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Q1: Respondent details

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Q2: Country or Customs territory

- INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Q3: Organization

Public sector

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Q4: Title of case story

ITC SheTrades initiative: Connecting one million women to market by 2020

Q5: Case story focus

Trade Facilitation.

Q6: Case story abstract

Women's economic empowerment is not a matter for government policy, the private sector, or social change alone. All have critical roles to play. This is why the International Trade Centre (ITC) has launched the "SheTrades" initiative, which seeks to connect one million women entrepreneurs to market by 2020.

Q7: Who provided funding?

Other (please specify) Multilateral Donors

Q8: Project/Programme type*Respondent skipped this question***Q9: Your text case story**

Women's economic empowerment is not a matter for government policy, the private sector, or social change alone. All have critical roles to play. This is why the International Trade Centre (ITC) has launched the "SheTrades" initiative, which seeks to connect one million women entrepreneurs to market by 2020.

- 7 global actions

ITC's months' long consultations with thought leaders around the world in 2015 sought to ramp up the trajectory towards eradicating extreme poverty by 2030. These consultations revealed that a key challenge is the persisting silos between the various actors working in this area, as well as the substantive components of women's enterprise development including research, policy, finance, access to markets; and capacity building.

SheTrades initiative provides a roadman for women's economic empowerment. It sets out seven global actions. to

address obstacles to trade, expand opportunities for women entrepreneurs and invites institutions across the globe to commit to:

1. collect, analyse and disseminate data on women's economic participation;
2. create trade policies and agreements that enhance women's participation in trade;
3. empower women-owned businesses to participate in the public procurement spending;
4. create corporate procurement programmes that embed diversity and inclusion in value chains;
5. address supply side constraints that especially affect women-owned businesses;
6. close the gap between men and women for accessing financial services; and,
7. ensure legislative and administrative reforms guarantee women's rights to ownership and control over resources.

- Results

With partners having pledged to connect 600,000 women to market within the year (up to December 2016) since it was launched, the initiative has received ringing endorsement from a growing number of leaders, decision makers and women entrepreneurs. Some results include commitments from companies such as Barclays Bank of Kenya (BBK). Launched on 15 July 2016 in Nairobi, the partnership between ITC and BBK under the SheTrades initiative seeks to equip 10,000 local women entrepreneurs with new skills and connect them to international trade opportunities. BBK set up a Kshs. 5 billion (USD 50 million) fund to offer credit facilities to enterprises owned or run by women. This is in addition to the Kshs. 30 billion (USD 295 million) that the bank has earmarked to lend to SMEs in Kenya. ITC employs its experience in business development to offer local women entrepreneurs support in critical areas, including financial management, in order to support them create and maintain links to international markets. Since July 2016, more than 1,415 Kenyan women entrepreneurs benefitted from the partnership.

Trade and investment promotion organisations (TIPOs) are also highly engaged with ITC SheTrades. Apex-Brasil, committed to connect 6,000 women entrepreneurs to international markets in the next two years through a new programme "Empowering women entrepreneurs through exports" that already reached out to 1360 women-led companies. Since its launch in March 2016, over 196 business meetings were organised facilitating USD 7.8 million worth of new business for women entrepreneurs.

- Turning to technology

The SheTrades initiative is supported by a web and mobile application, which is the result of a global tech-challenge organised by ITC, Google and CI&T aiming to connect women entrepreneurs to value chains all over the world.

Thousands of women businesses are now able to connect in real time, offering their products and services, boosting their companies in the global market and in supply value chains thanks to SheTrades. 4,600 companies (up to December 2016) have registered on the SheTrades networking and business matchmaking application with major proportion of companies coming from Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, India and Brazil.

All registered companies' benefit of it as a knowledge platform where e-courses, mentoring sessions, webinars and guidebooks about topics such as negotiation skills, e-commerce, market analysis, among others, are published and accessible on the App. Additional opportunities to attend trade fairs and exhibitions within SheTrades delegations are also offered through the platform.

Sara Yirga, owner & manager of Ya Coffee Roasters in Ethiopia is one of the 4,600 companies registered on SheTrades. Her goal is to improve farming, roasting, quality standards and expand her market by meeting new business partners. SheTrades provides what Sara is looking for: a platform for networking with peers but also a place where investors and buyers are ready to source products and services from women entrepreneurs. In Sara's words "SheTrades is a tool that really helps many women achieve their dreams of connecting with other women on the other side of the world. I see it also as a platform to inspire and empower women from different walks of life, but having one thing in common, a business to run."

The SheTrades App keeps being updated, improved and upgraded with new functionalities. Since November 2016 it displays a tracking system which allows getting from commitments to real implementation. Governments, individuals,

research institutions among others, can make specific, measurable pledges online around the seven SheTrades pillars as immediate actions to unlock markets for women to trade.

In simple words, the SheTrades initiative provides a framework of collaboration for partners to scale up and accelerate the rate at which women entrepreneurs are able to fully participate in the global economy, using trade and technology as a lever for economic resilience and transformation.

SheTrades is an initiative of the ITC Women and Trade Programme which is supported by the United Kingdom Aid through the Department for International Development (DFID), the Australian Government, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland as well as with support provided by the government of Norway and others through ITC's Global Trust Fund.

Q10: Lessons learnt

Respondent skipped this question
