

ACCESS! for African Businesswomen in International Trade

 SHARE

The International Trade Centre in partnership with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is conducting a regional Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop in Lusaka, Zambia, through a programme known as ACCESS!. This programme is meant for African business women in International Trade and it is part of the building African capacity for Trade (PACT II) programme. It is being implemented in partnership with COMESA, and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

ACCESS! aims at enhancing the competitiveness of women-owned enterprises in Africa and at promoting concrete business opportunities in international markets. It targets African women entrepreneurs who have already attained a fair level of management competence and are actual, emerging or potential exporters.

Speaking after the official opening ceremony at the workshop, PACT II Regional Technical Advisor Mr Frank Mugenyi said the project is meant for African women entrepreneurs with a fair level of management competence, potential exporters in national, regional or international markets. He added that chances of success for the women will be enhanced by building their international trade skills in selected economic sectors to help them explore new frontiers.

The benefiting countries include Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, South Africa, Rwanda and Tanzania. Mr Mugenyi said 30 potential businesswomen have been selected from each country and will be introduced to three markets categorised under regional, international and ethical fashion, a niche market on the international market.

Earlier, ITC Africa office senior trade promotion adviser Sebastien Turrel said that ITC is a focal point for export promotion and technical support. Mr Turrel said ITC is part of the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and its goal is to help developing and transitional countries achieve sustainable human development through exports.

Access! is an initiative that provides gender-responsive business development services such as:-

- A comprehensive exporters' training programme focusing on selected sectors in which women are traditionally involved and for which a significant export potential has been identified (coffee, leather, horticulture, services and textiles/handicrafts). In addition, the programme strengthens local trade-related training capacity reaching out to women entrepreneurs, through partnerships with African training organizations and business associations.
- Business counseling to selected enterprises to support them in developing and implementing their individual export strategies complements exporters' training with tailor-made expert advice and guidance from certified trainers and sector specialists.
- Market linkages allowing selected women entrepreneurs to access foreign markets through Trade Fairs, Buyers-Sellers meetings, Trade Mission or other international Trade Events
- And a web portal (www.womenexporters.com), facilitating women entrepreneurs' access to relevant export information tools and services, and providing an opportunity to showcase their company's capabilities.