THE BUSINESSWOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE BUSINESSWOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

A PRESENTATION TO THE MENA – OECD
WOMEN'S BUSINESS FORUM - PARIS, FRANCE
2011

Improving women's access to markets: the experience of the Businesswomen's Association of South Africa

BUSINESSWOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Government's Commitment

- The South African government is committed to facilitate participation in the main stream of the economy by persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.
- This includes black people, people living with disabilities, youth, and women
- The government has developed an integrated and coherent socio-economic policy and process towards the attainment of this goal.
- However, actual implementation has been slow as the number show

The National Gender Machinery

- Composite structures designed to function in a co-ordinated and mutually reinforcing manner while maintaining the independence of its institution.

- These include:
  - The Commission for Gender Equality
  - Ministry for Women, Children and People Living with Disabilities
  - National Office of the Status of Women, Provincial Office on the Status of Women, Gender Focal Points in Government Departments, Gender Focal points in Provinces (and local government)
  - Joint Monitoring Committee on Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women
  - The Parliamentary Women's Caucus (PWC)

Government's Mandate- The Constitution

- Legislation for the advancement of gender parity originates from the equality clause in the South African Constitution (section 9).

- In terms of the Constitution, in order promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.

- To that end, legislation has been put in place to advance gender equality
  - Commission for Gender Equality Act
  - Employment Equity Legislation
  - Black Economic Empowerment (Black women only)
  - Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (under review)
  - Gender Equality Bill (new legislation)

Gender Equality Bill

Development of new legislation currently under way :

- An overarching piece of legislation designed to ensure that we address the challenges facing women are addressed in a composite manner
- Designed to build on what has been achieved thus far
- Designed to ensure that gender parity measures are being enforced across all sectors of society
- To hold government departments accountable for implementation of existing
- To act as a mechanism for coordinating interventions on gender equality.

Economic Empowerment

- From the statistics, evident that economic empowerment still lagging behind
- No specific legislation dealing with women economic empowerment
- Issues dealt with ad hoc in other legislation especially dealing with racial transformation
- Gender Bill earmarked to address some of those issues

Gender Empowerment to Date Stats

Towards the attainment of 50/50 gender parity by 2015

- Political Environment
  - 43% women in cabinet
  - 38% representation in local government
- Corporate South Africa
  - 4.4 % women CEOs on JSE
  - 5.3% Chairpersons on JSE
  - 15.8 of all Directorships on the JSE
- Women Entrepreneurship
  - No Statistics available, but low participation in the mainstream
  - Women still engaged in survivalist, peripheral economic activity
  - Procurement Legislation has not made sufficient impact, it's not targeted and specific to women

Economic Empowerment – Government Efforts

- Department of Trade and Industry
  - 10 set aside sectors for procurement from women owned businesses
  - Preferential Procurement
  - Funding institutions – NEF, Khula / Ntsika, IDC
  - Other
- Discussion regarding a funding institution particularly for rural women through the ministry for Women and Children
- Efforts to ensure that state owned funding institutions pay particular attention to women entrepreneurs

Economic Empowerment – Civil Society Efforts

- BWA engagement with JSE for empowerment of women in corporate South Africa
- Conversations with multi nationals and large South African corporations for supplier diversity initiatives to encourage women entrepreneurs
- Conversations with government to set aside quotas for women in major projects and government contracts

Conclusion

- Government has made significant progress in terms of the policy frame work in general
- Specific legislation targeted towards women's economic empowerment necessary
- Implementation of existing provisions has been slow as the numbers show
- There is a need to set specific quotas for procurement and women within the corporate sector
- Civil society and the private sector has to take the lead to ensure implementation

BWA contact details

BWA Head Office

- Phone 011 486 0186
- Fax 011 486 0303
- Email info@bwasa.co.za

- Physical Address Office 230, Killarney Mall
  60 Riviera Road
  Killarney

- Web Address www.bwasa.co.za