

PN-ABR-7253
7-13-95

Women in the Market Initiative

**Meeting of the Steering Committee Members
Held Between 23rd and 25th November, 1992
Nairobi, Kenya**

**Prepared by
LABAT-ANDERSON Incorporated
March 6, 1993**



WOMEN IN THE MARKET INITIATIVE

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4. Julia Sarkodie-Mensah, Botswana
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7. Teresia Mbire, Uganda
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BACKGROUND AND GOALS OF THE INITIATIVE

The Women in the Market Initiative was launched as a result of USAID's experience in and support of private sector growth in Africa. The goal of this initiative is to promote the development of women-owned enterprises in Africa. This Initiative is envisaged as the beginning of a long-term action agenda and policy development attempt to assess, analyze, and resolve the position of women in the African context.

African women have played and continue to play an important role in the marketplace in Africa, particularly in the informal sector. The Initiative acknowledged the enormous social, structural, and legal barriers that women entrepreneurs face with regard to market entry and success in business. The Initiative noted that existing information on such barriers is incomplete, hence the need for women entrepreneurs to organize themselves into a formidable force to effect change.

From the beginning, the participants in the initiative felt there was a need to depart from the orientation prevailing among governments and international development agencies with regard to women in development, an orientation mainly based on social welfare, the informal sector, and family consumption. This conceptualization of women in development causes governments and development agencies to overlook golden opportunities to promote development through the private sector. They fail to clearly see women as full-fledged entrepreneurs whose enterprises can grow and compete successfully in the open market.

WELCOMING SPEECH

Evelyn K. Mungai

Project Director

Kenya

Your excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: I warmly welcome you to the opening of this important meeting, which is geared toward assisting and developing women's enterprises in Africa. To those from outside Kenya, I extend an especially warm welcome. This meeting has been lauded by women entrepreneurs within the continent, because they see it as the beginning of a long-term action agenda and policy development attempt to assess, analyze, and resolve the position of women in the African context.

African women have traditionally played an important role in the marketplace, particularly in the informal sector. The goal of this initiative is to address the enormous social, structural, and legal barriers that women face regarding market entry and success in business. To date, the information on such barriers is incomplete. There is definitely a need for women entrepreneurs to organize themselves as a formidable force to effect change.

The purpose of this meeting is to identify the major constraints that women entrepreneurs face as they attempt to develop their own businesses in Africa, and to identify topics for study and sources of empirical data to be used as a basis for a wider discussion at a major meeting of women entrepreneurs at a later stage.

It is also hoped that this meeting will lead to the creation of a formal network of women entrepreneurs working to implement action agenda items in their respective countries.

The Women in the Market Initiative has been launched as a result of USAID's experience with and support of private sector growth in collaboration with international donor agencies and forums, such as the African Project Development Facility (APDF) and the African Business Roundtable (ABR).

USAID taking the lead in this initiative is a great contribution to the economic development of the continent. To them we extend our most deep appreciation.

Various governments in the continent, and particularly so in Kenya, which is the host country of the Initiative, attach great importance to the potential role of women in the development of family welfare and of the nation as a whole. This subject matter is critical to the present and future development of African countries. We all hope that the initiative will augur well for a new era for the future of African women entrepreneurs. Development of a strong business network will no doubt pave the way for the continuous interaction of successful women entrepreneurs with other small-scale businesswomen, making it possible to create an enabling environment for the development of women in the marketplace.

Most of you are well informed of the financial hardship of women worldwide. In some countries in Africa, for instance, women find it difficult to open a bank account in their own name, to sign contracts without a male family member's countersignature, and to register a business in their own name.

Despite their constraints, women entrepreneurs have gained a reputation as hard-working and dynamic individuals who have a better record of loan repayment and effective use of financial resources than men.

Women's development has been curtailed by financial limitations in income generation activities, expansion of business enterprises, misrepresentation in decision-making forums, and societal attitudes toward women. Most women's talents remain unexploited and untapped. There is a need to facilitate change in order to ensure a transformation of the role of women in nation building. Lack of exposure has created an information barrier encountered by women entrepreneurs. This constraint will be effectively addressed.

Throughout this meeting, therefore, it is expected that deliberations will focus on practical suggestions that will bring our action-oriented policy document to be adopted by donor agencies, governments, and other interested parties.

It is important to mention that this initiative is the foundation for a long-term follow-up exercise. The follow-up will be in phases and documentation of each phase will be made.

My last word at this stage is to request participants to commit themselves to practical approaches throughout the meeting.

Once again, may I take this opportunity to express the gratitude of the women of Africa to the United States Agency for International Development, Bureau for Africa, and the Office of Women in Development, represented here today for the Initiative, for providing the financial and logistical support that has made this meeting a reality; and to LABAT-ANDERSON Incorporated, also represented at this meeting, for competently and effectively coordinating this effort on the U.S. side. The effects of their efforts, I have no doubt, will continue to be felt for a very long time, not only by the women of Africa, but by the continent as a whole.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have assisted in one way or another for the past several months in organizing this meeting, and all of you who have travelled great distances in quest of a better life for the African woman.

It is now my most pleasant duty to call upon Mr. Ignatio Maramba, the Regional Manager of the African Project Development Facility to deliver the keynote address.

Thank you!

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: KEYNOTE ADDRESS

A PERSPECTIVE

Ignatio Maramba
Regional Manager,
African Project Development Facility
East and Central Africa

Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Indira Gandhi, Corazon Aquino, Benazir Bhutto, Begum Khaleda Zia, Eugenia Charles, Violeta Chamorro.

"Women grow more than half of the food produced in the developing world."

"Women grow some 80 percent of the food produced in Sub-Saharan Africa."

"Government and aid development programs often tend to exploit women's labor without supporting it, maintaining it, or enhancing it."

The above names and statements, which I am sure most of us have heard and read many, many times before, give a picture of the power of women in the developing world, the actual and potential contribution of women to mankind, and the attention and care that we must give so that women in developing countries can have their share of opportunities to contribute to human development.

LEGAL AND CULTURAL BARRIERS TO WOMEN IN BUSINESS

In many African countries, most women cannot hold title to land. In many countries, including Kenya, banks generally require registration of a land certificate before awarding credit.

In some countries, for example, Botswana, married women often are not legally capable of entering into contracts, while in others

women cannot belong to cooperative associations, which are often significant avenues to the pooling of financing, skills, and information.

Women are often not significantly represented in business-related networks like chambers of commerce, associations of manufacturers, associations of exporters, and other business and social organizations.

Cultural and social perceptions in some countries also make it relatively more difficult for women to enter and succeed in the formal business sector.

In the past, the economic significance of women's contributions to national income was undervalued and often ignored. When women's contributions began to be seriously recognized and acknowledged in the early 1980s, the response of governments and development agencies in terms of assistance to women's activities was mostly based on social welfare, with little commercial or economic orientation.

Women have a tougher time than men in obtaining loans from financial institutions. However, if you talk to bankers who have significant experience in lending to women entrepreneurs, these bankers will tell you that women entrepreneurs have a much better record of paying their debts than their male counterparts.

There are only a few women entrepreneurs who do not encounter substantial legal and cultural barriers. Otherwise, a majority of African businesswomen find it difficult to expand their businesses. In developed countries, women seem to have done better. For example, about five million businesses in the United States are owned by women. In Canada, one-third of all enterprises are owned by women; in Finland, one-third; in Sweden, one-fourth; in Germany, one-fifth; and in the Netherlands, a

little less than one-fifth. APDF is trying to assist African women. About 15 percent of APDF assisted projects in Sub-Saharan Africa are owned and managed by women.

SOME ISSUES AND INITIATIVES

The universal effort to promote female entrepreneurship goes beyond the mandate of any individual institution or group. Many of the issues that will be raised in your three-day meeting could further be addressed by various governments, development agencies, or pressure groups.

There are a few issues and initiatives that I would like to bring up. Most often, government's orientation and development agencies' orientations with regard to women in development have been based mainly on social welfare and, to some extent, the informal sector and family welfare. This is well and good. However, our governments and our development agencies may be missing out on some golden opportunities to promote development through the private sector. This intervention would clearly see women as full-fledged entrepreneurs whose enterprises can grow and compete in the open market successfully.

Whether in Africa or elsewhere, we cannot deny the overwhelming significance of land ownership as a source of capital in entrepreneurship. While this condition affects both men and women, it is of particular significance to women entrepreneurs in Africa who, in most countries, have no access to marketable titles to land to use as collateral. All over Africa, the issue of land titles and women and its impact on private sector development is much talked about. However, it is taken lightly in high-level discussions and decisions. The reason being that it is assumed to be too politically sensitive and culturally complex.

Governments and development agencies can easily step up assistance to small-scale businesswomen. This could be accomplished in a number of ways, among which are entrepreneurship training programs for women entrepreneurs, provision of high-risk funding (equity and loan) for women's projects, and general assistance to women consultants.

There are today many programs designed to assist women in business. You might consider a project to gather data that would help assess the impact of such programs on women entrepreneurs. We need to know if the programs are responsive to the needs of women in business. The information gathered will also help determine how allocation of scarce resources would be approached.

Governments and development agencies can jointly start educational programs (and pressure groups) to address gender-specific issues, especially issues pertaining to legal and cultural barriers to women in business. Public awareness can go a long way in highlighting these issues.

Female success stories make interesting and inspiring reading and are much sought after. Some of you here have connections with the media, some of you are good writers, many of you are successful entrepreneurs, and many of you still are successful entrepreneurs and have good and inspiring stories to tell. I urge you to put your efforts together in this forum to produce well-documented profiles and case studies of successful women entrepreneurs for reference. I am sure the media, be it newspaper, magazine, or television, would be more than glad to print and air your resolutions. This is one powerful weapon you have to help break down the cultural and legal barriers affecting the African women entrepreneurs.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: AN OVERVIEW

Hellen Macharia
Luncheon Speaker
Kenya

SUMMARY

This paper aims at giving a brief overview of the subject of women's entrepreneurship in Kenya. It will give a short background and highlights of some of the issues and constraints hindering women in their entrepreneurial efforts. It will also attempt to suggest or outline some approaches for easing those constraints.

BACKGROUND

Women comprise one-half of the world's population. In Kenya, women comprise 52 percent of the total population. Of the adult female population, 80 percent live in the rural areas, where they produce 80 percent of the nation's total agricultural production in the form of subsistence and cash crops.

As the country's economic development process has given rise to industrial and other nonfarming economic activities, the male population has tended to pursue such activities. On the other hand, the bulk of the women are left to tend the farms and care for the families.

In recent times, women have become more aware of their needs, abilities, and opportunities, which they can exploit for the betterment of their lives and those of their families. They are thus increasingly assuming entrepreneurial roles in areas that have in the past been the preserve of men.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Who is an entrepreneur? Definitions abound. D. McClelland defined entrepreneurs as those who exercise some means of control over resources, producing more than they need so that they can sell, and are willing to take risks. J. Schumpeter included innovativeness as a mark of an entrepreneur. For the purposes of this paper we can define an entrepreneur as one who gets an idea (hers or someone else's), develops it, and organizes resources to implement it, with a view to making profit. Entrepreneurship is alertness to business opportunities, the ability to organize resources, as well as a willingness to take risks. The incentive for entrepreneurs is the expected gain, such as profits, or even "being one's own boss."

We need to get into the argument whether entrepreneurs are "born," or made through training, though it appears to be a combination of the two. Whatever the case, successful entrepreneurs tend to exhibit certain identifiable personal characteristics that include a high need for achievements, confidence, persistence (approaching tenacity), the ability to quickly notice opportunities before others do or to quickly exploit opportunities revealed by others, and the willingness to take risks.

It is often said that they have a "nose" for business opportunities.

Entrepreneurs, whether men or women, face some general problems. These include uncertainty in the markets where they sell their products and where they obtain their raw materials, competition, lack of finance or the high cost of borrowing, threat of technological change, threat of changes in the legal environment, and threat of political upheavals.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

There are many reasons why women take the risk of investing in their own business. Some of these reasons are the sheer necessity for survival, to earn an income or supplement an existing income, to implement a burning idea that they are confident will work, to be their own bosses, to occupy their time and talents, simply because other women are in business, and because the business is already established or has been inherited. But the most important reason is that these women want to be economically independent and thus masters of their own lives.

In venturing into business, many women will face the entrepreneurial problems outlined earlier, and other additional handicaps arising from their being women. Such gender-oriented constraints include multiple roles and responsibilities, limited education, social and psychological conditioning, lack of information, lack of access to resources, and unfavorable working conditions.

MULTIPLE DEMANDING ROLES

A woman is both a producer and reproducer. As a producer, the woman gathers or grows food for the subsistence of her family as well as growing cash crops. This is where the already mentioned 80 percent of Kenya's agricultural production comes from. Concurrently, the woman reproduces and must nurture the young for the perpetuation of the human race. She also has to be a homemaker, which demands that she draw water, fetch wood, and search out and prepare food for her family. These activities are largely unrecognized, not remunerated, and are not accounted for in the national statistics.

These multiple roles take up a great deal of women's time and energy. Most of them have therefore very little time and energy

left for business or other activities outside the home. If a woman chooses to pursue a business, it might be seen as an abdication of her basic role.

LIMITED EDUCATION

An entrepreneur need not be highly educated, but skills in literacy and numeracy, reinforced by technical skills, are a great help. Kenyan women continue to be disadvantaged in this area. For example, while the national illiteracy rate is 31 percent for men, it is 41.5 percent for women. Whereas primary school enrollments are balanced between boys and girls, girls perform poorly on the average. It could be because they are called upon to do domestic chores while the boys continue doing their school work. The rates for premature school drop-outs because of pregnancy or early marriage are higher for girls. At the secondary school level, there are more boys' schools, with better facilities, than for girls. Boys therefore have better grounding and preparation for entry into technical colleges and universities. Thus, female enrollment falls progressively to about 40 percent in secondary schools, 35 percent in technical schools, and 20 percent at university level, where the majority of women are mainly enrolled in arts subjects.

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

We live in communities where cultural norms create and uphold gender-specific roles governed by rigid normatic expectations: "A woman's place is in the home," "Little girls should be seen, not heard," and so forth. In many communities, a woman is regarded as the property of her father before marriage, and of her husband's family after marriage. There are many do's and don'ts for women in various communities.

For example, in some communities a woman may not own property, she must be confined to her house for so many days after childbirth, she may not eat this or that, she may not talk when men are talking among others.

Such norms, coupled with lack of education, stifle the development of women and often results in timidity, fear to think or express ideas, fear of outshining others, and, above all, fear of the husband and fear of venturing into new or unconventional activities.

This conflicts very sharply with the expected entrepreneurial qualities of innovativeness, confidence, need to achieve, and willingness to take risks.

LACK OF INFORMATION

In business, information is a vital tool. It is necessary to know what products exist, what is needed in what market, where to get the products or raw materials, how to process them, and what other developments are taking place and where. Low levels of education, and societal confinement, mean that women have little or no access to information. Limited chances of visiting social places where men go to exchange ideas and to update one another on developments and opportunities have curtailed women in business initiatives.

LACK OF ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Property ownership in most African countries is meant for men, who are favored by traditional inheritance rules and practices. Women lack land or building titles or other evidence of property ownership that is required by financiers as security for loans. Because of lack of access to resources, the woman entrepreneur is constrained from getting her venture capital at the starting

stage of her enterprise, and working capital for running the business. Because of lack of exposure, most women are ignorant about the available banking services and practices. It is quite common to see very successful businesswomen transacting business on a cash basis.

UNFAVORABLE WORKING CONDITIONS

Many successful men entrepreneurs start off as employees in the formal sector, where they gain skills, experience, contacts, and the resources to invest in their new businesses. Unfortunately for women, few of them are engaged by the formal sector. Women comprise only 18.5 percent of all employees in the formal sector and 30 percent of those in the informal sector. It has also been established that Kenyan women comprise only 2 percent of managers and 17 percent of semiprofessional workers. Women at policy- and decision-making levels are also very few, a point well illustrated by our last Parliament, where there were only two women MPs out of 188 members.

Thus, women do not have the opportunity that men have for preparing themselves before starting their businesses.

SUGGESTIONS

In light of the constraints outlined above, it is suggested that existing and renewed initiatives be sustained to address the various issues of concern.

It is necessary to sensitize the women themselves, the community (including financiers), and the governments to women's needs, abilities, and potential. This will involve persistently pointing out the imbalances and biases that exist against women.

Financial impediments must be overcome. Property and inheritance laws and practices must be reformulated so that women are recognized and treated as equals with men.

There is need to support and strengthen organizations such as the Women's Bureau, the Kenya Women's Finance Trust, and the Kenya Rural Enterprise Programme, among others. Other bodies, such as the Kenya Professional and Business Women, which provide education, training, and information, should encourage women. A lot still remains to be done to facilitate the acquisition of finance and credit for women entrepreneurs.

Although other homely and natural responsibilities (for example, giving birth and breastfeeding) remain the responsibility of women, the burden could be lightened through wider access to family planning services and the development of appropriate labor-saving devices for the home, garden, and business enterprises.

Training and extension services must be widely accessible to girls and women. For women entrepreneurs, there is an urgent need for training in entrepreneurial development and in business, technical, and management skills. Self-improvement skills will enhance confidence building, so that the women can stand their ground as they negotiate with their suppliers, customers, competitors, and bank managers, among others.

Finally, women need to intensify their own networks, through which they can exchange ideas, experiences, and information, and thereby encourage one another.

CONCLUSION

Which way for women entrepreneurs? The signs are encouraging. Women are increasingly getting sensitized to the challenges of

the business world. Governments and various agencies are addressing the subject from different angles, though a lot of ground still remains to be covered.

In the meantime, the constraints notwithstanding, women are increasingly venturing into their own businesses in trading, production, manufacturing, services, and professional fields, either individually or as groups. It is expected that the successful entrepreneurs should serve as role models for other women, to enable them develop their abilities. This will go a long way to uplift the welfare of the women themselves, their families, communities, and nations all over the world.

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LUNCHEON AND EXCELLENT COMPANY

Fred Mbiru
General Manager,
Barclays Bank of Kenya Limited
Kenya
Luncheon Speaker

"It is my time now to sing for it."

Madam Chairman, your meeting on the Women in the Market Initiative is extremely timely and could not possibly have been delayed any longer.

The world around us is in economic recession and Africa is no exception. Indeed, Africa is no longer at the crossroads but would seem to have passed the crossroads on the downward slope. Everywhere you look, Africa is in crisis about drought (in spite of a few inadequate scattered showers in last few weeks) and, along with that, famine. All the national economies of the continent are in a recession much more serious than the global recession.

There is political chaos up and down Africa. This year has been, probably, the most chaotic and confused year since the decolonization wave some 30 years back. There is talk of the little understood and little welcome multipartyism in politics. It would appear that democracy means as many different things as there are people talking about it. This comes at a time when the world outside Africa is experiencing new political alignments by friend and foe. Most people knew where they stood on the East-West divide or knew which superpowers were on their side.

Certainly the Chinese and Germans knew on which side of their walls they lived. All this change has brought new threats and opportunities. In summary, Madam Chairman, these are changing

times and a rather chaotic scene out of which order must emerge—not emerge, indeed, but out of this chaos order must be sorted out and be made to emerge. The destiny of humankind is too important to be left to emerge. It must be sorted out by us. Along with these social and political changes, trade and markets are very much in the middle of this change. Such situations create major challenges and with them opportunities.

Women and their activities are central to and certainly are part and parcel of these changes, of these challenges, and of these opportunities. Hence, this is the right time for your meeting. Africa of the 20th century is a poor continent, a continent groping for development opportunities, a continent that was exploited in the recent past, but one that is now struggling to find its own destiny and, hopefully, come out stronger than it might have been if there were no chaos around it. On the economic scene, Africa needs capital. Therefore, capital formation must be a major strategy for Africa. Although Africa is a recipient of aid, loans, and grants, and what you will, it must form its own capital from profits and from proper economic objectives. It must engage vigorously in economic activity. This must take in everybody. The continent has more women than men and must therefore consider women's development as one of the main objectives.

Africa must, therefore, seek and obtain technical expertise and proper education. That is one of the reasons that the continent is now fighting for effective political decision making. Capital must come not just from external sources but also from internal sources of income and savings, surplus from disposable income. The relevance of all this, Madam Chairman, is that women in the market are active in the creation of disposable income, which they will invest in order to get more disposable income.... This way into a sustainable snowball.

What is the place of the woman in all this? No longer in the kitchen, no such luck! I am aware that one of your major tasks is to collect data. It is important to know the level of unemployment among women compared to men. Women supply domestic labor, some of it paid, most of it unpaid. They supply food for no fewer than 80 percent of us and they are also entrepreneurs in business—the informal sector is full of them up and down Africa. These are largely small-sized businesses but some of them are very profitable and therefore meeting the economic objectives of entrepreneurship. Although financed from small savings, perhaps even smaller borrowings, they are a good employer of labor. In the formal sector women in businesses are considerably fewer. There must be a river to cross from the informal sector to the formal larger businesses, which often employ more people and generate more resources. It is in this realm that credit becomes a relevant factor.

Madam Chairman, why are there no large businesses owned by women? There must be some problems here. It is understood that a major problem is that women do not hold title deeds and therefore cannot borrow money. This is only a partial answer. It may be said that there goes the banker in defense of bankers, but I think, Madam Chairman, that there are major women investors in the stock markets with securities against which they can borrow. Also, there are women who have insured their precious lives and have life insurance policies against which they can borrow. There are many others who have got properties in cities and towns, and they can pledge those to borrow. No, I do not think that when we talk of women not having land title deeds that we have now given the final answer.

If we look further toward the problems, or barriers women have to cross, we could combine them into two categories. First of all there are external barriers. Many women have been told that "business is tough, it's not a joking matter, kind of—my

dear-keep off." Some have even been told this by loved ones. "Ah, ah, business is no place for you!" There are social prejudices among the business community, that is, the very marketplace itself. Many wholesalers and manufacturers will deal with the man of the house even when they know full well he is engaged elsewhere, and that it is the woman who will do the business. They will often hesitate to appoint the woman directly. Why? Because business presumably is not for women. Have you not heard the common saying, "She is rarely at home, you know she is a businesswoman."

How about the lenders? I must admit that there are bankers and other lenders who feel more comfortable lending to men than to women. Several banks, mine included, have women managers. I would not stick my neck out to say that the women managers have lent more to women's businesses. A further external factor: Are women better credit risks? Some say they are. In the absence of statistics, this is why you need data.

There are major internal barriers (personalization) and this, Madam Chairman, must be addressed and addressed vigorously. First and foremost is the fear of the unknown. You have heard stories. Some women say "I was very scared because I had a major fear of failure." This leads to a lack of confidence. Since you are all involved in business, you appreciate that if confidence or conviction wavers for a little while, that alone can make or break the business.

Another internal factor is the attitude to business. Women rarely go out of their way to struggle in the marketplace along with men. Some do not even believe its ladylike to go into the marketplace to wrestle and to compete with men.

A further internal factor, Madam Chairman, is lack of know-how, lack of facts. If more women knew how many women are out there

successfully wrestling in the field and successfully holding their heads up, I believe many more would forge ahead. Such statistics are just not available.

Once again, Madam Chairman, I do accept that there are problems about availability of credit and there are problems, also, about availability of title deeds, and when the laws of the land are based very much on man's traditional position--this is so even for non-Islamic law this increases the barriers and makes it all the more difficult for women to step out into business. There is no doubt in my mind that there is a major potential that has not been realized. It needs to be mobilized urgently and that is why it is important to overcome these barriers. We need, therefore, a forum through which we can be sensitized, not just the marketplace and its players, who indeed need this sensitization. But it is also important to assist the upcoming women entrepreneurs who are either in small-scale businesses or willing to start their own businesses. We need to train and educate them. We need to have business education. We need to learn how to make proper business proposals, how to approach our bankers, how to have the right attitude to business. Above all initiatives, we need to support each other. Why don't we have a larger number of women in the Chambers of Commerce? While working for that, why not have a Chapter for Women as part of the Chambers of Commerce?

There is a need for organizing seminars on credit acquisition.

In conclusion, let me pay tribute to your sponsors, USAID, APDF, ABR, and the others, some of whom are involved in the banking industry here in our Small Business Development, which indeed is the starting point and in which we deal with a lot of small businesses that are owned and managed by women. You are aware, Madam Chairman, that we have certain loan programs that are available to both men and women. We also have some women

entrepreneur loans, particularly through the Kenya Women Finance Trust, with which you are very familiar.

I know I am talking to entrepreneurs and must leave you with the message that there is big potential for women in business in this continent. Women must come in; we must help to bring them in as entrepreneurs, but no one can be qualified to be called an entrepreneur if they are afraid of failure. We must work hard to show them that others have taken the first step and succeeded.

What more can I say of determination, which is the only way to achieve our objectives?

May I end by reminding you of a graphic picture of determination?

When Macbeth falters in the murder of King Duncan:

Lady Macbeth: I have given suck, and know
How tender it's to love the babe that milks
me,
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as
you
Have done to this.

Macbeth: If we should fail,

Lady Macbeth: We fail!!
But screw your courage to the sticking place
And we'll not fail.

SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL ATTITUDES ON WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Angela Bahati Mbowe

Tanzania

INTRODUCTION

The biggest problem for women as a whole, particularly if I may refer to my country, Tanzania, is that they are not represented as they should be at the national level. This is why many women's activities or rights have not received fair consideration in spite of the existence of a women's ministry in Tanzania. Even in the law, sections on women's affairs and rights are not well-stipulated compared to other law sections.

History has a lot to tell, socially and historically, about African women's entrepreneurship. We have had women who worked so hard that in some areas they were looked on as, or called, "Kobota Tractors" yet were never allowed to express their views in business or to control funds.

In many African societies, women's activities are monitored at all levels. A good basic example exists in a lot of homes even today. For example, a houseboy generally never likes to be told off or given instructions by the woman of the house. There is a common saying that, "A woman cannot tell me anything." On the other side, female employees just don't respect their female employers, but when it comes to paying their wages they do not mind if it is paid by a woman. In such cases, most women have surrendered to reporting to their husbands on trivial issues, thus avoiding degrading themselves the more. Such attitudes have been major constraints for enterprising women.

Women who happen to hold high office have other experiences to narrate. An example is when I was employed as the first woman

marketing officer. Whenever any man was told, "Meet our marketing officer," they would say, "Hey, a woman! Will she manage the international contracts?" This job was a very big challenge to me and very discouraging. I had to be very careful and meticulous with my work because already there were negative attitudes about me. By working hard and being strong, I faced international coffee auctioning operations with courage. It never took me long to make a breakthrough on the auction table. Some of my male colleagues complained that maybe having a woman auctioning coffee could bias purchasers against male traders. I didn't hold the job long. A lot of hardships were inflicted on me personally to the extent that my rewards were less the harder I worked. Later, I decided to resign. That is when they started to say how effective I was and ask if I would like to stay on. But enough was enough.

CASE STUDIES

Coming back to enterprising women, I will pick my case studies from the grass roots, as I believe that any business person, and in particular a woman, starts from scratch.

Most women are not allowed to control their resources. A typical example was when a woman who lived in the Kilimanjaro Region decided to keep piglets out of her own savings. In this region, men leave their wives in the village and go to towns to look for jobs. This particular woman was left by herself and decided to start a piggery project. She put all her efforts into this.

When her husband came home, the wife, respecting the cultural rules, begged her husband to sell the pigs so that she could buy a milking cow and use the remaining funds for school fees. Women are not allowed to sell livestock, according to tradition, although milk is controlled by women. The man negotiated the price of the pigs without the wife and concluded the deal. The woman waited, and days passed by. One day the husband told her

that he was leaving to go back to work. When she asked about the pig money, he promised to give it to her; but he never gave her anything, and he went off.

How demoralized this woman was—she almost wanted to pack her things and leave for her mother's house, but the children held her. She calmed down. Someone sold her a small bull, for which she paid by being a laborer for this person until the price of the bull was paid. The strong determination of this woman made her break through because, when her husband came, she made sure that she called her father-in-law and explained what had happened to the pig project and how much she wanted a milking cow. The father-in-law called some elders and really told his son off. They helped the lady to sell her bull, she got some money for a milking cow, and now she is among the best dairy farmers in the region. The husband later surrendered his job, and he is now helping in the family dairy cows project. This example is one among many. It exemplifies how cultural beliefs have constrained women's entrepreneurial initiatives.

It takes longer for an enterprising woman to be successful in business because of lack of funds. Right from the word go, girls have to wait idly for someone to marry them, while boys are started off in business by their parents. It is worse in our times because we are not training our daughters to be hard working, a foundation which would go a long way in strengthening business acumen among girls.

The few women who can borrow face very frustrating bankers who can even become abusive by asking, "How many millions do you need?"—implying, "You know what borrowing so much means, though you are only a woman?" Such attitudes are very discouraging. Only strong-hearted women pursue credit to the end.

A woman's freedom of development is so limited. A typical case is

the Kilimanjaro Region, where the men control all the funds from the traditional cash crops or family businesses. Only a small proportion of family income is given back to the family. Women are not allowed to influence how the family's hard-earned money is spent, although they contribute heavily to the farms and businesses.

These experiences show how women's efforts are frustrated, yet they keep on trying, hoping one day to come out successfully.

Women are also frustrated by their husbands even in business partnership. There is a case in which a woman, together with her husband, started a business, and they did very well. When they had established themselves well, and their children were attending good schools, the husband passed away. Worse still, he died of AIDS. Before he died he told his parents and his brothers that all his properties were acquired by him together with his wife: "Whatever you do, please let her share it comfortably."

The wife, knowing what her husband's disease was, tried to persuade him to legally transfer some of the properties to her name because all the properties were in her husband's name. The husband refused, and said, "I have told everyone about our property, and that we have together worked for it." As usual, the husband refused to sign anything to his wife before he died. As soon as he died, his family started to discredit the wife. "Oh we have reliable information that you are the one who gave our son something bad until he died. We are giving you up after the funeral is over and you walk out of our home, and the children are ours." She was abused, told intolerable things. She was later chased off with nothing. This case study shows that husbands don't recognize their wives in property sharing.

There is evidence that some husbands create unworkable conditions that interfere with the woman's business performance. Failure to

comply makes things very unpleasant. There is another problem with women in business. If the woman is alone, she does not get due respect because she is looked upon as though she has, one way or the other, got her money from men, which of course is not always true.

In some cases men have gone to the extent of forbidding their wives to engage in business, arguing that progressive ladies do not respect marriages.

These constraints are major, but a women's group called Rongai Saw Mill in Rombo, Kilimanjaro Region, has attempted to resolve them. This group, by maintaining the high morals of historical African women, has established a registered organization. This group is now very successful because they organized themselves in such a manner that they combined the little money they had and opened an account with a bank. Later on, they wrote a feasibility study and looked for a loan to buy machines from small industries.

Having secured the loan, they fitted their machines, and arranged working shifts for all the members to make the sawmill work smoothly while each of the members had a chance to manage their homes. They also briefed their husbands in a get-together meeting about their activities, and things worked very well thereafter.

They discussed their business problems at meetings that were also attended by their husbands. By so doing, their husbands attended to all their possible presented problems happily, and they even extended ideas to help them progress further.

I appreciate this for one simple reason: This group of women, Rongai Saw Mill, is now the one single organization in the region that is very strong financially, because of the support the members received from their husbands.

CONCLUSION

Maybe what we can do, as today's generation, is to address historical, cultural, and social attitudes in order to devise ways and means of fighting against the cultural constraints which hinder women's success in business.

Women should unite regionally and internationally in order to organize themselves into a strong body to voice their problems. Above all, sharing ideas and experiences will go a long way in strengthening women's participation in business.

We should train our youngsters, boys and girls, to take advantage of education as much as possible, as this will be their competing tool. Let's train our girls to be responsible right from home. How do we expect them to take over from us if they sit home idle, being looked after by housegirls?

We women should, as the women before us, demonstrate the serious and responsible nature of our work. This way we will win our reputation back and be able to work more smoothly and comfortably. We need to identify ways and means of proposing amendments to major parts of laws that are not well-elaborated.

To sum up: We women should, above all, maintain our dignity to rectify where we went wrong compared to our previous generation. We need to think of ways to establish financial institutions in the region that are capable of handling all women's entrepreneurial matters needed for implementing women's projects right from the grass roots.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Agrina Mussa

Malawi

INTRODUCTION

The political, social, and economic status of women in Malawi has improved greatly since the country attained political independence in 1964. The Government places high priority on the development of women in all aspects of life.

Although changes in the status of women have become pronounced, a lot still remains to be done. Just as in many other countries, women have still not yet achieved equality with men. In Malawi, women are still the majority among illiterates, the unemployed, and the underemployed. They remain the minority among enterprise owners and operators. The situation is, however, slowly changing. We now see more educated, economically active, and politically successful women in our society than a few decades ago. It is estimated that by 1987, 10 percent of the small enterprises in Malawi were owned by women. The constitution might change the situation further because it calls upon all Malawians to help in developing all citizens, irrespective of their sex, race, color, or creed. Official policies also support the rapid integration of women in the social, economic, and political development of the country; encourage women's entrepreneurship and investment, both domestic and foreign; assist in the identification of industrial opportunities for small and medium enterprises; develop project profiles for small-scale industries, which many Malawian women have found useful and taken advantage of; liberalize industrial licensing; and provide special incentives, including the new industries where women are the main benefactors.

PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Women, as well as other entrepreneurs in Malawi, have for a long time experienced a number of problems when setting themselves up in business.

Lack of awareness of business ideas

Most women are not aware of business opportunities available in the country because of lack of interaction with the business-oriented community.

Lack of awareness of sources of finance and technical advice

It is generally known that few women are aware of the institutions that could provide financial and technical advice. This is particularly so in rural areas. One of the reasons for this is that the institutions offering such services are not known to members of the public. This communication gap has really affected the performance of women entrepreneurs.

Lack of basic education

Record keeping in business requires an entrepreneur to possess basic education. In Malawi there is still a large number of women who lack basic education; this makes it difficult for them to run and manage their businesses effectively.

Rigidity of traditional lending policies

The current lending policies of financial institutions make it difficult for small- and medium-scale women entrepreneurs to have access to capital and credit for establishing enterprises. Small Enterprises Development Organisation of Malawi (SEDOM) and the Investment Development Fund (INDEFUND), for example, require an equity contribution of 15 percent and 20 percent respectively. This makes it extremely difficult for women to raise capital, especially in the rural areas. Further, most women do not have

the collateral for the credit security required by finance institutions.

This is one of the main reasons why most women are confined to micro- and small-scale businesses, which require less capital. These businesses, unfortunately, yield less profit and therefore remain small financially.

Lack of adequate technical skills

Women have limited opportunities for enrolling in technical training courses such as engineering, architecture, woodworking, and so forth. The majority of women therefore only venture into traditional businesses such as garment manufacturing, food, agriculture, and trading, which are easier to start and to manage.

Lack of marketing skills

Few women are exposed to formal or informal marketing training. The traditional businesses, which most women venture into, are the most demanding in marketing skills because normally the market is flooded with the products of such businesses.

Marital Problems

Sometimes husbands are supposed to give consent to their wives' business proposals. Such requirements discourage those women who value their independence. In cases in which husbands become uncooperative, women's business output is really affected and may fail altogether.

THE MALAWIAN WOMAN IN SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SCALE ENTERPRISES

For a long time since independence, the Malawian Government has focused its attention on small- and medium-scale enterprises. Hence the establishment of the "Biwi Triangle" in Lilongwe and the Sedom Industrial Estate in Blantyre. The idea was to

stimulate small-scale enterprises in order to assist in the creation of a locally based entrepreneurial class, produce goods using locally available materials to save foreign exchange, and to generate employment for men and women in the sector. In addition, the above two industrial estates were meant to provide premises for small-scale entrepreneurs at reasonable rentals.

The following institutions were established to provide financial assistance:

- INDEBANK: Provides financial assistance to financially viable projects.
- INDEFUND: Like the INDEBANK, provides loans.
- SEDOM: Provides loans and advisory services.
- Development of Malawian Traders Trust (DEMATT): Provides service and training to entrepreneurs. This organization has a special department for women.
- Malawi Entrepreneurs Development Institute (MEDI): Provides training courses in entrepreneurship and technical skills. At the end of the courses, successful candidates are encouraged to set up businesses toward which the institute provides loans.

In spite of these incentives, it was observed that Malawian business women were not advancing at the same pace as men, and they tended to dominate the traditional businesses. However, a few women's businesses have grown to small and medium size in spite of the many obstacles and constraints they had in conducting business transactions.

In 1991 the National Association of Business Women (NABW) was founded. Among its objectives were the following:

- To safeguard the interest of all its members by ensuring that business opportunities are accorded to women.
- To provide communication channels for consultation and liaison

with various Government ministries on matters affecting women in business.

- To provide facilities for the exchange of ideas among its members.
- To encourage, broaden, and promote the interest among its members in all matters concerning trade, commerce, and industry.
- To stimulate, foster, and maintain businesswomen's involvement and participation in the programs of Chitukuko Cha Amayi M'Malawi (CCAM), SEDOM, DEMATT, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malawi, and other national organizations to ensure that resources available for business in the country are properly coordinated.

The establishment of the NABW in Malawi was also a major step in reinforcing the progress of women in development. NABW sought to mobilize businesswomen to work as a group with universal interests for universal gain.

The association's membership is open to all Malawian women. A major area of commendable work by NABW is the procurement of technical assistance and funding for women's projects.

Chitukuko Cha Amayi M'Malawi has increased the significance of women businesses in Malawi. It is to be commended for having developed the spirit of determination that has now been translated into individual initiatives among women in Malawi in business development. The CCAM has also been steadfast in seeking the recognition of women as catalysts for development activities. These included fund-raising, business sponsorships, and support of humanitarian activities.

There is no question today as to whether institutional conditions in Malawi support the development of women. The answer is by all means in the affirmative. The Government, donor agencies,

nongovernmental organizations, finance companies, and institutions in the market place have all recognized the role of women in development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To ensure financial rehabilitation of women, the existing information systems should be utilized to the maximum to publicize information on business opportunities and the availability of financial institutions and other support institutions that provide technical advice to women entrepreneurs. Such information should be disseminated to the grass roots level. This should be supplemented by seminars on entrepreneurship development, in both the English and Chichewa languages.
2. The existing functional literacy programs should be intensified to assist women in improving their basic education.
3. Rigid traditional lending policies by existing financial institutions should be streamlined to facilitate women entrepreneurs' entry into business through creation of easy access to capital.
4. Girls should be encouraged to take up technical subjects at schools and colleges.

CONCLUSION

The latent power of women in the development of entrepreneurship in Malawi should not be underestimated. It is a force to be reckoned with and encouraged. The days are fast disappearing when women are mere commodities, whiling their time away through gossiping, rearing children, jostling about a fireplace,

preparing food for the family, and so forth. Without really abandoning these, as they still form the spice of life, women's activities have been diversified by factory or workshop life. I therefore call upon all women in my country, and in other countries facing similar business constraints, to gear up and join forces with women in entrepreneurship all over the world. While we upgrade ourselves we also minimize the financial burden of our family development. Our nations will also benefit from our concerted action toward national development.

THE CHANGING ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

Ellen Mbhamali
Swaziland

INTRODUCTION

I feel greatly honored and privileged to speak on the changing economic status of women. Over the years, the economic role of women has experienced substantial changes. Women are no longer housewives whose place is in the kitchen. In today's world, women are income earners. They are in business as owners, managers, and employees, and are even in politics; they are almost everywhere.

In the Swazi culture, women are respected. In Swaziland, women entrepreneurs are an integral part of the economy. They form a majority (about 65 percent) of the small-enterprise sector, both as owners and employees. In rural Swaziland, women are active as farmers and operate most of the micro-enterprises. In the public sector, they hold the majority of the technical and professional positions. Women own and manage small- to medium-scale enterprises in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. It is now these small- to medium-scale enterprises that are perceived as the engine of economic growth and development.

The informal sector is of considerable significance, representing about 20 percent of paid employment in the private sector. About 80 percent of these jobs are held by women in such handicraft activities as sewing, weaving, knitting, crocheting, and pottery, as well as the hawking of fruits and vegetables. Women-owned businesses are mostly labor intensive, thus providing a significant proportion of permanent jobs for the less educated men and women, including school dropouts. This is a special contribution at the present high rate of unemployment.

In spite of this contribution, gender discrimination still exists. Women also face legal discrimination in their ability to obtain credit and are not represented at the very top management levels.

It is believed that the creation and expansion of Swazi businesses, particularly from small- to medium-scale businesses, is constrained by some of the following factors:

- Conservative banking practices that limit indigenous Swazis, especially women's access to financing
- Lack of entrepreneurial, managerial, and financial skills
- Lack of effective business associations to facilitate the growth of small businesses and to promote linkages between small- and large-scale enterprises
- Lack of a small domestic market effectively served by cheap duty-free imports from South Africa
- Traditional values and a legal system that discourages entrepreneurship

ACCESS TO COMMERCIAL CREDIT

In Swaziland, as in other developing countries, lack of access to commercial credit is regarded as a major constraint to small business growth. This is particularly so for businesses that are owned and managed by indigenous entrepreneurs.

Although the local banking industry is highly liquid and there are regulatory constraints such as interest rate ceilings, local commercial banks, including the development bank, are often reluctant to lend to most Swazi-owned businesses. The reasons for this include the following:

- The borrower's inability to present a well-prepared and convincing loan application. This in turn can be attributed to

lack of adequate training in business management, accounting, and bookkeeping. Most indigenous entrepreneurs, particularly women, have few years of formal schooling and therefore are unable to prepare a viable proposal.

- The borrower's lack of a track record with commercial institutions. Most Swazi entrepreneurs, especially women, lack track records with commercial banks and other financial institutions because they have never obtained loans from any commercial bank. In fact, because of the extremely conservative nature of local banks, commercial banks are reluctant to lend to first-time borrowers.
- Lack of references. References are required from the borrower's bank and employer before a loan is granted. Most Swazi indigenous entrepreneurs have neither the track records nor the substantial balances at the bank to induce commercial banks to grant commercial credit. Moreover, these entrepreneurs are self-employed and this alone compounds the problem.

LACK OF COLLATERAL

Commercial banks, including the development bank, require an acceptable collateral, such as land and buildings, to secure the loan. In some cases, 10 to 25 percent of the loan amount is required by banks as security. Thus, lack of acceptable collateral limits Swazi women from obtaining business loans from the commercial banks.

HIGH ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

The loan amounts required by Swazi entrepreneurs are too small, mostly less than £10,000, to justify the high administrative costs of loan processing. Consequently, indigenous entrepreneurs, particularly women entrepreneurs, resort to seeking very costly loans from nonbanking financial institutions such as money

lenders—loan sharks—whose interest rates range between 20 and 100 percent per month.

The problem is aggravated by the fact that currently there are no well-developed intermediate financial institutions in the country. Some of the financial institutions, such as the Asikhutulisane Credit and Savings Co-operative, have potential for growth. Nonbank financial institutions allow borrowing by smaller Swazi entrepreneurs. These have limited working capital, which is an ingredient for business expansion.

OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Married women face an additional obstacle in obtaining commercial bank loans because their husbands must countersign their loans, and they do not have an individual title to property that could be used as security. This constraint stems from the "minor" legal status of married women. Indeed, in Swaziland women are regarded as minors to the extent that even to obtain a passport, in order to go and purchase stocks or market their wares outside the country, women are required to produce authority from their husbands.

The Swaziland Business Development Project (Swazi Business Trust), which is jointly sponsored by the Government and USAID, is expected to assist indigenous business people through the provision of short-term technical assistance, 100-percent loan guarantees, and training of business people and trainers, as well as forging linkages between small- and large-scale businesses. The financial side of this program will come into effect next February 1993.

Even when collateral is available, there are still disparities. A survey conducted by the Business Women's Association of Swaziland

has shown that 31 percent of women obtain loans, compared to 79 percent of men. Why such disparities?

The Government is also promoting local business training as well as development of Swazi market outlets through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Education and Training

Insufficient business skills are a major constraint to business development. Swaziland has an abundant supply of cheap unskilled labor. However, their productivity is fairly low because of poor training, and education is greatly responsible for this vacuum. In fact, there is lack of trained workers and middle management personnel within the Swazi labor force. While unskilled labor is plentiful, skilled and professional talent is lacking even in business management.

Most indigenous business people, including women, require training to manage their businesses effectively. In fact, it is lack of training and adequate education that has hindered some women entrepreneurs from fully utilizing the small-scale loan guarantee scheme. They are unable to understand such basics as cash flow, business plans, and keeping proper books of accounts. Although a variety of training courses are already available in the country, they are insufficient in quantity and scope to meet the demand for training.

In response to the training needs of both entrepreneurs and employees, the Swazi government has built vocational training centers, improved curricula in colleges, and provided mass media educational programs. In addition, the Swaziland Business Development Project is very concerned with the training of entrepreneurs.

The main training focus is on the following areas: conducting

feasibility studies, financial planning management, cash planning and management, marketing, research, planning and advertising, entrepreneurship for existing small businesses, pricing and costing, personnel management, and administrative management. Women entrepreneurs need to be sensitized about the high risks of business, insurance, the bureaucracy of licensing, and coping with marriage constraints.

MARKET SIZE

Swaziland has a very small market in terms of population and purchasing power. Moreover, its membership in the Southern African Customs Union, an economic union with Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa, further limits the domestic market. Swazi enterprises share the domestic market with enterprises from the other member states, especially South African enterprises. The small domestic market seriously constrains the development of locally oriented firms and markets; thus Swazi industry is export-oriented with a considerable portion of its sales mainly in the European Economic Community (EEC) and in North America.

Local market opportunities in Swaziland are limited because of competition from inexpensive mass-produced imports from South Africa. Some niche markets, however, have been identified as potential opportunities for Swazi businesses. Consequently, there is a need for Swazi entrepreneurs to penetrate and maintain the overseas markets. There is, therefore, a need to provide valuable information on domestic, regional, and international markets to ensure the expansion of local businesses.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

It is encouraging to mention that the Government has now recognized that lack of access to commercial credit is a major hindrance to the establishment and expansion of small- to

medium-scale enterprises. As a result, the Government has put in place a number of programs to assist small to medium entrepreneurs.

Among these programs is a small-scale loan guarantee scheme, which was introduced in 1990 and managed by the Central Bank of Swaziland on behalf of the Government and implemented through commercial banks. Under the scheme, loans ranging from £1,000 to £50,000 are 75-percent guaranteed. The entrepreneur is expected to pay the 25 percent collateral. The scheme is widely used by women entrepreneurs, but the lack of 25 percent collateral required by commercial banks still limits some enthusiastic entrepreneurs from taking advantage of the it. The Swazi businesswomen have pledged with the government to have the collateral reduced from 25 percent.

DAY CARE CENTER

There is evidence that business mothers' input into business development has been affected by the requirements of child care. To enable women to concentrate in businesses, setting up day care centers within industrial estates is a must for the convenience of breast feeding purposes to ensure the health for all by the year 2000.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Finally, the Swazi government has come up with a clearly defined policy for the promotion of women entrepreneurs. This is part of the overall national policy. The issue must be clearly defined in the national development plans. Special incentives should be put in place to encourage the promotion of women entrepreneurs. Training programs should be part of the strategy for enhancing the expansion of women-owned enterprises.

THE CHANGING ROLES OF WOMEN

Julia Sarkodie-Mensah

Botswana

In the recent past, women were regarded as mothers and wives, with all the connotations which went with this regard, depending on the type of society—Western, Asian, African, and so forth. One thing was universal: women are homemakers, that is, hewers of wood, makers of babies, fetchers of water, tillers of the fields, and providers of physical satisfaction for their male counterparts. What a waste! I say this without in any way demeaning these roles. But this statement will perhaps become clearer at the end of this paper.

Women constitute more than 51 percent of the world's population. The percentage is higher in most African states, such as Botswana, where women constitute about 53 percent of the total population. In Africa in general, the percentage of female-headed households has always been high. Statistics indicate that 48 percent of all households in the rural areas in Botswana are headed by women and 33 percent in urban areas. Again, generally, women bear the primary responsibility for the health and nutritional needs of the family and society.

Most governments, the world over, have come to recognize that sustained progress in national development efforts necessitates the maximum participation of men and women in all aspects of economic and social development. These governments also recognize that women are an important human resource whose skills and capabilities should be developed, reinforced, and utilized to the fullest.

It is with this recognition that many governments and international agencies in recent times have established specific wings and departments for women, often referred to as "Women in

Development" (WID). Such governments and agencies include the Africa Development Bank (ADB), Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), USAID, and many others. Additionally, many African countries have women's affairs units within their administrative structures.

In Botswana, as far back as 1981, a Women's Affairs Division was established in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs. The specific objectives are very similar to its sister organizations, which could be summed up as coordinating women's activities at local, national, and international levels; disseminating information; conducting research on women's affairs; creating awareness; and liaison with policy makers in view of facilitating the participation of women in development.

What these departments have been doing over the years is holding awareness seminars and conferences to determine how we can move forward, as indeed we are here today commissioned to do. As we are all aware, gender is a significant development concept as it emphasizes the human dimension in development planning and decision making. It is indeed an important statistical variable because it illustrates the different roles, activities, and responsibilities of men and women. I mention this, because of questions often asked by our critics who think gender sensitization should not be an issue in development. Those who think women are becoming too vocal and that too much money is being spent on women in development are misled. The gender-segregated information is vital in development as it helps to differentiate men and women in a given social and cultural setting and planning can be done in the most efficient way utilizing this information.

In Africa and Latin America, surveys indicate that all sectors of formal employment except education and nursing are dominated by males. Generally, there are more females unemployed than their

male counterparts. While there is a marked concentration of women in the service sector, mainly as teachers, nurses, and social workers, men have monopolized the professional and technical occupations. With a general world recession and high rate of redundancy, it is obvious that women will be the hardest hit. This is because in urban areas in Africa (with few exceptions, as in West Africa), women are concentrated in occupations associated with government, as in the civil service. This awareness brings the topic for this conference, "Women in the Marketplace," in perspective. The issue of encouraging women's entrepreneurship has never been so burning as in recent times. Regrettably, this is not going to be an easy task because of the various constraints women face in the marketplace.

Although, generally, one could say that there is equality of opportunities, there is no doubt that women face certain unique problems different from their male counterparts. These constraints are varied and are often classified as social, cultural, legal, and lack of access to credit and training. These constraints have been talked of so often that I don't believe I have to bore this meeting with them. Some of these constraints, however, are overplayed, and we women often become paranoid and fail to see our positive attributes. This is not to say they don't exist, but I want us to isolate those for which a forum like this one is competent enough to talk about and take action. It should therefore not be surprising if I fail to lay much emphasis on legal and socio-cultural constraints. These are better handled by the local nongovernmental organizations and further, the legal issues vary from region to region and from country to country. The legal constraints in Southern Africa are perhaps the worst and are unique because of archaic marriage laws by which married women are generally classified as minors.

The three constraints that I consider universal and urgent are lack of adequate training, promotion, and awareness; lack of

credit and collateral; and poor source of information and dissemination of the same.

A recent survey carried out in Botswana by the Women in Business Association of Botswana indicate that of the women entrepreneurs interviewed, lack of market demand and access to credit were overwhelmingly cited as the two main constraints in addition to their multiple roles as homemakers and business and professional women. Generally, a high percentage of the women interviewed had enough basic education, that is, they could read and write. Ninety-eight percent of those interviewed viewed lack of training and technical skills as one of their main problems. Almost all of them were willing to pay something toward obtaining training. However, the type of training that women require must be organized in such a way that they are not taken away from their workplace for long periods of time, for continuity both for the business and home management.

Training should be as practical as possible and should cover aspects of bookkeeping, record keeping, marketing skills, assertiveness building, and business management. As a founding member of Women's Finance House of Botswana (WFHB), an affiliate of Women's World of Banking, I am able to confirm the correctness of this survey. WFHB has started a training program for women entrepreneurs in the rural and peri-urban areas of Botswana. The response and results so far have been encouraging. The training is very basic and covers areas like recordkeeping, pricing, bookkeeping, preparing business plans, and even using calculators. Unfortunately, WFHB is still small, and its effort is but a drop in the ocean. Organizations like USAID could do more to support this initiative, if consulted.

There is a need for assertiveness and confidence building in business. Most women complain that often they get frustrated and fail to make headway in their businesses because they are not

taken seriously by government officials, bank managers, and others. The fear of possible frustration makes women become timid when they visit bankers and so of course they are intimidated. Training must look at this area, including roleplaying. I realized this recently when I was preparing a training manual for WIHB. I found out that one of the reasons women experience difficulties in getting credit is that they go to bank managers without any proper business plan, are generally unprepared, and are afraid that they will be turned away.

Most often, women fail to get credit from the established financial institutions because they are not able to provide any form of collateral; in most African countries women are not able to own property either because of legal constraints or socioeconomic constraints. It is therefore imperative to identify alternative means of providing such women with credit through creating revolving funds and loan guarantee schemes. Again, most banks are unsympathetic to the service industry where women are often concentrated. This brings me to the topic of diversification.

Women often concentrate in retail and service industries where business growth is limited. Nongovernmental organizations need to make an effort to encourage women to diversify and expand into other areas, such as manufacturing.

When in London recently, while waiting in the underground station, I found an advertisement that set me thinking. A particular type of radio was being advertised as the best because it is made by women: because women have very sensitive ears and are therefore able to detect any acoustical defects, because they have aesthetic values, because they are more careful, the end result is a perfect radio. We must take stock of our attributes and use them positively.

Notwithstanding the legal, economic, social, lack of training, and other constraints faced by women, women's entrepreneurship in Africa is making headway. Again giving Botswana as an example, fifteen years ago there were virtually no women-owned businesses. This has changed a great deal and today, businesswomen in Botswana are viewed as a dynamic force. Given the right environment, they will most certainly overtake their male competitors. Although women-owned businesses are smaller, their progress is often steady because they are more cautious about expenditures. It is unusual for women-owned businesses to go into liquidation. If we continue with this track record, the financial institutions will change their attitude toward women entrepreneurs in due course. This places a lot of pressure and expectation on us because we have to be role models and set a fast pace.

Our role as mothers and wives is certainly going through a metamorphosis. The pace is rather slow, for various reasons, and it is necessary to create an enabling environment. This cannot all be done by our governments. The initiative needs to come from us. The magic is you out there! It is not unusual in modern times to come across successful women politicians. The results of the recent American elections show that in American politics women are beginning to make inroads. In the Senate, the number of women increased from three to seven. This is more than 100 percent. Carol Mosely Braun, the first black woman Senator, was just a recorder of deeds. In the House of Representatives, we also have Eva Clayton, the first black woman representative from North Carolina. Eleanor Smeal, an American feminist had this to say: "We have made a good-sized crack in the political glass ceiling." Harriet Woods, a former Missouri Lieutenant Governor also had this to say: "Earlier there was a 10-percent automatic disadvantage for a woman. This year, there may have been a slight benefit." This is a trend that will not easily be reversed. There is no longer the 10-percent disadvantage but a benefit, although

at present there are no women governors. Time will tell it all very soon, even in Africa!

Let us take the cue in Africa and get more women in politics, and in decision-making positions. Unfortunately, politics in Africa is often referred to as a "dirty involvement." But it is in Parliament that the laws and policies affecting women are made. How else are we to get beyond our constraints—legal and others—if we are not part of the law-making process. If we are to move forward, we have to use our local nongovernmental organizations more effectively, not only for charitable purposes, but, among other things, to become politically aware and even to act as pressure groups to get more and more women into government and in place as chairpersons of government boards, where major decisions are made. When we look around, there are few women who have made their mark in the political arena. We have had women like Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, and Bandara Naike; we have dynamic women like Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, who moved from Prime Minister to leader of the opposition in a predominantly Islamic country, where traditionally women are kept in the background, but it appears no one can silence her.

Because women constitute the majority of voters, let us vote for our womenfolk on the basis of merit and ability. Nonetheless, getting into politics and wielding massive political power is difficult without economic power. Integrating women into the marketplace is therefore necessary and urgent.

High aspirations do not imply abandoning our roles in society. What we are doing is widening our scope of roles. Women politicians, professionals, and businesswomen still have to juggle home and business. When Benazir Bhutto was chased back home recently after a demonstration, the first thing she did when she got home (as shown on television) was to hug and kiss her children. I don't believe we want our roles to change. Let us not

take our household roles as oppressive. We need to be able to delegate without losing control, we need to learn to juggle home and business. This we can do, if we learn to manage our time and to control stress.

SUMMARY

Roles are changing and widening, although women still have to take care of the home and children. More and more women are in service jobs as social workers, teachers, nurses, or civil servants. Now with economic demands, recession, and so forth, there is a need to become entrepreneurs, to get into the marketplace.

There are many constraints on women in the marketplace: socioeconomic and traditional values, legal restrictions, lack of credit and resources (lack of collateral), lack of adequate training in areas such as bookkeeping and business management, lack of assertiveness, and lack of information.

Most women are involved in small-scale enterprises of traditional trades. They need to be encouraged to develop and venture into all areas of business. To do so, there is need to overcome various barriers and to provide adequate and relevant training as well as help them get access to credit from banking institutions. Provision of other credit sources, for example, revolving loan funds, loan guarantee schemes, and so forth, is also necessary.

There is, therefore, a need to create an enabling environment. The initiative must come from us, and, as I said earlier, the magic is us. No one understands us better than ourselves. The idea of forming a body of women entrepreneurs to organize themselves as a formidable force for change to improve the enabling environment for women in the marketplace is welcome and most timely.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S GROUPS IN DEVELOPMENT

Lucille Rosaninoro Randria

Madagascar

It would be ideal if self-sufficiency could be achieved by individual performance. However, there are advantages in belonging to an organization to escape the isolation and ignorance of thinking and acting alone. Thus, Katherine Namuddu, in the needs assessment survey conducted by FEMNET, reminds us that groups are mechanisms that enable the members to benefit from the resources, knowledge, and experience harnessed by other members.

Various kinds of women's organizations have been created either for general interests as charitable initiatives, or as nongovernmental organizations. Nevertheless, most of them exist to improve the well-being of the members' individual families and hence mankind. The role of women's groups can be classified essentially according to their respective legal goals. One of the oldest and most widespread types of women's groups within the African continent may be the "tontines," with respect to social and economic interests. In this paper, I will discuss various issues through which the status of women has been and could be promoted.

LEGAL ASPECTS

The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) can be commended for its great contribution to the welfare of women's groups and related associations. The decade made it possible for the assessment of equality, development, and peace as far as women's status is concerned.

The majority of African countries claim to have equal opportunities for all citizens. Yet, in most of them, multiple

forms of discrimination and unequal treatment of women are evident. Women's property rights are regularly violated by husbands, fathers, extended family members, relatives, and even children. Dubious interpretations of customary law still govern actual behavior. Such constraints on legal status implementation have a tremendous impact on women's projects for equity building. As stated by FEMNET, the first step toward the achievement of women's legal rights is the amendment of laws regarding the creation of awareness of the status of women, the encouragement of women to stand and fight for their rights, changing social structures, the creation of a forum in which women are participants in decision making, and, finally, the systems for enforcement of the amended laws. These interventions would improve women's access to development resources, and ensure that women do indeed exercise control over the benefits of their work and labor.

SOCIAL ASPECTS

One type of tontine is mutual in character and promoted above all by women's associations. The objective of these groupings is the generation of mutual aid for the happy as well as the sorrowful times of life. Mutual help is predominant.

The Sudan Women's Unity Action (SWUA) aims to help women to be self-sufficient in all aspects of life in order to alleviate their situation in society. They pool their resources by creating income-generating employment throughout the country, without any ethical distinction. The associations' entrepreneurial involvements are predominant in cloth painting, garments, embroidery, and straw weaving. The main goal is to enhance women's knowledge and awareness, and to fight against physical violence, sexual harassment, rape, and slavery. The associations encourage information exchange and communication between women and the promotion of the woman's image, and, above all, call for

peace among women.

The tenth meeting of the Regional African Committee for Coordination and Women's Integration in Development, held in Addis Ababa in 1989, assessed the socioeconomic situation of women in Africa. They assessed various activities through which women could be integrated in development.

The West African Women's Association, among other activities, is involved in attracting state members, nongovernmental organizations, and international organizations to extend assistance meant to implement the Association's programs. It also initiates training and research programs with emphasis on rural and urban women's development. The Pan-African Organization of Women Entrepreneurs and Traders in West Africa has similar activities with the same objective, that is, women's integration in development. The Regional Office of Arab States and European Programmes is planning to organize, with the cooperation of the Arab League, an important regional conference about the progress achieved in women's roles, responsibilities, and economic contributions within the framework of national development throughout the West African region.

WOMEN'S GROUPS ACTIVITIES

The tontine is an operation consisting of two or more persons (men as well as women) who are acquainted with one another very well, and who agree on the basis of mutual trust to take turns depositing for the other(s) a certain amount of money within a specified period of time. The tontine started when clan members felt the need to unite their efforts, and evolved from organizations in traditional societies that were founded by agricultural labor groups. It is a sociological phenomenon that grew out of the economic crisis in the developing world in the mid-1970s. This joint venture gives a higher purchasing power,

beyond personal resources. Such commitment ensures compulsory savings for the group. To achieve this, the group develops solidarity and discipline.

The association enhances mutual action and achievements and assists the members in gaining access to credit and enables them to save money.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has assisted women's groups greatly within the region, especially in agriculture, by extending credit access for some women in Zimbabwe, in 1988, with the collaboration of a financial institution. Groups of farmers, 80 percent of whom are women, were also given intensive training in agricultural techniques, group dynamics, participative planning, record keeping, and assessment of business production trends.

In 1988-89, FAO also financially assisted Egypt with a training program to help women villagers get organized in groups for food crop production. The project aimed at achieving food security and provides employment-generating activities. Thus, 300 women beneficiaries had a chance to learn about animal husbandry, fruit and vegetable drying, and freezing and preservation methods. After this training, about 436 women applied for new revolving loans for livestock farming.

The following are women's groups' activities in several African countries:

- Raising of dairy cattle in Tanzania, where milk supply and products increased two-fold after the involvement of women's groups
- Fodder and milk production in Kenya
- Fish processing in Sierra Leone
- Aquaculture in Zambia

- Fish sales in Burundi
- Forestwood farming in Cape Verde
- Control of sand dunes and soil and water conservation measures in Mauritania
- Promotion of mutual savings and loans in The Congo and formation of the African Savings and Loans Cooperative Association (ACECA) in The Congo

In Nairobi, Kenya, ACECA counts 25 affiliated national movements and records important developments within English-speaking countries. Considerable work remains to be accomplished in the North African region, where Islamic groups do not favor women's development. The fact that ACECA does not generate a foreign debt makes it an appropriate alternative for improving women's entrepreneurship.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN'S GROUPS

Several professional women's groups and associations were created since the United Nations Decade of Women Conference in Nairobi in 1985, such as the Women in Media Association, the Malagasy Women Medical Doctors, and others.

There is a need for the empowerment of women's groups, particularly umbrella organizations like FEMNET, to encourage and promote the design, organization, and implementation of activities whereby African women can obtain the information, skills, and experiences necessary for making effective contributions to national development. But FEMNET's ideas and perceptions, however well-articulated and well-intentioned, will make little impact in a country unless there is a strong national membership in FEMNET. FEMNET can play a crucial and leading role in assembling data and generating and disseminating information. FEMNET activities have brought about changes that have made a difference in the lives of girls and women through facilitating

participation of women in national development, and streamlining, enhancing, and supporting the process of networking within a continent where the effectiveness of sharing knowledge, skills, and experiences tends to be perpetually diffused by a multiplicity of fragmented poor resources.

Organization of a pyramid network was also suggested by the French-speaking Women's Conference, recently held in Bamako, to coordinate empowerment of women's groups, from small village-level savings groups and gradually toward financial institutions as the banks, which would ensure women the financial powers to borrow.

The 1991-92 FEMNET planning session included the following topics:

- Women's empowerment
- Women's legal rights
- Women's involvement in development
- Improvement of women's management skills
- Coordination of and collaboration on women's activities
- Research and documentation of information beneficial to women
- Encouragement of women's representation in national affairs and decision making
- Improvement of women's managerial skills

CONCLUSION

Although women's activities are taken lightly in many African countries, in fact African governments are well aware that any group of people can become a powerful lobby that can influence decisions and hence effect change. Women's organizations have potential and enormous power as voters although most of them are not aware of this. This power, if properly utilized, could be used positively for the benefit of women.

Savings and loans are theoretically attractive institutions. Nevertheless, close communication and monitoring seems to be a must in any organization, and priority needs ought to be addressed in the first place after a serious identification and appraisal. More research is required to identify and assess the constraints on women throughout the African continent.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: OBSTACLES AND CONSTRAINTS

ON WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Catherine Mwanamwambwa

Zambia

The concept of women entrepreneurs in Africa is coming into focus and may eventually be a major issue in women's development because it involves many aspects of the formal and informal sectors as well as rural and urban development. In their attempts to develop their entrepreneurial skills and activities, women are faced with a number of constraints, some of which are described in this paper.

HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Education

In most families, boys are given preference to girls in educational enrollment. When parents decide which child to educate, boys are accorded first priority. Teenage pregnancies limit women's education to about 30 percent. In some countries, when a girl gets pregnant while in school, she is unlikely to continue because of the responsibilities of motherhood, while the boy responsible for the pregnancy could just be suspended briefly with the possibility of school re-entry.

Land Ownership

In many African countries, women cannot own land. Land is very important capital in the development of entrepreneurship because it can be used as collateral for credit.

Agricultural Production

Women provide labor, they grow subsistence crops and cash crops, yet they do not own the means of production or even control farm

proceeds. In some societies, women are considered as cheap farm laborers, and there are instances of men marrying many wives to secure farm labor.

Legal System

Women are considered as minors in some societies. The society treats them as "dark, silent shadows" that are seen and not heard. Their rights are guaranteed through their fathers, uncles, husbands or sons. This discrimination prevents the women concerned from progressing in business.

Modern Constraints

Most women choose businesses that are not viable. How many women go into cottage industries, and how much tie-dyed goods can be sold in an economy to enable people develop a "real business"? There are instances in which women present projects to banks without a comprehensive study of the project's viability.

I accept that there are instances in which actual discrimination plays a role in denying women credit, but there are cases in which the project proposed is just not bankable.

Lack of Access to Credit

In addition to not having collateral, coupled to discrimination and the attitudes of male bankers, women's enterprise development has been affected by the overall economic situation in most of the African countries. Some of the countries have incurred massive debts that cannot be repaid, thus reducing borrowing and resulting in the banks liquidity problems. The result is that neither men's nor women's enterprises can obtain adequate financing. This has caused the private sector to be starved of funds. Where credit may be available in the commercial banks, the

interest rate is pegged so high that the credit provided becomes totally unaffordable.

The structural adjustment programs (SAP), usually articulated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, make local liquidity more available. Since many SAP programs are geared toward the creation of economic growth, the money supply must be reduced in order to allow for substantial economic growth.

Stereotyping

Conceptualizations of women's issues have also acted as obstacles to and constraints on women. In Zambia, women's development programs normally start with emphasis on rural women and on income-generating activities. These activities, which are based on community development, are meant to supplement women's incomes. They are mostly small-scale. Many women were given loans to start business at the small-scale level, with emphasis on creating cooperatives. These initiatives generally group women in spite of their individual special talents.

Elsewhere, women are treated as a homogeneous group and are therefore dealt a similar broad spectrum of treatment. To deal with women, it is important that there be a stratification of women's needs so that solutions for their problems can be addressed effectively. This is so because the constraints facing women entrepreneurs at the macro-level are totally different from those being experienced by other women with business enterprises at a lower level. This grouping has really marginalized the position of women, both nationally and in the marketplace.

Donor Agencies

Women-related issues are rarely part of the mainstream actions of most of the donor agencies. Consequently, programs to benefit

women are also attached as appendages to the mainstream of development projects. This causes women's programs to be taken lightly or as second best. In spite of this, women technocrats have emerged since the United Nations' Decade of the Woman.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

How do we redress this situation and turn our obstacles into opportunities?

1. The definition of women's entrepreneurship must be radically differentiated from the concept of women in development (WID) so as to focus on individual achievement and not on group development.
2. Records of successful women should be documented to serve as role models for other African women who aspire to start businesses or to develop them. Above all, there is a need for positive assertiveness.
3. Women must set goals for themselves and set timetables on when to achieve them. They need to constantly assess business trends. Hanging on to a stagnant business is detrimental. Women need to move from trading, manufacturing, agribusiness, and so forth, to be dynamic and to keep on trying and diversifying the products and sectors of business.
4. Joint ventures are useful, especially when one partner can provide marketing and technology transfer. In the agricultural industry, for instance, where I have my experience, the local partner can provide land, product, and so forth, and the other partner can provide research and development on technology for processing the product and the marketing and sale of the product.

5. Donor Agencies must help women entrepreneurs to identify and to choose joint ventures in partnerships by constantly organizing forums like this one to encourage the western countries to open up their markets to African goods.
6. Many of the macroeconomic changes sweeping through Africa, such as privatization, should ensure that women are actively involved. For instance, we suggest that 25 percent of all donor funds be geared toward purchasing parastatal companies, and that the money be repaid at the normal rate and not as concessionary.
7. The role of commercial banks is being diminished because of the liquidity ratio and therefore we need to look at other financial instruments that can help us. For instance, we should draw on the counter value funds available and our ministries of finance should tap such donor agency funds as the Japanese Aid Grant, and others.
8. It is necessary to use successful businesswomen to enhance the private sector initiative and help to focus more on the development of African entrepreneurs.
9. Finally, I believe this initiative should not be just a network but should be attached to a structure and have a structure of its own.

WOMEN AND PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Teresia Mbire

Uganda

INTRODUCTION

This topic requires that I examine critically the status of women in general and African women in particular vis-à-vis their access to property, with specific reference to Uganda.

In an attempt to do this I shall evaluate the constraints, social and legal, that affect women's access to property and, therefore, their entrepreneurship.

I have looked at the constraints that women face as stemming both from social and legal factors that impede their access to property through inheritance and succession, and factors that undermine their attempt to generate income and ultimately own property. In this paper the following factors have been examined: discrimination in law against women, land ownership, denial of economic rights, women's engagement in marginalized activities, women's domestic work load, comparative analysis of female and male wage employment, women and education, lack of access to credit, and rural poverty.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN UGANDA

I have looked at the statute books in Uganda, and I am glad to note that there are no significant discriminatory aspects of law. There are, however, two issues that I would like to point out in connection with the status of Ugandan women in respect of law.

The first is the succession act. In this act, Cap 130 of the 1964 laws of Uganda, the term *legal heir* is defined as the living relative nearest in degree to an intestate person. It goes on to

clarify that a male shall be preferred to a female when there is equality between kindred of the same degree. This is a manifestation of the discriminatory aspect of the law. For a man to be preferred to a woman, in law, without any kind of justification, is equivalent to racism. In a similar instance, in the same act, the term *linear consanguinity* is interpreted as that relation which subsists between two persons, one of whom is descended in direct line from the other, as between a man and his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and so on. No mention whatsoever is made of a woman!

The inequality before the law is one of the factors that undermines the status of women and denies to them property that would have otherwise been passed on to them.

On the whole, I have not found significant oppressive aspects in our laws. We should note here that, even if laws were enacted to positively favor women, such acts would only go against the tide. This is because the legitimate basis of all laws are societal norms, attitudes, and values. These are what constitute the main focus of this discussion, because I have found them to be the source of the most significant oppression and subjugation of women, thereby undermining their access to property in Uganda.

Just like women in all patriarchal African societies, Ugandan women confront an oppressive subordinate situation in the workplace, in the family, and in most spheres of society at large. Traditional gender attitudes are deeply ingrained in the minds of men and women, and have limited women's access to and control over all spheres of life—in educational opportunities, political participation, working life, and property ownership.

Culturally, land ownership is purely meant for men. Land ownership has been awarded to men as presumed heads of household. Women continue to cultivate land, both for subsistence crops and

cash crops, yet they have limited chances of controlling the incomes from agricultural activities.

Upon the death of her father or husband, a woman does not inherit land or other properties. Such rights are passed on to the men, regardless of how close the men might have been to the deceased. In Uganda, it is a common practice for the deceased husband's relatives to forcibly seize all the property that would have been passed on to the widow. It is absurd to see that even fellow women-relatives of the deceased-join hands with men to take the property of their widowed relatives.

Other aspects of societal attitudes that deny women's access to property are closely tied with the attitudes toward mobility of women, economic rights, and women who are engaged in business.

Because of their traditional household roles, women's mobility is limited, and this, in turn, limits their maneuverability required in business. In addition to the fact that men tend to deter their wives from moving about and actively engaging in business, the women's traditional household roles do not allow them free time. It is amazing sometimes to see how some women combine their traditional domestic activities with active businesses. There are, therefore, limits to how far women can expand and exploit their entrepreneurial ability in the midst of these multiple conflicting roles.

In spite of their contribution to development, women are denied economic rights. This denial has affected women all over the world. Women are thought to contribute nearly 30 percent of the world GDP annually. Women work two-thirds of global working hours, yet they receive a tenth of all the world's income. Other statistics also demonstrate this trend. While women grow 60 percent of food and cash crops, only 19 percent of women sell the crop and control only 10 percent of the funds generated thereof."

Attempts by married women who work for wages to engage in business are generally viewed as threats to their husbands. They fear that their wives may prosper in business and become economically independent. In such cases, the men tend to discourage them or undermine their initiatives or seize their businesses outright. There are many cases of women's initiatives that have been interfered with and manipulated by men. Most women find it difficult to prevent their menfolk from misappropriating cash or taking management decisions single-handed. The denial of economic rights and independence incapacitates the development efforts of women and their entrepreneurship achievements.

Women's engagement in marginalized activities, like traditional handicrafts, mat weaving, basketry, hand loom work, and tailoring, all of which require a very low capital input, lowers their business financial strength compared to their male counterparts. It also reinforces the traditional conception that women can only manage small businesses. Such small-scale business activities are nonregistered, guarantee a severe shortage of working capital, and have minimum access to credit facilities through the formal banks.

Gender remains a fundamental principle for organizing the division of labor within the family. In most societies the division of labor favors men. Women end up with homely, burdensome responsibilities. Women therefore find themselves constrained in time because their time has to be shared out to accommodate other household duties. The continued involvement in such activities therefore perpetuates women's inability to effectively manage major business enterprises.

The differences between male and female wage employment also limits women's incomes, investment, and, ultimately, property ownership. Women tend to be concentrated in low-paying occupations like secretarial work, teaching, nursing, midwifery,

and so forth. It seems to be in the best interest of men to perpetuate this status quo to prevent women from competing with them for better paying jobs. Employment in low-paying jobs that have been stereotyped as women's jobs has affected women's attempts to make effective investments and acquire property.

Another factor worth noting is the discrimination against women in education. Although there are no legal barriers to girls' and women's participation in formal education, women do not have the same opportunities for formal education. In Uganda, in lower primary school registration the ratio of girls to boys is almost equal. However, this ratio steadily changes until by primary seven it is 65-percent boys and 35-percent girls. In senior five (grade 12) it is 75-percent boys and 25-percent girls, and in senior six 85-percent boys and 15-percent girls. Girls are not generally encouraged to continue their studies. They stay in school for a few years; most of them are often recalled to help in the home or for early marriages. If there is a choice between sending a boy or a girl to school it is the boy who is accorded the opportunity. This is happening more and more because of the increase in school fees and lack of ready cash for many families.

Lack of education also limits women's access to credit. If a woman wants a loan and she is unable to write a proposal herself and understand the loan documents, her chances of advancing are considerably reduced. This severely limits the woman in making her own decisions, which further undermines her chance of property ownership.

Coupled with this are other factors that limit women's access to credit banks. Access to bank credit is impossible without security, a guarantee, and the ability to read and write. The bureaucratic requirements of bank credit are cumbersome for women micro-entrepreneurs. Few women bother to consult banks for financing. Finally, outright discrimination by bank employees may

prevent women from applying for or being granted loans.

A case in point, where formal bank credit should have been granted the women but was instead channelled to the men, is the rural farmer's program that was implemented in Uganda. This program apparently disregarded the central position of the women as the significant agricultural producers and instead bypassed the women and channeled the credit, in the form of farm agricultural inputs, to the men.

The outright lack of cash, especially in the rural economy, has impeded women's attempts at entrepreneurship. In Uganda, the desire and determination toward this end seems to emerge gradually. This is manifested by the numerous women's groups that have sprung up in an attempt to pull resources together and to engage in productive activity. However, there is no strong market economy, the market infrastructure remains weak, and opportunities for saving and investment are lacking. Lack of proper infrastructure, especially in the rural areas, is a real constraint on the agricultural products market. The hardest hit by these constraints are women.

CONCLUSION

The Government has recognized the importance of women in national development and has set up institutions and programs designed to uplift the status of women. A separate Ministry of Women in Development has been inaugurated to tackle gender issues, to empower women, and to elevate their status. The resistance councils and committees with a separate post of secretary for women's affairs give a political voice to women. This is a forum through which women can voice their concerns and attract the attention of policy makers. There are also special women's representatives in Parliament. A special financial institution, Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust (UWFCT), has also been

established to channel credit toward women without the requirement of collateral credit security. Nongovernmental organizations such as the Federation of Uganda Women Lawyers (FIDA) have been formed. Action for Women in Development (ACFODE) is actively engaged in addressing women's rights and their development in general. The constitutional amendment process is also in progress and women's rights are some of the pertinent issues. The future looks promising, and there is great hope that women's rights will at last be readdressed and their access to credit and property facilitated.

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THE ART OF BORROWING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

It is indeed a great privilege, honor, and pleasure for me to have the opportunity to participate in this remarkable "Women in the Market Initiative" meeting, and I must congratulate the organizers of this meeting for their thoughtfulness and vision in having put in place such a program which will, no doubt, be of immense benefit to those of us present here today.

My assignment here today is to discuss with you, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, "The Art of Borrowing—What You Need to Know," the purpose of which will be to examine in detail the art of borrowing, what it entails, its overall linkages with lending appraisals, and, finally, the quality of borrowing.

WHAT IS BORROWING?

The first question that immediately comes to mind is, "What is borrowing?" Borrowing is described as the taking of something temporarily with the intention of returning it. Borrowing is a term that covers a wide expanse of different activities and can involve money, materials like clothes, or equipment of different kinds for a third-party utility. It will no doubt be a herculean task if we do not narrow down the definition of borrowing.

For the purposes of this paper, we shall examine borrowing from the standpoint of financial intermediation, which relates to financial interactions within a given economy. For instance, let's assume a particular economy that is closed, and within which there are principally two sectors, the surplus sector and the deficit sector.

A Two-Sector Closed Economy

In the two-sector closed economy, it is expected that funds (call it money if you like) flow from the surplus sector. It is pertinent at this stage to give a short description of both surplus and deficit sectors.

Surplus Sector: A surplus sector is a sector that, for a given income, can be described by the formula $Y = C + S$, where Y is income, C is consumption, and S is savings. I have deliberately left out investment because we are considering a closed economy.

Deficit Sector: A deficit sector is a sector that, for a given level of income, always has a negative net balance. That is, consumption is always greater than income and the deficit is being taken care of by the flow of funds from the surplus sector to the deficit sector. This situation can be represented by the formula $Y < C$, where Y is income and C is consumption. The situation highlighted above is a micro description of what I called financial intermediation, and it is at the level of the deficit sector that the word borrowing becomes more explicit. To complete the preamble, "art" can be likened to "cleverness" or "skill," but more often than not, the word "art" is used in a derogatory sense. The art of borrowing, therefore, can interchangeably be referred to as the "canons/modalities" of borrowing or of financial intermediation.

Why Do We Borrow?

Considering our focus of study, the question that readily comes to mind is, "Why do we borrow?"

This question is the converse of another question, "Why do Banks lend?" We borrow for a number of reasons, but for the purpose of this paper, we shall restrict borrowing to investment and

development purposes. It is important to note the three basic motives for holding money accounts for borrowing: transactionary, precautionary, and speculative.

This paper will examine the third reason for borrowing because it relates directly to financial intermediation.

The speculative motive for borrowing refers, among other things, to the procurement of funds for investment purposes with the view that, at the end of the loan term, the returns on investment will not only meet the cost of funds but will also leave behind some margin that is always termed profit.

It is for this purpose, more than anything else, that borrowing should be well articulated, planned, controlled, and monitored. The following key points should be understood when borrowing funds:

- The purpose of borrowing
- The size and nature of the project
- The capital/amount involved
- The gestation period
- The demand elasticity of the product and market support
- The cost of funds
- The durability of the product(s)
- The convenience, or otherwise, of the source of borrowing
- The cash flow projection to determine the ability to repay within a given period
- The collateral to be offered by way of security
- The availability of loanable funds

FACTORS THAT AFFECT BORROWING

The Purpose of Borrowing

The first thought that comes into the borrower's mind is, "Why do I want to borrow?" Obviously, no rational human being will borrow money before thinking of what to do with the money. Also, the purpose of borrowing must be legal. No lender will lend money for illegal transactions such as gambling, importing contraband goods, organizing coups, money doubling, and so forth. Like an engine that drives the machinery, borrowing can provide the impetus for the forward movement of the project. This information is essential to the lender. It is unnecessary for any lender to part with his funds on a venture that cannot guarantee the payment of interest and the repayment of the principal capital. Borrowing for a risky venture will no doubt call for a very high interest rate. The borrower, therefore, must from the onset satisfy himself or herself that the purpose of borrowing is genuine and realistic.

The Size and Nature of the Project

The size of the anticipated project will no doubt determine the amount of capital to be borrowed and, in particular, the modalities of borrowing. For instance, where the project is small, borrowing will be easier and faster. However, if the project is very large and the project is of a specialized nature, borrowing becomes complicated and rather technical. An example of this is borrowing to finance an oil refinery. The capital outlay involved will no doubt be beyond that which a single bank can finance. Such projects will need consortium lending, in which a group of banks come together under a lead bank to finance a huge capital outlay. In such lending, all the banks involved share the securities pledged on a pari-passu basis, that is, up to the extent of each individual bank's exposure to the project. To sum

up, the amount to be borrowed and the modalities and logistics of borrowing are functions of the size and the nature of the proposed project.

The Capital/Amount Involved

The amount of capital needed is closely related to the size of the project. However, the important thing about the capital/amount involved is that this is the determinant of where and how to borrow. It will also determine the relative ease, speed, and cost of borrowing.

The Gestation Period

The gestation period, also, determines the mode of borrowing. The generation period of any prospective project, no doubt, affects the conditions of borrowing. The gestation period is the time-lag between the commencement of a project and its completion, when the project is scheduled to be commissioned. The longer the gestation period, the higher will be the cost of capital borrowed, because no production or output is expected during the gestation period.

The Demand Elasticity of the Product and Market Supply

Demand elasticity and the expected market are related to the nature of the products for which borrowing is required and to the relative competitiveness of the product. Where the market situation for the product is highly competitive, borrowing should be properly planned in advance. Similarly, where the demand for the product is highly elastic, a thorough and indepth study of the market situation must be made before borrowing. What this means is that a product with high demand elasticity is vulnerable to market changes because there may be variety of substitutes for the product.

However, if the demand elasticity for the product is highly inelastic, the borrower enjoys a monopolistic advantage and thus can borrow even at high interest rates. Such costs can easily be passed on to the final consumer. In making decisions to borrow, the borrower must consider the market situation, the demand function, and the availability of substitutes for the products he or she is considering for production. It should be noted that in an absolutely ideal situation, the price should be related to the average revenue, which should also be equal to the average cost.

The Cost of Funds

The price of borrowing is the cost of funds. It is just a reflection of demand theory, which assumes that both the lender and the borrower are rational. A rational borrower will borrow when the cost of funds (that is, the interest rate) is low and borrow less when the interest rate is high. Besides being affected by the interest rate, the level of borrowing is further affected by the level of return on investment. Where return on investment is very low, it is only expedient for the borrower to borrow less.

The Durability of the Product

Another factor to be taken into account when borrowing is product durability. To borrow money for financing a project whose products are vulnerable to variable and adverse market forces is downright suicidal. Such operational hazard has the effect of making the repayment of the money borrowed extremely difficult.

The Convenience of Borrowing

Convenience of borrowing does not need much elaboration, because it is only logical that the volume and rate of borrowing depend

on the convenience attached to such borrowing and, in particular, the lending terms.

Cash Flow Projections

Cash flow projection, to determine the ability to repay within a given period, is a crucial factor when thinking of borrowing, and it is crucial to both the borrower and the lender. In short, the cash flow projection is a mirror of the entire project for which finance is being sought. No reasonable lender will agree to lend without analysis of a well-articulated cash flow projection. Because lending is not indefinite, the lender, apart from expecting repayment of his money with interest at a given period, also wants to satisfy himself as to the source of repayment. As mentioned earlier, the cash flow projection is reflected by the activities of the borrower with respect to a given project. The cash flow projection also acts as a pointer to the viability or otherwise of a proposed project. It is essential for any borrower to first examine in depth the cash flow projections, because these, on the other hand, will assist in determining the amount of money to be borrowed.

Collateral

Collateral is security offered by prospective borrowers to guarantee the safety of the borrowed funds. No rational lender is ready to give out money without some tangible assets presented by the borrower as a guarantee. The value and adequacy of securities available go a long way toward determining how much one can be allowed to borrow. However, there are occasions when banks lend "clean," that is, lend without securities. Such favors, though not common, are reflections of the credibility, trustworthiness, and integrity of the borrower.

Loanable Funds

Another key factor that affects borrowing is the availability of loanable funds. The amount to be borrowed and the size of loanable funds are positively correlated. The greater the size of loanable funds, the more the funds are available for the borrowers. More often than not, all the necessary prerequisites for borrowing may be in place, yet borrowers may not be able to borrow because of the scarcity of loanable funds. It is important to mention here that lending by banks is highly controlled through sectoral lending limits and, in particular, the ratio of loans and advances to that of total deposits. When banks have reached their credit ceiling, they cannot extend further credits, regardless of how lofty the loan proposal might be.

It should be noted that the factors discussed above are those considered unique to borrowing, but they are by no means exhaustive. Environmental factors also play very important roles in the process of borrowing, and the effect of Government legislation cannot be overstressed.

TYPES OF LOANS GRANTED BY FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

The following are the types of loans granted by financial intermediaries with reference to Nigeria.

Industrial Loans: These are granted in the form of short-term overdraft or medium-term loans to promote industrial and manufacturing concerns. This offer is useful as a working capital or capital item with a shorter repayment period. Merchant and development banks are the available sources of such capital.

Import Financing: This normally involves the use of commercial letters of credit. Essentially, finance companies are major sources of such funds, but the introduction of the African

Development Bank/Export Stimulation Loan Scheme and the diversification of the nation's income, coupled with the attendant emphasis on the need to boost nonoil export, have eliminated the commercial and merchant banks in Nigeria as financiers of imported goods.

Real Estate and Construction Loans: Such loans could be utilized for the construction of any, or a combination of, residential and office buildings, shopping centers, industrial properties, and hotels.

Syndicated Loans: These are loan combinations granted by more than one financial institution to a single borrower whose loan request is too large to be financed by one source of finance. Commercial ventures such as office blocks and buildings, shopping centers, and hotels are the prime users of such financing.

Political Loans: These are finances given to support the economic and social activities of political parties. Most financial intermediaries are reluctant to finance such ventures.

Commercial Loans: The 1972 Indigenization Decree and its subsequent amendments have boosted indigenous participation in commercial activities. Because retail trade is an area where African women have carved a niche for themselves, some financial intermediaries have extended tangible support in this area.

It is in this light that the Afribank Female Credit Scheme (AFCS) emerged. This scheme is designed to promote the development of small-scale projects initiated and undertaken by Nigerian women entrepreneurs.

Agricultural Loans: The need to boost food production in the economy has led to the promotion of agricultural output through agricultural loan facilities. Because weather is an unpredictable

factor in determining success in agriculture, the need to reduce its debilitating effect has led to the introduction of the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme by the Federal Government to improve credit facilities for the farming sector.

FACTORS RESTRICTING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO CREDIT

Gender classification poses a great barrier to women's access to credit for business. This, however, varies from one country to another. Some of the major restrictions common in most countries are the following:

- Lack of technical business skills
- Limited education
- Religious, technical, and legal barriers
- Lack of assertiveness
- Improper justification of project proposals
- Lack of determination

CONCLUSION

The conditions highlighted above ideally hold sway in the process of credit acquisition, appraisal, and disbursement. Because these conditions apply to both sexes, what then are the peculiar features of the system that can help women in Africa to achieve pareto optimality in harnessing resources for our economic development and political emancipation? These are supposed to be the canons that we should understand, not only in borrowing, but in all aspects of business entrepreneurship.

Women's innate ability to manage is unsurpassed. This innate attribute (which includes the ability to listen, thereby having a better understanding and communicative ability) is essential both in human resource and business management.

It is common knowledge that women are frequently hamstrung by cultural, legal, and attitudinal handicaps that prevent them from exercising their powers and enjoying their privileges.

The few successful ones among us must encourage others in order to harness our innate abilities for corporate development, to improve on our performance, and to erode the obsolete belief that women are a weaker sex.

Younger women must be physically and mentally prepared for the dual managerial role they will have to play in the future, both at home and in the marketplace.

With competitiveness, aggressiveness, risk-taking and long-term dependable commitment to a career, society's negative perception about women in the market will gradually change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Encouragement of women to open businesses, with easier access to credit facilities, will have a noticeable impact on solutions to world problems of poverty. With full cooperation of government and nongovernment organizations, this can be achieved through the following:

1. All African governments should be encouraged to change credit and borrowing policies favorably for women in order to encourage their efforts in national development.
2. Lenders should grant concessionary conditions and interest rates for women, as incentives to increase their access to business credit.
3. Various governments should consider removing legal barriers against women in business.

4. Government organizations should encourage typical women's businesses, such as vocational institutions, garment industries, food processing industries, and the transportation and sale of agricultural products.
5. An appropriate agency should establish a strong database with the necessary protocol for the study of African women in business (small-, medium-, and large-scale). Such information should be analyzed, appropriately stored, and made retrievable, if need be. With a strong and reliable information base, women can be greatly assisted in attaining their fullest potential in the nation's market economy structure.
6. An organization of women worldwide should have an advisory board in all member countries, for immediate and effective action against the legal and cultural barriers that militate against women in business.
7. At the local level, women should form cooperative societies or associations to strengthen their financial base. The establishment of women's banks in various African countries is essential to promote women's status in society and to facilitate access to credit.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Cecilia Chege

Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Women have made significant contributions to the development of the agricultural sector. Women form an average of 52 percent of the rural population, with a strong historic role in food production, processing, and marketing. Women all over the world are associated with family care. They contribute two-thirds of agricultural labor (UNICEF 1987). In the sub-Saharan region, 80 percent of the food is produced by women. UNESCO (1987) estimates the following breakdown of women's contributions as 75 percent of food production, 60 percent of domestic storage, 60 percent of animal husbandry, 75 to 85 percent of food transportation, and 90 percent of all domestic household activities.

WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AGRICULTURE

Small-scale farming is the backbone of Kenya's economy and is predominantly meant for the production of food crops such as legumes, maize, vegetables, bananas, potatoes, millet, sorghum, cassava, and yams, and supports livestock such as dairy cows, pigs, poultry, goats, sheep, rabbits, and so forth, for domestic consumption. Some agricultural products are sold to supplement the family income.

Large-scale farming is predominantly a man's domain. The products from this sector comprise cereals, dairy, beef, tea, coffee, sisal, and horticultural crops. These products are marketed through cooperative societies such as the Coffee Board, the Tea Board, horticultural crop development authorities, and Kenyan cooperatives. This type of farming is not very attractive to

women farmers, because few of them own land titles that could be used to obtain credit.

Where women are employed in agriculture, they are casual laborers with no benefits, no security, and low wages and cannot be unionized because they are casuals with limited education. The majority are landless and work for long hours, picking coffee or tea and weeding. The employers take advantage of their desperation by paying them badly.

Women of Kenya are gradually forming themselves into joint ventures in the form of self-help cooperative societies. These have projects such as chicken farming, goat farming, bee-keeping, trading, tailoring, ranching, coffee farming, and so forth. Twenty-five thousand such groups are already registered with the Government. These groups benefit from the services provided by the Ministry of Cooperatives and extension services, as well as from donor agencies. Other sources of financing for these groups are the Cooperative Bank, the Agricultural Finance Corporation, the Pact for Productivity, and the Kenya Women Finance Trust.

CONSTRAINTS

Traditional systems protected women's rights to land, in that land was communally owned. But land reforms have since replaced this communal ownership by individual ownership purely meant for men. Women have no land rights, yet they bear the responsibility of farm management. Social and cultural attitudes toward women, and prejudices, hinder their effective participation in the development of agriculture. In addition to farm activities, women have to fetch water and fuel wood, among other home responsibilities. Men tend to migrate to cities for formal jobs. In most communities in Kenya, women depend on their fathers and husbands for financial support because they lack title deeds,

insurance policies, share certificates, logbooks, or any other form of collateral recognizable by banks.

Illiteracy and lack of awareness as to where to obtain technical assistance and financial and extension services hinder women from full exploitation of their environment, such as using farm inputs and choosing planting materials for better productivity. The price structure of agricultural products vis-à-vis the price of agricultural inputs; coupled with fluctuating weather conditions; the availability of seeds, fertilizers, and chemicals; and shortage of labor at peak seasons result in large crop losses and makes farming a very discouraging venture. The process of payment for farm produce also discourages the farmers.

The drudgery of the farming lives of rural women is unlikely to be accepted by young women. Such evidence has made rural women develop inferiority complexes and lack self-confidence. Being in such a desperate environment leaves no room to form strong venture groups to enforce change.

Attempts by small-scale farmers to market their products within urban areas are greatly frustrated by local authority bylaws that restrict the acquisition of hawking licenses. The majority of hawkers who are harassed in towns are women.

INTERVENTION MEASURES

In 1975, a women's bureau was started to assist in the integration of women into the economy. As a result, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of women's groups, from 502 in 1976 to 3,590 in 1984, with membership of 140,044 women. Some of the activities of these women's groups include bee-keeping, water projects, posho mills, bakeries, consumer shops, gasoline stations, building rental houses, livestock

keeping, irrigation projects, shelter construction, and development of the members' homes.

The improvement of extension services in food and agriculture has really improved the effects of women initiatives and has led to increased food production, increased awareness of environmental conservation, encouragement of cooperative farming and marketing, better marketing skills, and identification of good distribution channels.

LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION FOR AFRICA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

African heads of state and governments adopted the Lagos Plan of Action for Africa's Economic Development in 1980; the following efforts are evident in some of the countries:

- The 1984 Arusha strategies for the advancement of African women spelled out ways to enhance women's contributions in food and nutrition.
- In Burkina Faso, the slogan "Development without destruction" was adopted. This program provided village groups with new farming techniques and loans. The results were improved seed varieties, seasonal crops, introduction of irrigation, drainage control, and reforestation.
- Zimbabwe took steps to increase credit to farmers, most of whom were women. Discriminatory policies favoring large-scale farmers were removed and extension services were directed to women's farmers' groups, which are now allowed to own agricultural marketing board cards.
- In Tanzania, relevant training of women farmers has made farming activities easier, leading to increased food and other crop production.
- In Cameroon, an integrated project combining women's technical and literacy education, credit and technological facilities, and supportive government policy was introduced in 1980.

- In Kenya there are 23,000 women groups involved in comprehensive rural development.

WOMEN'S PROJECTS

There is evidence that most women's projects succeed because women are better resource managers than men.

In Kenya today, many women are involved in small-scale enterprises (Jua Kali), other than agriculture, for sources of income. In this sector, the majority of women are engaged in cottage industries, especially in making handicrafts, tailoring, and weaving. In the retail trade, there is an increase in the petty trading and hawking of farm produce, household utensils, clothes (especially second hand), small quantities of smuggled clothes, shoes, fashion items, jewelry, and handbags.

Large numbers of women are seen with their wares in Kenyan markets all over the country, especially in suburban and rural areas. Very little support has been given to these activities. In the past very little interest was shown in the informal sector by nongovernmental organizations and Government bodies, but recently Government policy on employment is addressing itself to the constraints that have been hindering growth of the informal sector. Recently, the Government of Kenya has proposed many measures toward streamlining the informal sector, because this sector is a very important grass roots opening to women's entrepreneurship. Women have also been given much encouragement by donor agencies and nongovernmental organizations. With such support, women will put their assets together and compete with their male counterparts.

CONSTRAINTS ON WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

The following are among the constraints that women face in the informal sector:

- Lack of capital and credit facilities for stabilization and growth
- Lack of knowledge, skills, quality control, and farm mechanization regarding the demand and marketing of products
- Lack of marketing facilities, including market surveys and feasibility studies
- Illiteracy among women, who lack awareness of their legal rights
- Lack of infrastructure and appropriate technology that would affect efficiency and quality control

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since independence, women entrepreneurs have developed at a very fast pace. If the momentum is maintained, in another decade women will operate at par with men. What women now have to realize is that their small cottage industries need to be developed into real industries. They have to develop from production of food to manufacturing, packaging, storing, and marketing finished food products. They have to make an attempt to enter export markets where the money is.

Women farmers need to organize themselves into cooperatives to promote the marketing of their farm products.

The infrastructure must be improved to improve transportation of farm products, particularly perishable products.

Promotion of women's agricultural activities will mean the establishment of factories and warehouses in rural areas, which

will offer more employment to women. The Government is offering many incentives for rural industrialization, such as various tax exceptions for processing equipment going to rural areas.

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LACK OF ACCESS TO CREDIT

Betty K. Mtero

Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Lack of access to credit facilities has been a problem for many women entrepreneurs in Africa and particularly in Zimbabwe. I am excited that we finally have an opportunity to address ourselves to some of these issues at this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is also to identify the major constraints that women entrepreneurs face when they attempt to develop their own businesses. Many of us here have our own stories to tell about the obstacles we encountered when we were starting our businesses.

Let me reflect upon my own experience, particularly when we started our own company, Shades of Africa (Private) Limited. The purpose for which the company was established was to carry on business as wholesalers, retailers, dealers, manufacturers, and repairers of crafts, sculpture, pottery, and other similar goods. The company also distributes all classes of goods, including clothing, foodstuffs, radios, electrical equipment, musical instruments, household appliances, and furniture. The initial problem was access to viable credit facilities. Although we would go on and on through the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of Shades of Africa (Private) Limited, membership would not have given me and many other women entrepreneurs access to credit and sound financial background. This experience was really better, considering that if it had been a man attempting to start the business, everything would have been much easier.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN

In Zimbabwe, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) commissioned a study in 1989 to identify the major needs and constraints faced by businesswomen. The study established that the major constraints were lack of viable ideas and limited technical and managerial skills. It also noted that limited access to credit was the most critical constraint. This was closely associated with lack of collateral.

As a follow-up, a study in 1990 recommended that CIDA needed to focus on gender imbalances in the provision of credit to business persons in Zimbabwe. Of the present Credit Guarantee Company (CGC) Loan Guarantee Portfolio, 87 percent of the guarantees went to men, compared to 13 percent for women. These statistics reflect the general trends of credit discrimination in Zimbabwe.

CIDA has started the pilot guarantee project, which aims to increase the proportion of bank loans to women from 13 percent to 35 percent by the end of the project in five years.

The project will also demonstrate to banks the worthiness of women clients and at the same time sensitize the Zimbabwean banking community to the issues and constraints that businesswomen face. A total of ZW\$750,000 has been set aside by CIDA for this pilot loan guarantee project.

CGC was selected to manage the proposed pilot loan guarantee project. Initial support will benefit businesswomen. Financial assistance to businessmen will be determined by the evaluation of gender credit imbalances.

CGC was selected because it already operates a guarantee program that caters to both sexes and because of its proven track record in successfully managing a guarantee program. Another major

factor in selecting CGC was its linkage with the five commercial banks and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. CIDA was also pleased with the fact that the central Government, through Treasury, is involved with the provision of grants to CGC for its operations. Because of this, and the banks' involvement in the CGC loan guarantee project, the company is assured of continued financial, manpower, and accommodation support even after CIDA withdraws after the five-year pilot period.

There are plans to start an operation fund, that is, a guarantee fund. The guarantee fund is a standby for honoring loans extended to businesswomen by commercial banks.

Banks will still be entitled to call for whatever security the borrowing businesswomen may have in order to minimize their credit risk exposure of 25 percent. However, with the sensitization exercise, it is hoped that bank managers will be more receptive to managing the 25-percent risk exposure without calling for security cover for it, particularly in cases where the borrower has no collateral to offer.

The women of Zimbabwe will benefit from this pilot project as the bank managers become aware of what the project offers. In order to augment the technical and managerial skills of businesswomen, the CIDA package will include a provision for a scholarship fund. CIDA, in liaison with Women in Business Zimbabwe (WIB) and CGC, will identify relevant training requirements. Institutions and organizations that provide training facilities will be consulted, and selected women will be sent for training. In line with the above point, the gender sensitization exercise will be carried out. This will involve a series of seminars and workshops all over Zimbabwe. It is expected that the training acquired will have multiplier effects through the organization of such seminars and workshops.

CONCLUSION

Although Zimbabwe has been relatively successful with respect to industrialization, compared to other countries in southern Africa, the country today faces high rates of unemployment and low rates of investment.

The trend indicates that an increasing number of Zimbabweans will turn to the micro- and small-enterprise sectors. There are already many women in Zimbabwe who are engaged in micro- and small-scale enterprises. Most of these women get loans from their families, friends, or money lenders. Only a very small percentage receive loans from formal credit institutions. Similar experience is evident in other African countries. Although more efforts to rehabilitate women's financial status are needed, we hope that the CIDA initiative and the pending evaluation of the CGC pilot project will open a new chapter to the women in the market initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To alleviate the problems of credit available to women in business, create an enabling environment to assist women gaining access to credit.
2. Reinforce the utility of existing information available in countries represented at this meeting in order to address the constraints encountered by women in business.
3. Provide or support training on relevant skills for women's businesses.
4. Provide loans at reasonable interest rates to promote the status of women entrepreneurs.

5. Assess the market channels both for imported and exported goods.
6. Provide incentives to support women in the establishment and development of business enterprises.
7. Encourage indigenous industries to ensure healthy competition with international companies.
8. Get women representatives on the financial boards responsible for loans earmarked for women in business.

"The challenge that women face in this century is to compete effectively with men in order to achieve economic independence without which the majority of women will never realize emancipation."

I thank the Office of the Women in Development of USAID and you all for being given this time to participate in this event. On behalf, of the Women in Business Zimbabwe and on my own behalf, I thank you.

THE WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR: OBSTACLES AND CONSTRAINTS

Khadija Simba

Tanzania

In writing about the plight of a woman with serious entrepreneurial ambitions, it is extremely difficult to avoid a focus on personal experience in terms of obstacles and constraints. This brief paper may make references to my personal experience in order to clarify points of relevance to the subject matter.

We are living in a world full of prejudice. The human mind has been subjected to racial, ethnic, religious, and many other forms of prejudice. As human beings we all suffer from one sort or another of prejudice, which usually manifests itself in some form of discrimination. The human tendency has always been to struggle in order to either neutralize its effects or to eliminate it altogether.

What we have experienced so far is the extreme difficulty of fighting against prejudice. It is a tragedy that humanity may have to face during our entire lifetime. Sexual prejudice is a form of prejudice that has thrown all women of the world into one basket. One would have thought that because of the commonality of this problem, we could have pooled our resources and, over a period of time, eliminated at least this form of prejudice from our communities. This effort, too, seems to be failing in a number of ways.

Because of the universal prejudice against the black race, the African woman is facing the worst of all obstacles to human endeavor. This situation has been made more complicated because most women have seemingly accepted their position as prescribed by various societies.

Under these conditions, therefore, an African woman, in principle, has been compartmentalized by society into a certain zone of economic activity and within certain parameters of social responsibility. If one wishes to go outside these prescribed confines, one must excel in a combination of the following attributes:

- Possess a high degree of ambition and self confidence
- Be committed to the pursuit of a career or a business project connected to the realization of one's ambition
- Have a capacity for hard work, and highly developed assertiveness and determination
- Realize that one is operating in an exceedingly hostile and prejudiced environment
- Be very strongly motivated to prepare oneself for a series of frustrations and, sometimes, even humiliation at the hands of a paternalistic society

These, in my view, are the basic personal attributes of any woman who wishes to be an equal member of a community and to assume full responsibility for her destiny and for the protection of her family and business as well. With humility, I will attempt to share my own experience with members of the steering committee whose aim, I understand, is to identify the major constraints that women entrepreneurs face in developing their businesses.

I must begin by saying that I have always had a burning desire to engage in private business of my own. And as I grew older and got married and settled into family life, that desire became progressively stronger.

We lived in America in our early days, in Uganda in the sixties, and left in 1978 to settle in London for three years before finally returning home in 1981. The exposure I had abroad and my experiences in Uganda to a large extent determined my resolution

to pursue, at all costs, the entrepreneurial initiatives that I took from time to time.

My main activity involves manufacturing sanitary pads and surgical cotton. I am also involved in general trading and representing foreign businesses. In all these activities I have had to face the following normal problems:

- Acquisition of a business license
- Lack of long-term loans and working capital
- Acquisition of land titles
- Marketing
- Other operational problems

In tackling all these problems, I have had to face the general attitudinal constraints related to the societal prejudices that I had alluded to earlier. At the same time, I had to maintain my firm position as a wife and mother and to cope constantly with the pressures of a husband who is equally ambitious in pursuit of his own ideals. Under these circumstances, one has to find an optimal balance. These are the factors on which, in my view, the steering committee can spend some discussion time. I have no doubt that exchanging views at such a forum will go a long way toward the development of policy guidelines that will create an enabling climate upon which women can develop their talents for entrepreneurship.

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

The participants noted that while official policies in most African countries support the rapid integration of women in social, economic, and political development, women continue to face enormous constraints in business. Among the constraints identified were the following:

- Lack of access to financing
- Lack of basic education
- Rigid lending policies by existing financial institutions
- Lack of access to technical advice and skills
- Marital problems

LACK OF ACCESS TO FINANCING

The lack of access to financing is tied to property ownership, a "preserve of men" usually favored by traditional inheritance laws and practices. In Africa, land ownership laws discriminate against women. Most women have no marketable title to land to use as collateral. Although much debate has focused on the issue of land title and its impact on private sector development, it is often left out or given little attention in high-level discussions and policy decisions. Property ownership as it pertains to land in most African countries is considered too politically sensitive and too culturally complex.

Lending trends to small-scale entrepreneurs are affected by the lack of effective intermediate financial institutions and business associations that promote linkages between small- and large-scale enterprises.

The legal status of married women as minors implies that they cannot easily acquire credit without the consent of their husbands.

Many project proposals by women entrepreneurs are not bankable because of their inability to prepare comprehensive feasibility studies and proposals of viable projects.

Many women cannot obtain credit because they lack collateral. At times, gender discrimination and the attitude of male bankers are determining factors in securing credit.

Many African countries have had little economic growth in their gross national products and gross domestic products. Balance of payments problems and servicing the debt burden are starving funds from the private sector. Interest rates are pegged so high that available credit becomes unaffordable for most women entrepreneurs.

LACK OF BASIC EDUCATION

While an entrepreneur need not be highly educated, basic skills in literacy and numeracy, reinforced by technical skills, are a big advantage. Women continue to be disadvantaged in this area. Preference for males, rather than ability to learn and equality, continues to be a constraint for women in basic education.

Whereas in most countries primary school enrollments of boys and girls are balanced, girls perform poorly, probably because of domestic chores. Girls also drop out of school because of pregnancy or early marriage. At the secondary school level there are more boys' schools with better facilities for technical training. Hence, at universities, women are enrolled mainly in arts subjects.

RIGID LENDING POLICIES BY EXISTING FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Women face a tougher challenge than men in obtaining loans from financial institutions. Banks and other financial institutions continue to discriminate against women entrepreneurs, even though many bankers acknowledge from experience in lending to women entrepreneurs that women have a much better repayment record than their male counterparts.

Women in business initiatives continue to be appendages, not the mainstream, of lending practices. This remains true even while African governments have encouraged and facilitated the establishment of financial institutions that stimulate small-scale businesses and that assist in creating a locally based entrepreneurial class, a class that would produce goods and services using locally available materials to save on foreign exchange and generate employment.

Commercial banks and other financial institutions cling rigidly to title deeds and other traditional evidence of property ownership as security or collateral for loans.

While the problem of property ownership contributes to lack of credit, because of the rigidity of lending institutions, it is compounded by customary inheritance laws that discriminate against women in regard to property. Under such laws, the clan and family usually prevail. Social friction and conflict is created by these contradictions, which emerge from the interpretation and application of customary and modern systems of law. The discriminatory outcome of such interpretations means that women continue to remain "dark silent shadows."

Although banks do tend to be rigid in their lending practices, there is evidence that women often tend to approach financial institutions without well-prepared business proposals.

LACK OF ACCESS TO TECHNICAL ADVICE AND SKILLS

While the debate on women's entrepreneurship has tended to focus on financial, cultural, and social constraints on women in business, little attention has been focused on the provision of the technical advice and functional education needed to improve the business technical skills required for effective business management.

MARITAL PROBLEMS

The role of marital problems in holding back women entrepreneurs often tends to be downplayed, thus curtailing personal freedom. It is a constraint with personal ramifications that too often spill over into society. The minor legal status of a married woman defines the man as head of the household and as the decision maker. This definition limits women who feel that it is not right to surpass the accomplishments of their husbands.

SUMMARY

When both market and household roles have to be performed, the extent to which women can expand and exploit their entrepreneurial ability is limited. The multiple, demanding roles of women, as both producers and reproducers, take up a great deal of their time and energy. The woman as homemaker has limited mobility and this, in turn, limits her maneuverability in the business realm.

The participants felt that the constraints that women face in business are universal and that the problems of women are known. Thus, the meeting concentrated on an action agenda and strategy that would make it easier for businesswomen to develop their enterprises. The constraints that women face in business, their

causes, and consequences, were best summed up by Khadija Simba, who said:

The world is "full of prejudice. The human mind has been subjected to racial, ethnic, religious, and many other forms of prejudice. As human beings, we all suffer from one sort or another of prejudice, which usually manifests itself in some form of discrimination. The human tendency has always been to struggle in order to either neutralize its effects or to eliminate it altogether."

RESOLUTIONS AND PLAN OF ACTION

RESOLUTIONS

The participants felt that the constraints on women's business activities could be alleviated by interventions in the areas of education and awareness of businesswomen's issues, access to finances, and women's organization.

Education and Awareness of Businesswomen's Issues

In order to affect the development of women for a positive contribution to national development, initiatives must be sustained to sensitize women themselves, the community, and governments to women's needs.

Governments and donor agencies should shift emphasis and focus from community development to individual achievements. The definition of "women as entrepreneurs" must be radically differentiated from "women in development."

To assist women in improving their basic education, functional literacy programs must be intensified. This can be done through training and extension services in technical and managerial skills. To help women entrepreneurs become better managers, management training should include home management, self-management, time management, and stress management skills, as well as self-improvement skills and confidence building.

Girls must be encouraged to take up technical subjects in schools and colleges.

Research is needed on successful women entrepreneurs. The subjects of documented success stories can serve as role models

for other African women and can encourage the "positive assertiveness" of women in business.

The advantages of women as entrepreneurs were best summed up by M.O.K. Taiwo when she said:

Women's innate ability to manage is unsurpassed. The innate attributes which include the ability to listen, thereby having a better understanding of people, better communicative ability and compassion borne out of maternal instinct could help us get the best result out of managing people and resources in our business endeavors.

Access to Finances

To publicize business opportunities and the availability of financial and technical resources, maximum use must be made of existing information systems, with due reference to technical advisory services.

To facilitate easier access to credit for women entrepreneurs, financial institutions must streamline their lending policies for women. To this end, women must form pressure groups and lobby their national governments.

Organization

Women must strengthen their own networks, over which they can exchange ideas and information and share experiences. Stronger networks would be useful in establishing a strong, effective, and dynamic organization of African women entrepreneurs.

The participants agreed that African women entrepreneurs must create their own economic forum to facilitate and enhance the

participation of African women in the economic mainstream. This organization would endeavor to do the following:

- Create an enabling environment for change. Pressure groups would lobby governments to effect law and policy reforms on cultural and historical attitudes, training in specific skills, technical support (business advisory services), and access to power. There should be country-based consultants on the same issues.
- Establish a database, across all countries, of financial assistance policies, business advisory services, and training programs.
- Promote private investment by studying existing investment plans and opportunities, trade missions, and privatization efforts.
- Solicit financing for businesswomen in general by identifying sources of capital and lobbying for a quota system.
- Work toward meeting its own expenses by collecting membership dues, soliciting funds from donor agencies, and investing surplus funds.
- Collaborate with other organizations such as SADCC, ECOWAS, PTA, Womens World Banking, and others to publicize the organization and its network, publish documents, represent businesswomen's interests, and publish newsletters.

The participants resolved to appoint an Interim Steering Committee to support the Initiative in the short term. This committee has the following tasks:

- As a pressure group, lobby to achieve the Initiative's objectives.
- Collect and update existing information pertaining to women in business.
- Meet and review the study survey and develop a plan of action.
- After reviewing the studies, conduct a larger meeting to identify other women entrepreneurs and to discuss the findings of the studies and the suggested action agenda.

PLAN OF ACTION

Having established the need for this Initiative, the Committee members resolved on the following plan of action:

1. The Interim Steering Committee will be allowed to stand as constituted until it has finalized its objectives after phase four.
2. Evelyn Mungai will remain the Chairperson/Coordinator of the Steering Committee.
3. Local consultants will survey the means by which African female entrepreneurs can be integrated into the economic mainstream.
4. The Committee will draft the terms of reference (see below) for the consultants and hand them over to A.I.D. as guidelines.
5. Prior to commencement of their assignments, the Steering Committee will be given an opportunity to review the terms of reference for the various country consultants.

6. A.I.D. will coordinate the consultants.
7. The consultants will work in liaison with their respective country's Steering Committee members.

Terms of Reference for the proposed Local Consultants

Local consultants will collect, update, and evaluate information on women in business. This information will be the basis for the proposed action agenda, specifically involving the following areas:

- Trade and investment opportunities and new market initiatives, for example, joint ventures, franchising, opportunities available for women at SADCC, ECOWAS, and so forth.
- Existing financial and credit programs, for example, IFC, the Sub-Saharan Fund, the Japanese Fund, ADB, and so forth.
- The enabling environment only as related to business enterprises, for example, training in specific skills, technical support systems, and access to power.

MEETING EVALUATION

The meeting of the steering committee, Phase 1 of this Initiative, was evaluated through a questionnaire circulated to the participants on the final day of the meeting. All the participants indicated that the launching of the Initiative was an excellent idea. They thought it a good move toward assisting women in business because it will highlight the subject of women's entrepreneurship, which has been blurred and downplayed by the emphasis on women in development in general. It was the first meeting of key businesswomen held to discuss the factors affecting the performance of businesswomen in Africa. The participants strongly felt that the Initiative will strengthen the financial position of young African women who aspire to join the marketplace.

The baseline data survey conducted at the end of the meeting was welcomed because it will definitely bring out supportive evidence on the plight and status of women entrepreneurs in Africa. Such data are most crucial in influencing policy makers, donor agencies, and the international community toward supporting women's businesses in Africa.

Most of the participants indicated that the following interventions would promote the Initiative and make permanent its resolutions and policies:

- Form a strong pressure group to influence national decisions on women's affairs.
- Form a network of successful businesswomen in each of the represented countries. This network would publicize the essence of the development of women's businesses, that is, it would encourage the movement of small-scale businesses to medium-scale operations and hence to large-scale enterprises.
- Affiliate the Initiative with existing women's organizations.

The participants felt that the meeting was well-planned and that they benefitted personally through discussions at the meeting. Generally, they felt that the Initiative's phases should be implemented without delay. It is encouraging to note that all the participants pledged their total support, cooperation, and involvement in implementing the Initiative's proposals in their respective countries.

The members believe strongly that the committee's efforts could only be rewarded if the Initiative's proposals are adopted as policy guidelines for the rehabilitation of the economic status of African women.

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By GEORGE KIMENYI

It's a new focus on women's initiative in private enterprise

It is unfortunate that the contribution of women entrepreneurs to third world economies is being ignored, the Regional Manager of the African Development Facility (APDF), Ignatio Maramba, said recently.

In a keynote address during the opening of a three day meeting of "Women in the Market Initiative," Maramba said some Third World countries and development agencies dismissed women's home-based small enterprises as insignificant income-generating activities with little growth potential, which neither needed nor deserved financial services. They must instead be viewed as real enterprise which contribute to economic growth and family welfare, he said.

He observed that women, especially in Africa, had traditionally played an important role in farming and off-farm employment. He singled out market women in coastal West Africa as the most independent and successful entrepreneurs on the continent but lamented that his could not be said of some parts of East and Southern Africa where women cannot even open bank accounts in their own names. They have to sign contracts with a male family member counter-signing and cannot even register a business in their own names.

"Throughout the continent, women in the marketplace are confronted by social, structural and legal barriers, in addition to those which constrain their male counterparts.

"Despite this, women entrepreneurs have gained a reputation as hard-working individuals who have a better track record in loan repayment and effective use of financial resources than men," he said.

Maramba said recent ex-

periences run counter to certain, negative notions about financing women's enterprises such as the myths that women and the poor use financial services strictly for short-term consumption, that they do not save and that their businesses are not good credit risks.

"About 10 per cent of the projects my organization, assists in sub-saharan Africa are owned and successfully managed by women. They use profits from their small and micro-enterprise activities to purchase health services and pay for education for their families, which, in turn, enhances the human resource base, thus contributing to national development goals," he says.

While admitting that it would be asking too much to expect most Third World coun-

success stories, which would go a long way in helping break down the cultural and legal barriers facing women entrepreneurs in Third World countries," he concluded.

The three-day meeting (November 23-25), chaired by Mrs Evelyn Mungai, the vice-chairperson and project director of the "Women in the Market Initiative," was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development's Bureau for Africa and the Office of Women in Development. Characteristics of women-run businesses, their assets and their responsibilities in the household; special credit problems and the operational issues affecting women's projects.

She said their main goal was to transform women from passive beneficiaries to clients with long-term reciprocal relationships with governments, financial institutions and development agencies.

tries and development agencies to shed generations-old habits overnight, and that may serious impediments to progress remain, Maramba called on both parties to step up assistance to women businesswomen through entrepreneurship, export training and the provision of high-risk funding to their projects through either equity participation or long-term loans.

And to overcome certain misconceptions about the benefits of women-run enterprises, the APDF boss urged the participants to produce well-documented profiles and case studies into successful women's projects, which, he said, would "make very interesting and inspiring reading."

"I am sure the media would be happy to highlight these

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Top businesswomen map out strategies

By MARGARETTA wa GACHERU
A ultra-elite group of African women entrepreneurs were meeting last week in Nairobi to discuss how to bring their fellow African women into the economic mainstream.

"That is, after all, where we are operating from - not the periphery, but the economic mainstream," said a Botswana businesswoman, Mrs Julia Sarkodie Mensah, managing director of Yarley Cosmetics Ltd.

She was one of the select participants invited to take part in a "Women in the Market Initiative", organised by project director Mrs Evelyn Mungai, with assistance from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the African Project Development Facility (APDF), Labst-Anderson Consultants and the African Development Bank's 'Business Round table', of which Mrs Mungai is vice-chairman.

"This is an exceptional gathering of women in many respects", said Mrs Catherine Mwanamwambwa of Zambia, who is the managing director of Bimzi Ltd. "For one, we all started our businesses from scratch," said the former academic who in the late sixties, founded the African Association of Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) together with Kenya's Dr. Appola Pala Okeyo. Mrs Mwanamwambwa's commercial line is leather goods, although some years back, she chose to diversify into commercial agriculture. Today, she and her partners export fresh foods (fruits, vegetables and even beef) all around the African region.

Ghanaian-born Sarkodie-Mensah started off in Gaborone,



Mrs Mungai: "We have our problems too"

lecturing in history at the University of Botswana and setting up a law office before she got into the beauty business.

"I wanted a larger challenge and so decided there was no need to continue importing hair products from overseas. I could manufacture them myself."

And so, with technical assistance from the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) and her American supplier, Johnson Products, Julia set up her own full laboratory and line of hair care products which she gave the brand name 'Hairloom' in 1986.

"I'm the only manufacturer of this sort in all of Southern Africa", said Julia who currently

exports to Swaziland, Lesotho and South Africa as well as to her motherland where the beauty business has been booming for years.

Now producing body creams and lotions under her other brand name, Yarleys, Julia intends to begin exporting to East Africa, including Kenya.

Mrs Mungai's business lines include a secretarial bureau and fashion college and the *Presence* magazine.

From Nigeria came Mrs Margaret Traiwu, managing director of Peggy Chemicals, DuPont paint manufacturer and area distributor in her country.

Mrs Agrina Musa of Malawi is one of the designers in Blantyre, while from Swaziland came Mrs Ellen Mbhamali - the only African woman dealing in gemstones and semi-precious jewels.

From Uganda was Mrs Teresa Mbire who have had to 'start from scratch' in business at least twice.

In both instances, she'd achieved results which far surpassed even her most hopeful dreams.

Kenya's Cecilia Chege of Belluwa Farms had fantastic 'rags-to-riches' tales to tell during the three-days meeting. The participants discussed how best to be other women graduate from small-scale, informal sector enterprises.

At the same time, they deliberated on how best they could join hands to solve their common needs and concerns.

"We have our problems too such as access to financing, new markets and new technologies", said Julia.

The businesswomen agreed in principle to set up a new women's organisation aimed at strengthening links between middle and upper level African women entrepreneurs.

APDF regional manager Ignatio Maramba asked the participants to serve as a source of inspiration to other African women by enhancing their public profile.

The manager urged them to raise public awareness as to the tremendous impact African women had in their own home economies and on the regional economy as well.

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A woman's place is ... in Big Business!

By KATHRYN KAHIKO

AFTER her husband left to go to Dar es Salaam to look for formal employment, the young Chagga woman decided not to just sit back at home. She would do something to supplement her husband's income while he fought it out in the rough, tough "man's" world.

She bought some piglets and started rearing them. She looked forward to having them in the market once they were nice and fat.

When her husband came home for Christmas holidays, she asked him, as per the Chagga custom, to sell them for her. Chagga women are not permitted, by custom, to sell livestock.

When he sold the pigs, the husband did not give his wife the money which she had earmarked for starting a dairy farm. He used it for his own purposes instead.

Disappointed but not despaired — she bought some more piglets. And she decided to get wise, customs or no customs. So next time the pigs were ready for market, she involved her father-in-law. And she was able to start her dairy herd.

This is one of the stories that were being traded at the recently concluded "Women for the Market Initiative" forum held in Nairobi.

Biris

The delegates sat for three days and outlined the problems faced by women entrepreneurs especially those going into



Women harvesting honey.

business for the first time. They cited gender bias as the worst drawback while women's lack of confidence was a close runner-up.

The group was drawn from 10 African countries and consisted of the more successful businesswomen in those countries. These women, who are in their late 30s to early 40s, had managed to penetrate the male dominated business world and become forces to be reckoned with.

One of the many problems the women talked about was the fact that in Africa, a woman's place is still seen as being in the kitchen cooking for her family and tending to the various domestic chores always piling up. A woman in the boardroom is frowned upon and sometimes discouraged even by the husbands.

Many of the delegates felt

that this was because of the men's fear of the competition; the men felt threatened.

The women in the Market Initiative was founded by USAID and the African Project Development Facility (APDF). It is a premier group that looks into the constraints that affect women who want to go into business.

Hawking

As the general manager of Barclays Bank of Kenya, Mr Fred Mbiru said during the closing ceremony, about 80 per cent of the food production in Kenya was from the sweat of women. They are in the informal sector where they grow food crops for the household, operate small businesses like selling produce in the market and hawking things around offices. Few ever go beyond this, unfortunately.

The assembled businesswo-

men who have made it in the cultural world of big business want to help their less fortunate sisters to cross the great divide.

One thing they all agreed on was that they needed to get down to business. They did not want a forum to be just another talking shop where no major decisions are made but a lot of self pity goes on and, worse, no action is ever taken.

No time. The initiative women formulated specific plans to be followed and they plan to meet in a few months time when they will discuss in great detail the actual problems they have managed to dig out that prevent the majority of women from going into big business.

The regional manager of the APDF, Mr Ignazio Marimba who spoke in one of his sessions said that the constraints affecting the African women were widespread in the whole region. He pointed out that some cultures do not allow women to be holders of land titles. As such women have no collateral to offer banks to secure loans. In some countries like Botswana men do not easily allow their women to enter into legal contracts.

Networks

Another point brought forth by Mr Marimba and endorsed by Mr Mbiru was that there was inadequate representation in the traditional business related networks like the chambers of commerce, association of manufacturers, association of exporters to name just a few. Mr Mbiru suggested that a chapter for women in the chamber of commerce might help.

As for the much heralded "women in development" programmes these, participants felt, are geared towards the informal

months on end?

Or could it be, as put by the women entrepreneurs, that they are discriminated against when it comes to big business deals?

There are cases where women have gone with proposals to banks, only to be told they have been "unsuccessful" in their applications for loans. They have then transferred their ideas to their husbands who have gone with the same proposals and been able to get the required loans.

Manufacturing companies have failed to give distribution rights to women and gives the same to men who in turn let their wives run the business!

Deserving

All these discriminations and questions need to be researched further so that a balance is reached where all deserving people get what they ask for.

The budding women entrepreneurs need to shed their lack of confidence and go for whatever they want. Same as the men. They have to be sure that they want to succeed and not give in easily when they encounter even the first drawback.

They have to be prepared to take risks that go with all businesses, and spend long hours in the business fields if they are to succeed. And lending institutions need to revise their stand where women are concerned so that a fair balance can eventually be achieved.

Compete

Yet the question that goes begging is: Are women ready to take up the mantle of big business? Are they willing to go all out and compete against all odds to make it in big business?

It is true that in Kenya, for example, there are very few women top entrepreneurs. The same is true indeed for the world. Could this be because they prefer to be more concerned in looking after their families and doing jobs that do not require them to be away from the home front for

According to APDF's Marimba, about five million businesses in the United States are owned by women. In Canada, one-third of all enterprises are owned by women. Finland one-third, Sweden one-fourth, Germany one-fifth, is the Netherlands slightly less than one-fifth.

Africa, too needs to get into these rankings.

Successful business women plan action to give everyone a 'balanced chance'

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DAILY NATION

Nairobi, Friday, November 27, 1992

Support women entrepreneurs

For centuries women have suffered - and in fact, continued - discrimination in virtually every field of human endeavour simply on account of their gender.

Even in modern times, when a few of them have made striking break-throughs in male-dominated domains, they still face barriers that hinder their advancement.

Take women in business. Although it has been proven that they are better managers and initiators of business ideas and projects, they receive very little support from society in general and, in particular, from financial institutions.

Until fairly recently, a woman could not receive a loan from a bank unless she was accompanied by her father, brother, or husband. Although this is no longer the case, society still frowns upon women go-getters and many bank managers still look the other way when faced with a loan proposal from a woman.

Discrimination against women is probably the main cause of under-development in many parts of the world. Why, for example, should women who produce 80 per cent of the food in Africa not be trusted with as little as a \$10,000 loan to start a small business or even a vegetable bank?

According to a leading banker, the major problem women still face in Africa includes lack of collateral for loans, this on top of social prejudice. He says many bankers and lenders feel more comfortable lending to men than to women.

Ironically, some of the prejudice perpetrated against women comes from women themselves.

So which way out for women entrepreneurs and the rest of their lot? Take charge of your own destiny. Overcome these barriers and cultivate a positive image of yourselves - for lack of confidence is said to be one of the major barriers to women's advancement. The world needs you and your contribution to the betterment of humanity.

Listen to one of your own: "The world should look up to women to save the world economy (now in deep recession)," asserts Ms Nancy Berry, president of Women's World Banking, the parent organisation of the Nancy Women's Finance Trust.

It is through organisations like Nancy Berry's and their affiliates that women can overcome some of the barriers. Change is sweeping the world. Women should be part of it and should not let the emerging opportunities slip by.

As a just-concluded meeting of African Women in the Market Initiative sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was told, the continent has more women than men and must, as one of its top priorities, put women to work and support their business ventures.

Meetings such as this ought to take place much more often to enable women to be used to step out into the rough-and-tumble of the business world. The women who attended the meeting have set the pace. The next step is to push out to those very many others still left behind.

The fact that the world would be a better place if it fully utilised one of its most abundant human resources - women - need not be belaboured. The benefits are there for all to see, from agriculture to the formal and informal sectors.

Educate a woman and you educate a nation; educate a man and you educate an individual, a pioneering African educationist and man of vision said. The same should be the case in the workplace and in business.

Therefore, governments, non-governmental organisations and private institutions ought to support women in their endeavours, be they social, economic or political, for this is the sure way to a better future for all of us.

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