

Global Trade and Gender Arrangementⁱ

The Participantsⁱⁱ have entered into the following Arrangement:

1. General Understandings

- a) In concluding this Arrangement on Trade and Gender, the Participants:
- i. acknowledge the importance of incorporating a gender perspective into the promotion of inclusive economic growth, and the key role that gender-responsive policies can play in achieving sustainable development;
 - ii. recall the Sustainable Development Goals in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls;
 - iii. acknowledge that effective domestic coordination of trade and investment policies which take into account the importance of both women's and men's participation, and the different barriers they may face in accessing trade and finance, can further contribute to achieving sustainable economic growth;
 - iv. acknowledge that improving women's access to trade and investment opportunities and removing barriers in their territories enhances women's participation in domestic, regional and global markets;
 - v. acknowledge that it is inappropriate to waive or otherwise derogate from protection afforded in their respective gender equality laws and regulations, in a manner that weakens or reduces the protections afforded in those laws and regulations so as to encourage trade or investment between the Participants, or from any other economy;
 - vi. acknowledge that women's enhanced participation in the labour market, the growth of women-owned enterprises and entrepreneurship, women's economic autonomy and access to, and ownership of, economic resources contribute to prosperity, competitiveness, and the well-being of society;
 - vii. acknowledge the importance of initiatives, efforts, and work on trade and gender developed and being carried out at the World Trade Organization (WTO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and other relevant fora, and the importance of taking into consideration their findings, recommendations, and activities to ensure effective coordination and implementation of cooperation activities;
 - viii. recall the objectives of the WTO *Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment on the Occasion of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017* (the 'Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment');

- ix. acknowledge the need to identify the range of barriers that limit opportunities for women in the economy and the need to deliver evidence-based interventions in response;
- x. acknowledge the importance of adopting, maintaining, and implementing gender equality laws, regulations, policies, and best practices; and
- xi. acknowledge the importance of promoting public awareness of their gender equality laws, regulations, policies and practices, including by making them publicly available.

2. General Dispositions

- a) The Participants will promote mutually supportive trade and gender policies in order to improve women's participation in trade and investment and in the furtherance of women's economic empowerment and sustainable development.
- b) Each Participant will work towards increasing women's participation in trade and investment.
- c) Each Participant will enforce its laws and regulations promoting gender equality and improving women's access to economic opportunities.
- d) The Participants recognise that it is inappropriate to encourage trade and investment by weakening or reducing the protection afforded in their respective gender equality laws and regulations.

3. International Instruments

- a) The Participants reaffirm their commitment to implement the obligations under the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979), and acknowledge the general recommendations made under its Committee.
- b) The Participants reaffirm their commitment to implement the obligations under any other international agreement addressing women's rights or gender equality to which they are party.
- c) The Participants will implement the *Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment*.

4. Gender and Trade in Services

- a) If a Participant adopts or maintains measures relating to licensing requirements and procedures, qualification requirements and procedures, or technical standards relating to authorisation for the supply of a service, it will ensure that such measures do not discriminate based on gender.

b) The Participants will not consider legitimate differentiation, as well as the adoption of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating *de facto* gender equality, as discrimination for the purposes of this paragraph. Legitimate differentiation is defined as differential treatment that is reasonable and objective, and aims to achieve a legitimate public policy purpose.

5. Gender and Responsible Business Conduct

Each Participant will encourage enterprises operating within its territory or subject to its jurisdiction to voluntarily incorporate into their internal policies those internationally recognised standards, guidelines, and principles that address gender equality that have been endorsed or are supported by that Participant.

6. Discrimination in the Workplace

a) The Participants support the goal of promoting gender equality in the workplace.

b) The Participants will cooperate and share best practices to eliminate discrimination in employment and occupation as stated in the *ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and Its Follow-Up* (1998), including on the basis of sex, pregnancy, possibility of pregnancy, maternity, gender and gender identity, and sexual orientation.

7. Transparency

The Participants will share their respective experiences relating to policies and programmes to encourage women's full and equal participation in national and international economies through voluntary reporting during the WTO trade policy review mechanism as part of their National Reports.

8. Cooperation

a) The Participants will develop joint cooperation activities which may include those areas of cooperation listed in paragraph 9.

b) The Participants will carry out cooperation activities aimed at enhancing the ability of women, including workers, entrepreneurs, business women and business owners, to fully access and benefit from the opportunities created by this Arrangement. The Participants will ensure that these cooperation activities are carried out with inclusive participation of women.

c) The Participants will jointly determine the issues for which cooperation activities will be carried out through the coordination, as appropriate, of their respective agencies, national private companies, labour unions, civil society, academic institutions, and non-governmental organisations, among others.

d) The Participants understand that the cooperation activities they develop may include the following:

- i. dialogues, workshops, seminars, conferences, cooperation programmes and projects, including internships, visits and research;
- ii. technical assistance to promote and facilitate capacity building and training;
- iii. exchange of experts and information; and
- iv. sharing of experiences and best practices in designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and strengthening policies and programs to enhance women's participation in domestic, regional and global economies.

e) The Participants will jointly decide on the priorities for cooperation activities based on their interests and available resources. Each Participant will bear its own costs associated with its participation in cooperation and other related activities.

f) The Participants will work together in international and multilateral fora to advance trade and gender issues and understanding, whenever possible, including at APEC, OECD and the WTO.

9. Areas of Cooperation

a) The Participants may cooperate in the following areas:

- i. developing programmes to promote women's full and equal participation, empowerment and advancement in society by encouraging, valuing and recognising women's unpaid care work, capacity-building and skills enhancement of women including at work, in business, and at senior levels in all sectors of society (such as on public and private boards);
- ii. improving women's access to participation, leadership and education, in particular in fields in which they are traditionally underrepresented such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), as well as innovation, e-commerce and any other field related to trade;
- iii. promoting financial inclusion and education as well as access to financing and financial assistance, including trade financing;
- iv. promoting business development services for women and programmes to improve women's digital skills and access to online business tools;
- v. enhancing women entrepreneurs' participation in government procurement markets;
- vi. advancing women's leadership and developing women's networks;
- vii. developing initiatives to promote gender equality within enterprises;
- viii. fostering women's participation in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors;

- ix. fostering women's entrepreneurship, including activities to promote the internationalisation of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) led by women and the integration of women in the formal sector of the economy;
- x. developing trade missions for business women and women entrepreneurs;
- xi. advancing care policies and programmes with a gender and shared social responsibility perspective including parenting and other family co-responsibilities;
- xii. supporting economic opportunities for rural and Indigenous women in trade and investment;
- xiii. enhancing the competitiveness of women-owned enterprises to allow them to participate and compete in local, regional, and global value chains;
- xiv. promoting the use of diverse suppliers, including women-owned businesses;
- xv. conducting gender-based analysis and monitoring the gender-based effects of trade;
- xvi. sharing methods and procedures for the collection of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data, the use of indicators, monitoring and evaluation methodologies and the analysis of gender-focused statistics related to trade; and
- xvii. other areas upon which they may jointly decide.

10. Trade and Gender Working Group

a) The Participants hereby establish a Trade and Gender Working Group composed of representatives of each Participant. The Working Group will:

- i. organise and facilitate the cooperation activities;
- ii. facilitate the exchange of information on each other's experiences and best practices with respect to the establishment and implementation of policies and programmes that address trade and gender-related issues in order to achieve the greatest possible benefit under this Arrangement;
- iii. facilitate the exchange of information on lessons learned through the cooperation activities carried out under Paragraph 9;
- iv. discuss joint proposals to support policies and other initiatives on trade and gender;
- v. invite international donor institutions, private sector entities, non-governmental organisations, or other relevant institutions, as appropriate, to assist with the development and implementation of cooperation activities;
- vi. review the operation of this arrangement and the cooperation activities thereunder periodically;

- vii. at the request of a Participant, consider any matter related to the implementation and operation of this Arrangement;
- viii. meet annually at a time and place to be mutually determined which may take place on the margins of other related meetings or using electronic means;
- ix. report publicly on its work and findings;
- x. consider any expressions of interest in joining this Arrangement within two months of their receipt; and
- xi. other functions upon which the Participants may jointly decide.

11. Contact Points for Trade and Gender

a) Within one month of signature, each Participant will designate a Contact Point for Trade and Gender to coordinate the implementation of this Arrangement.

b) The Participants understand that the Chair of the Working Group will maintain a separate list of the Contact Points of all Participants which it will update and distribute annually or as required.

12. Review

The Participants will consider, *inter alia*, opportunities to negotiate another legal form of this arrangement or a treaty-level instrument on trade and gender. The first periodic review of this arrangement will take place on a mutually determined basis no later than 3 years after it takes effect.

13. Additional Participants

a) The Participants may invite other economies interested in pursuing inclusive trade and investment approaches that contribute to gender equality and women's economic empowerment to join this Arrangement. Interested economies will inform them in writing of their desire to join the Arrangement. Following a positive decision by the Trade and Gender Working Group, new Participants may join the Arrangement, which will take effect for them upon signature.

b) The Participants understand that:

- i. new Participants may create, for their own purposes, an unofficial version of this Arrangement into the language of their choice;
- ii. the equally valid versions for signing onto this Arrangement will be English, French and Spanish;
- iii. new Participants may also have an additional testimonium on the signature page for this Arrangement in the language of their choice in addition to testimoniums in English, French and Spanish.

14. Working Language

The Participants understand that the working language for this arrangement will be English.

15. Differences in interpretation and implementation

The Participants will resolve any differences on the interpretation or application of this Arrangement amicably and in good faith, taking into account the objectives of this Arrangement.

16. Final dispositions

- a) This Arrangement will take effect upon the date of its signature by the Participants.
- b) The Participants may amend this Arrangement upon their mutual written consent.
- c) Any Participant may cease its participation in this Arrangement by giving a written notice to the other Participants.
- d) The Participants may terminate this Arrangement upon their mutual written consent.
- e) The Participants understand that termination of this Arrangement will not affect the activities already in progress.

Signed in triplicate, on August 5 of 2020, in the English, French and Spanish languages, each version being equally valid.

ⁱAs amended on February 28 2024.

ⁱⁱ Participants currently include: Canada (August 5, 2020), Chile (August 5, 2020), New Zealand (August 5, 2020), Mexico (October 6, 2021), Colombia (June 13, 2022), Peru (June 13, 2022), Costa Rica (May 16 2023), Ecuador (May 16 2023), Argentina (October 31 2023), Australia (February 26 2024) and Brazil (February 26 2024).