – <i>Creative Women Empowerment</i> 4. Mrs. Rawya Mansour, Chairperson, RAMSCO Group, Egypt – <i>Initiative on ECO Villages</i> 5. Ms. Nina Boer, Arbitrator, Court of Arbitration at St. Petersburg Chamber of Advocates – <i>Women's legal and economic empowerment in the Russian Federation</i> 6. Mr. Sergei Morozov, Governor of Ulyanovsk Region – <i>Opportunities for regional development through supporting women's entrepreneurship</i> 7. Mr. Sergei Movchan, Vice Governor of St. Petersburg – <i>Support of women-run SMEs in St Petersburg</i> 8. Ms. Faiza Lahlou, Director of Communications in Europe, Head of Corporate Reputation and CSR, P&G – <i>Gender equality presents a compelling business and global citizenship opportunity for P&G</i> <p>Questions & answers</p>
11:00–11:30	Coffee Break

Time	Topic
11:30–12:45	<p>PANEL SESSION II</p> <p>Creating solutions to the women’s entrepreneurship challenge – successful approaches for supporting women’s economic empowerment</p> <p>This panel explores and discusses successful methods of supporting innovative approaches to women’s economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. The discussion will highlight the role of policies, regulations, and education and training in increasing women’s entrepreneurial activities. The speakers will debate existing approaches and practices that are applied in Europe and the Arab region and how they impact the local development of women’s entrepreneurship. The discussion will focus on solutions enhancing women’s access to technology- and industry-oriented areas of entrepreneurship. It will also highlight practical experiences of promoting women entrepreneurs in trade, manufacturing, and the digital economy in various countries. The panel will discuss how the involvement of women in industrial manufacturing and the creation of favourable working conditions influence the overall attractiveness of engagement in the industrial sector. Panellists will discuss the role of increased women’s economic empowerment as a key driver for the needed transformation and diversification of economies in different regions. The following key questions will guide the debate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the role of government, in terms of policies and regulations, in promoting the economic capacities of women? 2. What is the role of associations in improving women’s working conditions? 3. What role do education and training systems play in nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial attitudes among women? 4. What is the role of business development services, technologies, and investment promotion in strengthening women’s entrepreneurship? 5. How can enhanced women’s entrepreneurship in industries and trade be promoted? 6. What is the role of the private sector, and in particular small and medium sized businesses, in promoting women’s economic empowerment? 7. How to attract women to technology-based areas of entrepreneurship? 8. What is the linkage between the digital economy and women’s economic empowerment? 9. How can women influence the economic realities of future generations in the context of ISID? <p>Keynote speech by: Mr. Maxim Parshin, Director of the Department for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses and Competition, Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation & Ms. Natalia Larionova, Deputy Director General of Federal Corporation for Small and Medium Business Development</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Veronika Peshkova, Member of the Management Board, OPORA RUSSIA; Member of the Expert Council of the OPORA RUSSIA Committee on the Development of Women’s Entrepreneurship</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Stanislav Cherdantsev, Vice Governor of Kemerovo Region – <i>Women’s entrepreneurship: state support measures</i> 2. Ms. Alicia Nikitina, Chief Executive Officer, Russian Export Center School of Export – <i>State support to promote the internationalization of women-owned SMEs</i> 3. Mrs. Anna Soshinskaya, President, Responsible for the Future Charitable Foundation – <i>Results and future prospects of the Russian federal educational programme ‘Mum – Entrepreneur’</i> 4. Ms. Sofia Spector-Balazovskaya, Co-Founder, FARMA VAM – <i>Case study of women-owned industrial project</i> 5. Ms. Ekaterina Malandiy, Head, SME Department, Uralsib Bank – <i>Strategies supporting women’s access to financial resources</i> 6. Ms. Reem Badran, President, MENA Businesswomen’s Network – <i>Women Business Networks</i> 7. Mrs. Douja Gharbi, Vice President, Confédération des Entreprises Citoyennes de Tunisie, Tunisia – <i>Women Entrepreneurs Mentorship Programs</i> 8. Mrs. Fadia Suliman Hussein Mohamed, Sudan – <i>Success Story – Entrepreneurship in Education</i> 9. Mrs. Fadwa Suliman Hussein Mohamed, Sudan – <i>Success Story – Entrepreneurship in Education</i> <p>Questions & answers</p>
12:45–14:00	Lunch break

Time	Topic
14:00 – 15:25	<p>PANEL SESSION III UNIDO approach to fostering women’s economic empowerment and entrepreneurship</p> <p>The final panel will focus on the UNIDO approach of supporting women to create businesses that cater for the needs of a modern society in Europe and Arab countries. UNIDO experts from different fields will debate the applicability of selected programmes in different cultural and business environments. In this panel, UNIDO will present case studies and promote some of its best-practice examples. The panel aims to establish grounds for future economic cooperation between Russia and Arab countries in the field of women’s economic empowerment and entrepreneurship by focusing on the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNIDO approach and projects supporting women’s entrepreneurship in different regions 2. New trends in women’s entrepreneurship in CIS countries and the Arab region, including relevant cultural specifics and challenges involved 3. Enterprise Development and Upgrading Programmes – the Arab model for enterprise development and investment promotion <p>Keynote speech by: Mr. Hashim Hussein, Head, UNIDO Investment and Promotion Office Bahrain – UNIDO intervention in the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship in the Arab region</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Jacek Cukrowski, Chief, UNIDO Regional Division for Europe and Central Asia</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Lucia Cartini, Senior Industrial Development Officer, ITPO Coordinator, UNIDO Investment and Promotion Division – <i>When creativity meets business: UNIDO project stories</i> 2. Mr. Farrukh Alimjanov, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO Cluster and Innovation Division – <i>Enhancing SME competitiveness as an effective tool for improved socio-economic role of women</i> 3. Mr. Marlen Bakalli, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO Rural Entrepreneurship, Job Creation and Human Security Division – <i>Women entrepreneurship and creative industries</i> 4. Ms. Nawal Al Sabbagh, Chief Executive Officer, Nawal Flowers – <i>Success Story – Women Entrepreneurship</i> 5. Ms. Huda Janahi, Chief Executive Officer, Global Cargo and Traveller Services – <i>Success Story – Women Entrepreneurship in Cargo</i> 6. Ms. Nadiya Cherkassova, Head, Committee on the Development of Women’s Entrepreneurship, OPORA RUSSIA – <i>International initiatives of “OPORA RUSSIA” to support the development of women’s entrepreneurship</i> <p>Questions & answers</p>
15:25–15:30	Closing remarks
<p><i>During the panel sessions, simultaneous translation in Russian and English will be provided.</i></p>	
<p>Organizers: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), OPORA RUSSIA Committee on the Development of Women’s Entrepreneurship, and the Arab International Center for Entrepreneurship and Investment, Bahrain (AICE)</p>	

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INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

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