

2013 APEC Conference: Innovation and ICT for Women Business

Date: June 28-29, 2013

Venue: Howard Civil Service International House, Taipei

The APEC Conference on Innovation and ICT for Women Business was held on June 28-29, 2013 in Taipei. The conference was attended by 150 delegates from 12 APEC member economies' public and private sectors. We were delighted that Minister without Portfolio Ms. Ying-shay Luo (Chinese Taipei) and Minister of Interior Mr. Hong-yuan Lee (Chinese Taipei) gave us the welcome remarks. The congratulatory addresses were given by Ms. Siti Meiningsih, the Head of ICT Research and Development for Posts & Informatics from Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Republic of Indonesia, and Ms. Wimonkan Kosumas, the Chairwoman of APEC SMEWG from Thailand. Experts and representatives from many international organizations and economies were invited to discuss the importance of ICT innovations on women's livelihood development. After enthusiastic deliberations, the participants have reached the following key findings and recommendations.

Key findings:

- Gender gap

Affordability, cultural barriers, lack of awareness and technical fluency are the main causes of gender gap in women's access to ICT devices. Building technical fluency is a critical precursor to broader adoption of ICT for women to access appropriate, scalable, and low-cost ICT technologies and improve learning outcomes in formal and non-formal education.

- Capacity building

ICT capacity building should be designed to motivate women to assume greater social and economic responsibilities and to empower women's participation in the global supply chain.

- Access to capital

Women tend to play an important role in informal job market and handle a high volume of low-value transactions in the developing world. Thus tailor-made ICT financial services prioritizing at convenience, reliability, security and privacy would be the keys to break the bottlenecks along their adoption curve.

- Access to market

Increasing the share of government procurement secured by women vendors can bring economic benefit to women and their communities. Training programs on ICT and equitable access to public contracts should be provided to create opportunities for women vendors that offer competitive products and services.

Base on the key findings, we have the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

Awareness

- Utilizing women's role models and best practices in ICT business to promote women's awareness on ICT opportunities.
- Incorporating family needs and provide information on healthcare, government service, financial service, education and access to market in ICT training program to stimulate women's interests of using ICT.

Affordability

- Improving women-friendly ICT infrastructures and offer customized packages, flexible charges or digital training to increase women's usage of ICT devices and service for disadvantage groups such as the elderly, rural women and aborigines.

Ability

- Leveraging existing telecentre networks to design basic training toolkits with accessible interface to increase digital literacy for women.
- Developing vocational training package with ICTs for young working women and engage mothers with the workforce.

Research and Policies

- Conducting landscape on ICT tools to empower women entrepreneurs and identify key elements of successful practices.
- Providing research-based policy recommendations for PPWE and associated APEC working groups to develop women-responsive policy and practical measures.

We are convinced that this conference is a great opportunity for member economies to address the pressing needs for women's ICT capacity building and business empowerment. Given the number of public and private stakeholders involved, **we would like to call for increasing attention and support on public-private partnership initiatives in the APEC region.**

Finally, we would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to all delegations, organizations and experts to share their expertise and experience on "Innovation and ICT for Women Business". We look forward to future collaborations in the implementation of the "Innovation for Women and Economic Development" three-year project (2013-2015).