



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Gender and Trade

A bi-monthly newsletter published by the Commonwealth Secretariat in association with Gender and Trade Initiative (GATI) and Department of International Development (DFID)



EDITORIAL



We are once again pleased to present before you the combined September-December issue of our gender and trade newsletter. Apologies to our readers for the delay on account of administrative reasons.

This issue seeks to present a fresh perspective on the impact of trade liberalisation and related forces of increasing integration in African countries on gender. We carry a detailed interview with Peter Jacobs, an expert on economic issues especially with reference to rural development and agriculture related issues on a diverse set of issues and concerns in Africa. We also present before you select facts concerning the increasing trade integration of countries in the Commonwealth region. A more detailed work which brings together diverse data sources available on gender in each country of the Commonwealth is under finalisation and would be released in the coming weeks soon.

Given the context of the Economic Partnership Agreements under negotiation between the EU and 75 different countries spread across the African, Caribbean and the Pacific region, the Commonwealth Secretariat is set to launch a major exercise on integrating gender concerns in to the EPAs. The newsletter highlights more details of this new and important initiative. There are other useful pieces and information including a piece on the impact of FDI on gendered wages in China.

As we seek to strengthen the value addition in the newsletter, we look forward to receiving your valuable comments, suggestions and other feedback. We also invite short pieces of any relevant issue on the theme of gender and trade from our readers for possible inclusion in the newsletter.



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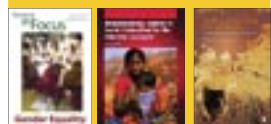
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Gender Analysis of Economic Partnership Agreements for 2008

With gender equality increasingly being seen as critical to growth, development and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there has also been recognition of the need to focus on the gender implications and impacts of trade agreements and policies. However, gender analysis and women's representation at all levels of trade policy implementation including at government level on negotiating teams and inter-sectoral trade fora and hence women's voices have been largely absent. To date, there is little evidence that gender analysis has been integrated into the preparations, discussion and negotiations of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

In response to this, the Commonwealth Secretariat and One World Action are embarking on a gender analysis of the EPAs in three regions as part of the Commonwealth Secretariat's DFID-funded Capacity Building in Gender and Trade project. The purpose of the analysis will be to provide commentary on the gender and women's rights implications of the overall texts and evidence gathered, to identify major challenges and impacts on development, and to suggest particular policy changes that will be necessary in the process of implementation. The identified regions are East Africa, Southern Africa and the Caribbean.

Through gender analysis of the draft EPAs and other evidence, this activity will seek to ascertain the major challenges and likely impacts on



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development, and to identify what policy changes will be necessary in the implementation process to ensure gender equitable outcomes.

Overall objectives of the analysis are to:

- Draw on the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the issues raised by One World Action's research, to strengthen

advocacy at the EU and Southern and Eastern African levels to put and keep gender equality and women's rights issues on the trade, and specifically the EPAs, agenda;

- Build capacity of women's organisations and other CSOs in Southern and Eastern Africa and the Caribbean to take advantage of the policy spaces under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement to engage more proactively with the negotiations and implementation process and engage effectively in national and regional debates on EPAs and in advocacy work;
- Build capacity at the national government level within trade and relevant sectoral ministries to improve integration of and response to gender impact analysis of trade policy implementation.

The analysis will be followed by dissemination through One World Action and Commonwealth Secretariat networks, followed by three regional capacity building workshops based on the findings, southern advocacy where possible and European advocacy in Brussels. The research is being coordinated by Marzia Fontana, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, and led by Chris Stevens, Overseas Development Institute.

For further information on this activity, please contact *Fatimah Kelleher, Programme Officer*, at f.kelleher@commonwealth.int or on 00 44 (0)207 747 6221.

A Shift in the Relative Gender Wage Advantages in China

A paper review of 'Foreign Direct Investment and Gendered Wages in China' by Elissa Braunstein and Mark Brenner, *Feminist Economics*, 13:3, 213-237, 2007

In an era of rapid globalisation and liberalisation of developing economies, China is considered to be one of the global engines of growth due to the rapid pace of growth at nearly 10 percent per annum for over the last five years in succession. Such increased rates of growth can be partly attributed to the increased rate of FDI inflows into the country. Apart from raising the investment and growth, a lot of recent literature has lauded FDI which results in an expansion of employment opportunities. The paper by Elissa Braunstein and Mark Brenner in the latest issue of the *Feminist Economics* titled 'Foreign Direct Investment and Gendered Wages in China' documents the impact of increased FDI on the employment pattern specially focusing on the effects of such increases on gendered wages in urban China.

Looking at FDI in China through a gendered lens is an extension of feminist literature on women and globalisation. With an expansion of the global economy and increased foreign investments, in developing economies there has been a rise in the employment opportunities for the women worldwide. It has often been associated with the labour-intensive and export-oriented assembly line production patterns, which made such 'feminisation' of employment possible in specific sectors. Such a phenomenon was observed in the rapidly globalising economies like the Latin American



Countries (LAC), Mexico, East and South-east Asian countries. Credible researches have already discussed the various problems associated with such employment opportunities to the likes of wage discrimination and other forms of non-wage discrimination. The Chinese experience has also been somewhat similar. Previous researches have shown the exploitation faced by women workers in the assembly line production units in terms of wage discrimination, long hours and poor conditions of work. This paper concentrates mainly on the declining urban wages of the women workers and simultaneously illustrates the existence of discrimination between the urban male and female wages.

The paper, while admitting that the Chinese context of evaluating the wage dynamics is a bit complex, also notes that the standard Chinese gender-wage ratio is higher by the

world standards. The female wages in 2002 have been 82.5 percent of the male wages, which is actually lower than its 1995 estimate of 83.2 percent. The study evaluates the impact of FDI on urban women's and men's wages by combining the household survey data from 1995 to 2002 with eleven Chinese province-level macro-data for two years.

The findings of the analysis suggest that the significant presence of FDI has had a positive impact on both male and female wages of the Chinese workers employed directly by the foreign invested enterprises and in those provinces where the presence of FDI has been more for the year 1995. In fact the women workers received a bigger boost in their wages relative to the male workers. But by the year 2002, such gender based advantages were reversed and in both cases whether employed in foreign invested enterprise or in a province with larger share of FDI, men workers

gained the relative advantage. The paper argues that there has been a shift in the production patterns by the foreign enterprises to higher productivity and more domestically oriented production. And since women and men are segregated into different types of production systems, women being more prone to be employed at low skilled production, the changing composition of the FDIs, which are more capital intensive in nature rather than the earlier light goods production units with labour intensive techniques, have seen the male workers as the gainers.

In conclusion, the paper also points out that while FDI does have a positive impact on the wages of both men and women, the changing patterns of investment towards less internationally mobile and more capital intensive production patterns have a tendency to widen the existing gender wage-gaps. Given the growth pattern of the Chinese economy, it will remain as a favourite destination for the FDIs in near future. The paper ends with a cautionary note that if the changed composition does not favour production of the export-oriented, labour-intensive light



goods, then there exists a possibility of gender wage inequalities persisting due to FDI. Under such circumstances, China would need to carry out policy interventions to address the issue of gender segregation.

While the paper brings out revealing observations regarding declining urban wages for women workers in China – an experience which almost all developing economies are undergoing in differing degrees – the paper does not adequately elaborate a policy framework and the nature of policies that can be adopted to regulate such FDI movements which are more favourable towards gender parity in wages. Also, another useful addition to the paper would have been an investigation into the gender wage

structure/dynamics of the state-owned enterprises in China. This would have led to a more comprehensive and comparative understanding relative to the impact of foreign investments in China and throw up pointers for a broad based policy approach to address critical issues of gender parity in wages.

The paper is an important contribution to the existing literature on gendered effects of international trade and capital mobility on employment and wages. It comes at a time when China is being projected as a possible model for the developing countries to emulate and having an ideal policy setting for promotion of FDI globally. That such policies are actually increasing the inter-regional and intra-regional inequalities across the globe has also been a subject of research and discussion. However, in this context cross country researches on impact of globalisation on gendered inequalities especially in countries with a high trade:GDP ratio and those which are also experiencing high rates of GDP growth would bring out interesting policy lessons. Coming back to the Chinese case which has been historically characterised by patriarchal norms, such inequalities may end up being accentuated rather than be reformed or addressed in any sustainable manner. The findings in the paper rightly suggest a cautious approach and the need to build in regulatory checks and supplementary measures in the quest towards gender equality.

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Select Facts Related to the Economic and Trade Profiles of Commonwealth Countries¹

The Commonwealth of Nations is an association of 53 independent states spread over six geo-political regions. The countries are as diverse in their economy as they are in their polity and society. Its members range from Canada, world's largest territory, on the one hand, to Nauru, a small island. Further, it includes desert countries such as Namibia on the one hand, and Bangladesh marked by high vulnerability to floods on the other. The countries are also marked by diverse economic characteristics at both ends of the development spectrum ranging from the very poorest countries (in terms of GDP) such as Mozambique and Tanzania to some of the wealthiest such as New Zealand and Australia. This introductory note is intended to present in an outline form some of the trade related facts and figures of the Commonwealth countries. More data for providing a country wide snap shot of gender related indicators for each of the commonwealth country would be

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The data highlighted in the note have been collected from different sources and include: the Commonwealth Secretariat, World Trade Organisation and United Nations. Calculations have been made wherever necessary. The presentation for each country has concentrated on an overall introduction for the particular

Table 1: Regional Spread of Commonwealth Countries

Regions	Countries
Africa	Botswana, Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia
Americas	Canada, Belize, Guyana
Asia	Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka
Caribbean	Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago
Europe	Cyprus, Malta, UK
Pacific	Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu.

¹ Extracted from a forthcoming research, authored by Dr. Arpita Subhash, Dr. Swati Sucharita Nanda and Dr. K. Murali, under the joint auspices of Commonwealth Secretariat and GATI.

Table 2: Ranking of Regions in Descending Order of Average Trade to GDP Ratio

Regions	Average Trade to GDP	Coefficient of Variation (CoV)
Asia	143.14	102.1
America	128.1	48.56
Caribbean	111.3	9.62
Europe	104.8	52.06
Africa	89.71	48.19
Pacific	89.56	44.02

country (overview, GDP) and trade (Exports/Imports) data.

Trade to GDP ratio which is an estimate of an economy's total trade of goods and commercial services (exports + imports, balance of payments basis) divided by GDP, on the basis of data for the three latest years available is given for all countries. This ratio is an indicator of the trade openness of the countries and their integration with the world economy. GDP is measured in nominal terms and with market exchange rates.

Even a cursory look at the trade data collected shows the existence of wide variations across regions and countries. For example, at its average, the trade to GDP ratio is 89.71 for African region and 89.56 for Pacific region while it is as high as 143.14 for the Asian commonwealth countries. This shows the increasing trade openness of the latter compared to the former region.

Region-wise coefficient of variation (CoV) is also given, along with the average trade to GDP ratio to highlight the dispersion of each country within the region. The CoV of a sample is the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean. It

Table 3: Ranking of Regions in Descending Order of Average HDI Rank

Regions	Average HDI Rank	Coefficient of Variation (CoV)
Europe	26.33	27.99
Caribbean	66.11	34.11
America	68	79.18
Pacific	78.63	63.72
Asia	88.5	49.98
Africa	139.44	24.6

is a dimensionless number that can be used to compare the amount of variance between populations with different means. Higher CoV means greater difference within the value of the attributes (trade to GDP ratio (Table 2) and HDI rankings

(Table 3)) of the countries within a region.

Even in terms of the Human Development Indices developed by the United Nations, the regions vary from an average of 26.33 for Europe to an average of 139.44 for Africa. This goes a long way to explain the existing levels of education, economic and political empowerment understood through participation in the workforce as well as in decision-making structures.

Commonwealth Countries of Africa

There are 18 African nations that hold membership of the Commonwealth. Except Seychelles,

Table 4: WTO Membership, Trade-GDP Ratio

Countries	Joined CW	Joined WTO	Trade-GDP Ratio (%) [#]
Botswana	1966	31 May 1995	90.0
Cameroon	1995	13 December 1995	43.8
The Gambia	1965	23 October 1996	100.1
Ghana	1957	1 January 1995	95.7
Kenya	1963	1 January 1995	56.3
Lesotho	1966	31 May 1995	148.5
Malawi	1964	31 May 1995	79.5
Mauritius	1968	1 January 1995	119.4
Mozambique	1995	26 August 1995	72.6
Namibia	1990	1 January 1995	83.1
Nigeria	1960*	1 January 1995	80.8
Seychelles	1976	Observer	192.2
Sierra Leone	1961	23 July 1995	57.3
South Africa	1931**	1 January 1995	54.9
Swaziland	1968	1 January 1995	172.8
Uganda	1962	1 January 1995	44.2
United Republic of Tanzania	1961	1 January 1995	50.8
Zambia	1964	1 January 1995	72.8 (2002-2004)
AVERAGE			89.71
Coefficient of Variance			48.19

[#] The ratio is taken for the period of 2003-05 unless otherwise mentioned.

* Suspension from 1995 to 1999

** Left in 1961, Rejoined in 1994

rest of the countries attained accession to the WTO at different points of time during 1995-96. Seychelles as of 2007 is still in the process of accession in the WTO and holds observer status.

Annual GDP growth rates for most of the countries are in the range of 4-6 percent (2003-05). While Sierra Leone (7.1%), Mozambique (7.9%) and Malawi (8.5%) are among high growth countries, Cameroon (3.5%), Lesotho (3%), Seychelles (-1%) and Swaziland have low GDP growth rates.

Countries also show significant divergence in terms of the sector having major contribution to their GDP. For example, Sierra Leone (49%), Cameroon (45%), Tanzania (43%), Ghana (37%), Malawi (35%), Uganda (30%) and The Gambia (30%) have pre-dominantly agricultural economies; while Mauritius (70%), Seychelles (67%), South Africa (67%), Kenya (65%), Namibia (58%), The Gambia (55%), Zambia (51%) and Botswana (50%) have high contribution from service sector to their economies. Swaziland (50%), Nigeria (53%), Botswana (46%), Lesotho (43%) have fairly large contribution to GDP from the industrial sector.

For most of the countries, the share in world merchandise and services trade is within the range of 0.00 to 0.05 percent. The exceptions are Nigeria (share in world merchandise exports is 0.4% and commercial services export is 0.17%) and South Africa (share in world merchandise exports is 0.5% and commercial services export is 0.44%). Kenya (0.06%) and Mauritius (0.07%) have a comparatively better share in world services exports.



For almost all the countries, major import items are foodstuff, machinery, fuel and transportation equipment. Electronics, chemicals, medicines and consumer goods are also exported to many of these countries.

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There are three Commonwealth countries in the American region. All of them have been members of the WTO since 1995.

Trade to GDP ratio of Guyana is the highest with 195.5 percent while Canada is at 72.9 percent. Average trade to GDP ratio is 128.1 percent with CoV of 48.56 percent.

GDP growth rates of the countries of the region vary from 2.7 percent (Canada) to 4.5 percent (Guyana). Contribution to the economy is about 22-23 percent from agriculture in Canada and Belize and about 36 percent in Guyana. Service sector contributes more than 60 percent to GDP in Canada (68%) and Belize (62%, basically due to tourism) and about 45 percent in Guyana.

In terms of exports, while Canada's export basket includes vehicles and aircrafts, machinery and telecommunication equipment, chemicals, fertilizers, fuel, electricity, wood and its products, export products from Belize and Guyana are similar and consist of sugar, molasses, fruits, fish and shrimps, wood and its products. Guyana also exports minerals and metals like gold, bauxite and aluminum while Belize also exports clothing materials.

Major import items of all the countries include machinery and equipment, fuel, chemicals, manufactured and consumer goods.

Canada holds the highest share in world total merchandise exports at

Table 5: WTO Membership, Trade-GDP Ratio

Countries	Joined CW	Joined WTO	Trade-GDP Ratio *(%)
Canada	1931	1 st Jan. 1995	72.9
Belize	1981	1 st Jan. 1995	115.9
Guyana	1966	1 st Jan. 1995	195.5
AVERAGE			128.1
Coefficient of Variance			48.56

* The ratio is taken for the period from 2003-05.

3.43 percent and world total services exports at 2.13 percent. Belize and Guyana have almost negligible share of 0.00-0.01 in world merchandise exports and about 0.01 in world services exports.

Commonwealth Countries of Asia

There are eight Commonwealth countries in the Asian region. All of them have been members of the WTO since 1995.

The trade to GDP ratio has huge variations between countries in the region with Singapore holding the highest Trade-GDP ratio of 431.8 percent and Pakistan at 33.1 percent is the lowest. Average for all the countries is 143.14 percent with CoV of 102.1 percent.

Most of the countries in the region have annual GDP growth rates in the range of 5-8 percent with the exception of Brunei Darussalam (0.4%).

Service sector is the major contributor to GDP for most nations. However, contribution from agriculture sector to GDP of South Asian countries is considerably falling between 16 and 20 percent.



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Textiles and related products are the common export items for all the nations except Brunei and Maldives. Again, with exception of Brunei, all other countries are importers of crude oil, petroleum and petroleum products.

With the exception of Singapore (about 2% in merchandise and services trade), India (about 1% merchandise and 2% in services), and Malaysia (both merchandise and services recorded about 1%), most of the Commonwealth countries of Asia recorded a miniscule share in world trade.

Commonwealth Countries of the Caribbean

There are 10 Commonwealth Countries in the Caribbean region. While nine of them are members of the WTO, the Bahamas is in the process of accession.

Trade to GDP ratio, which provides an insight into the trade openness of the specific countries, has St. Lucia at the highest with 127.3 percent and the Bahamas at the lowest in the region with 95.1 percent. Average trade to GDP ratio of the countries of this region is 111.3 percent with least intra-region variation of 9.62 percent as compared to other regions.

The annual GDP growth rate for countries of this region falls between 2.5 percent - 5 percent with the exception of Grenada (0.9%) and Trinidad and Tobago (11.9%) which are countries with lowest and highest GDP growth rates respectively in this region.

Almost all the countries of this region have tourism based service economies. In most of these

Table 6: WTO Membership, Trade-GDP Ratio

Countries	Joined CW	Joined WTO	Trade-GDP Ratio*(%)
Bangladesh	1972	1 Jan 1995	38.0
Brunei Darussalam	1984	1 Jan 1995	...
India	1947	1 Jan 1995	36.6
Malaysia	1957	1 Jan 1995	217.9
Maldives	1982	31 May 1995	166.3
Pakistan	1947	1 Jan 1995	33.1
Singapore	1965	1 Jan 1995	431.8
Sri Lanka	1948	1 Jan 1995	78.3
AVERAGE			143.14
Coefficient of Variance			102.10

*The ratio is taken for the period of 2003-05 unless otherwise mentioned.

Table 7: WTO, Trade-GDP Ratio of the Caribbean Commonwealth Members

Countries	Joined CW	Joined WTO	Trade-GDP Ratio*(%)
Antigua & Barbuda	1981	1 Jan. 1995	125.8
Bahamas	1973	Observer**	95.1 (2001-03)
Barbados	1966	1 Jan.1995	119.4
Dominica	1978	1 Jan.1995	109.1
Grenada	1974	22 Feb. 1996	114.4
Jamaica	1962	9 Mar.1995	102.0
St. Kitts & Nevis	1983	21 Feb. 1996	109.2
St. Lucia	1979	1 Jan. 1995	127.3
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	1979	1 Jan. 1995	110.9
Trinidad & Tobago	1962	1 Mar. 1995	99.8
AVERAGE			111.3
Coefficient of Variance			9.62

* Ratio is taken for the period 2003-05 unless otherwise mentioned.

** Observer status is regarded as accession in process.

countries, the contribution to GDP from services sector ranges from about 50 percent to 90 percent. Trinidad and Tobago have about 58 percent contribution from industrial sector with rest coming from services and just 0.7 percent contribution from agriculture. These island countries have relatively little contribution from agriculture (ranging from highest 17% in Dominica to 0.7% in Trinidad and Tobago) to their economy as compared to other regions of the Commonwealth countries.

Export basket of the region for most of the countries contains items like vegetables and fruits, bananas, cocoa, coconut oil, rum, animal and animal products, clothing and apparels, chemicals etc. Few countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica and St. Kitts also export items like petroleum products, minerals and fuels, manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment, steel products, fertiliser and electrical components.



In most of these countries, the contribution to GDP from services sector ranges from about 50 percent to 90 percent.

Average trade to GDP ratio of the Pacific region is 89.56 percent with a variance of 44 percent.



Imports in most of these countries consist of foodstuff, machinery and transportation equipment, chemicals, manufactured and consumer goods.

Share in world merchandise exports is nil for most of the countries. Jamaica and Bahamas have share of 0.01 percent and Trinidad and Tobago is best placed with a share of 0.09 percent. Share in world services exports is better for most countries compared to their share in merchandise (with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago which has a better share of merchandise exports (0.09%) as compared to services exports of 0.03%) and varies from nil to 0.1 percent (Bahamas) owing to tourism.

Commonwealth Countries of the Pacific

There are 11 Commonwealth countries in the Pacific region. Six of them such as Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tonga are members of the WTO while Samoa and Vanuatu are in the process of accession.

The trade to GDP ratio, regarded as a measure of trade openness of the country, shows Fiji as having the highest with 126.6 percent, while Australia has the lowest with 39.5 percent share (of trade) in the GDP. Average trade to GDP ratio of the region is 89.56 percent with a variance of 44 percent.

GDP growth rates of the countries in this region also vary from 0.3 percent (Kiribati) to 6.8 percent (Vanuatu) with Samoa (5.5%) and Solomon Island (4.4%) being other two economies with good growth rates.

(Contd on page 15)

“The Agrarian Sector ought to be Protected to Ensure Food and Nutrition Security First”

GATI: What has been the effect of trade liberalisation policies on gender equality in agriculture? Do you think rural agricultural women workers have benefited from the trade liberalisation policies adopted by the developing countries, specifically in the context of African women?

Peter: Across rural Africa, rural women participate in agriculture as small producers usually without tenure rights, farm workers on huge commercial farms and traders in informal markets for fruits and vegetables. Of course, most women straddle across these different livelihood activities. In my view, we need to systematically trace the effects of trade liberalisation for these different groups of women. The overall effect of agricultural trade on women in agriculture is likely to be the same, but the way it works will vary and would depend on which activities women actually participate in. Trade liberalisation does not resolve what Michael Perelman has termed the ‘farm worker paradox’. This paradox captures the idea that those ensuring the food and nutrition security of rest of the society are usually the most impoverished and hungry.

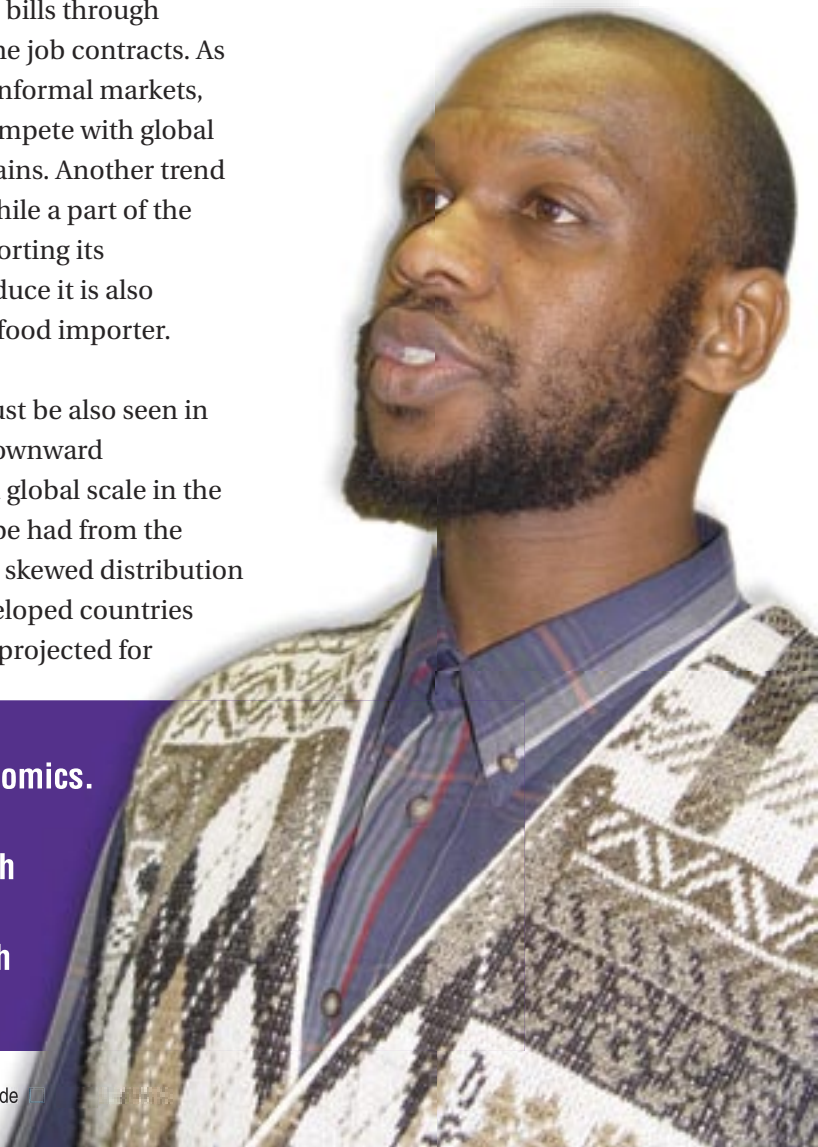
As small farmers, African women farm on marginal plots for subsistence with virtually zero tenure security. These women are constantly forced off their farms to make space for large-scale export farmers or real estate, tourism and mining by multinational corporations. As wage workers, women carry the costs of higher efficiency and growth gains. It is clear how growth or efficiency in agriculture operates at the level of the farm. At this level it basically translates into raising the yield per hectare and drastically lowering production costs. The focus of trade liberalisers has been mainly to reduce the wage bills through offering part-time job contracts. As traders in local informal markets, women must compete with global supermarket chains. Another trend to note is that while a part of the continent is exporting its agricultural produce it is also becoming a net food importer.

These trends must be also seen in the context of downward adjustment on a global scale in the overall gains to be had from the Doha Round, its skewed distribution in favour of developed countries and even losses projected for

countries in East and Southern Africa. In Tanzania, Malawi and Uganda exports as a percentage of GDP may fall by as much as 0.8 percent: and African countries are also net food importers.

GATI: Does the basic hypothesis that commercialisation of agriculture would drive away women workers, who are mostly situated at the bottom of the chain, holds in the context of Africa? Would you cite this aspect as a significant reason for most African women workers in the agricultural sector for not being involved in the production of cash crops?

Peter Jacobs holds a PhD in Economics. He lectures development economics at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in South Africa and is a research specialist in rural development at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).



Peter: Commercial farming, or more precisely large scale export-oriented agriculture, is not new in Africa. The integration of the continent into the global economy, at least according to the simplistic comparative advantage doctrine, was based on its natural resource abundance (land, etc) and availability of unskilled labour. Farming for export thus exploited the continent's ability and potential to supply exotic tropical fruits, vegetables and so forth to markets in the North.

It is hard to accept the hypothesis that an expansion of commercial farming is driving African women out of agriculture if we look at the evidence of last 5-10 years. FAO studies and increasing evidence from the grassroots, show the 'feminisation of agriculture' well under way in Africa. The number of women in rural areas and farming is rapidly dwarfing that of men. Men are usually the first to migrate to urban areas in search of income earning opportunities to supplement the rural livelihood. However, according to the 2008 World Development Report, agriculture and not migration to cities remains the main contributor to improved rural livelihoods. This implies that the role of women in agriculture, either as subsistence producers or farm workers, is far from diminishing.

GATI: Recent data on agricultural employment tend to suggest that women workers, because of their 'special skills' are able to perform certain special tasks (using 'nimble fingers') and are gaining employment opportunities in commercial agriculture as well. What is your perception and opinion in this regard? Do you think such a process is also taking place in Africa?

In Gambia there is an ongoing conflict, primarily through official agencies, over women's cultivation of major crops like groundnuts in the upland regions or rice in the low land. Men control these agencies and have been pushing women out of crops with lucrative export income.

Peter: The feminisation of the agricultural workforce in Africa is basically following a global trend. My sense is that women perform specific tasks in the agricultural production process and in some commodity types (or crops) employers prefer women over their male counterparts. On large scale commercial farms, women are not involved in land tilling that much, but more in planting, harvesting and post harvest treatment of crops.

This seems to be the pattern in established and in the emerging (newer) cash crops. For instance, women workers have been and remain the pickers on the vast tea plantations or estates in Kenya. The cut flowers industry which is rapidly spreading across Eastern and Central Africa is employing mostly women farm workers.

Let me cite a different but interesting case from West Africa. In Gambia there is an ongoing conflict, primarily through official agencies, over women's cultivation of major crops like groundnuts in the upland regions or rice in the low land. Men control these agencies and have been pushing women out of crops with lucrative export income.

GATI: Do you think that the lack of access to land and proper resources

for the women workers in agriculture, coupled by the adoption of trade liberalisation policies by the African governments have affected the food security in the region?

Peter: It is astounding that gender inequality persists in various forms even in countries that have gained their independence several decades ago, with human rights and democracy enshrined in their Constitutions. Under customary rules or institutions – dating back from pre-colonial times – women in Africa have had limited and insecure access to land and agricultural resources. In this context a woman's access to agrarian resources is determined or mediated by her attachment to a man. This institutional arrangement has been either resilient or just manipulated by male elites to retain their control over land-based resources.

Most African governments pay lip service to gender equality in the agrarian sector. Zambia's progressive land policies (informed by the Beijing Platform), for instance, require the redistribution of 50% of land to women. But this is simply not being implemented for a host of reasons, including embedded gender discrimination. More broadly though, it is the norm rather than the exception for land transfers to women to be market-based, privatised and commodified. External liberalisation seems to be speeding up this extension of market practices in the agrarian sector. Land transactions take place between willing sellers and willing buyers. State supported marketing boards and public sector agricultural extension services have been dismantled, all to conform to global trade rules. In this context, groups with accumulated wealth

and powerful men, dictate the rules and are the winners.

South Africa, which is an example of a developing country at an advanced stage of liberalising its extremely dualistic agricultural sector, has high levels of food insecurity in rural areas. And intra-sectoral trade in farming commodities is neither reducing these prices for the rural poor nor reversing the trend towards becoming a net food importer. Consequently, the burden for ensuring food and nutrition security in rural areas (in addition to the HIV/AIDS pandemic) falls upon women, who are the bulk of the subsistence farmers and temporary farm workers.

GATI: What kind of policies can be adopted to solve these problems? Would it involve increased engagement of women workers in the process?

Peter: The evidence is quite clear: rural women in Africa are the

poorest farmers, workers and traders in an unequal global trading regime. What can be done to break this pattern of unequal trade and its effects on women? Of course, agrarian reform policies need to explicitly incorporate gender issues. But in doing this, governments of the South must realise the limits and devastation of the unimpeded reign of markets – full scale internal and external liberalisation. Policies must recognise market failures and go beyond markets to tackle gender inequality. The agrarian sector ought to be protected to ensure food and nutrition security first. Priority must be given to integrate agriculture deeper into the local economy rather than just the global economy (export orientation seems to be driving the premature de-industrialisation of Africa). Agrarian support targeted to women farmers must be backed with financial support and effective local institutions. Local institutions need to operate on direct participatory principles involving women in an organised way in local decision making and other actions.

GATI: What, in your opinion, should be the first step for the various African Governments towards achieving gender equality in the agrarian sector?

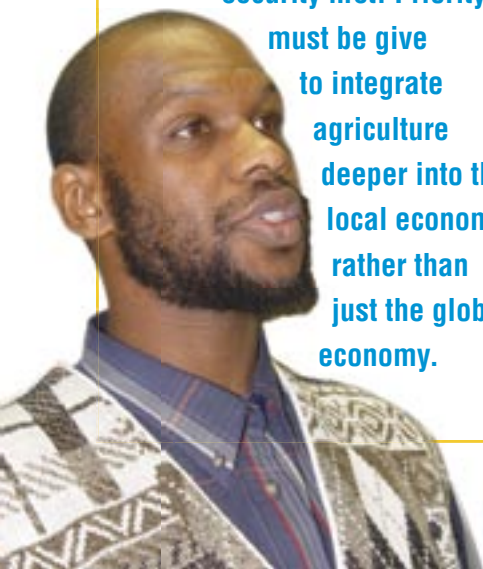
Peter: No single African country has the capacity or weight in the global economy to shift the current unequal trade regime to work for poor rural women and bring about gender equality. African governments need to cooperate in order to link their agricultural sectors around gender equity. They can, as a first step, facilitate the establishment of an independent network of rural women to craft an agenda for moving towards gender equity in the

agrarian sector at a regional level. Variations and commonalities in local socio-economic conditions exist for this initiative. This network will play a crucial coordinating function to ongoing disparate efforts in rural areas to improve the lot of rural women.

GATI: Do you think the issue of the effects of trade liberalisation policies on women engaged in agriculture has received adequate responses from various other stakeholders and policymakers across the globe? How have the multilateral agencies like the WTO, UN etc. fared in this respect?

Peter: The suffering of rural women took centre stage at the World Congress of Rural Women in April 2007, hosted by South Africa. It brought together a cross section of public and private sector agencies, NGOs and social movements from Africa and other parts of the world. It examined ways to improve the design and implementation of policies to advance the interests of women in rural areas. Many agencies operating at a global level have started mainstreaming women or gender issues in agriculture. The UN, the FAO and the World Bank now have embraced the gender and development (GAD) paradigm. A critical domain of work of these global agencies has been around gender dis-aggregation in surveying agrarian issues. But the GAD framework places the emphasis on the structural constraints to gender equality. This opens the possibility for going beyond just mainstreaming gender issues in agriculture towards genuinely altering the socio-economic and political structures that underpin gender inequality in the agrarian sector.

Policies must recognise market failures and go beyond markets to tackle gender inequality. The agrarian sector ought to be protected to ensure food and nutrition security first. Priority must be given to integrate agriculture deeper into the local economy rather than just the global economy.





Hazards of Horticulture

Women Engaged in Production of Fresh Cut Flowers Face On-farm Exploitation

Did you know that the horticultural sector is one of the major foreign exchange earners in East Africa?

The cut flower industry serves as one of the third major foreign exchange earners for the region after coffee and tourism. The market for cut flowers and vegetables in Europe, mainly UK, serves as one of the major export destinations for the East African produces. In recent years, Kenya surpassed Israel and Columbia to become the largest exporter of fresh cut flowers to the EU. Kenya is in fact the largest exporter of cut flowers to the EU in East Africa followed by Uganda. There are also other significant players like Zambia, Tanzania, etc serving the European demands.

The increased demands for African horticulture products have expanded the sector considerably. Given its labour intensive character, such expansion has created important employment opportunities, especially for women. A quick glance

While increased employment opportunities can be termed as a positive outcome from the industry, statistics suggest that majority of the workers are hired as casual labour.

at statistics shows that the majority of workers on flower and vegetable farms in East Africa are women. While increased employment opportunities can be termed as a positive outcome from the industry,

yet a closer look at statistics suggest that majority of the workers are hired as casual labour.

For example, in Kenya, 65 percent of labour force in the flower industry are hired as temporary, seasonal or casual and 75 percent of them are women.

In Zambia 77 percent of the labour force are temporary, seasonal or casual and 60 percent of them are women.





Casualisation of the workforce is one of the biggest problems for women workers in the horticulture industry. The women workers are subjected to a high degree of exploitation in terms of both wage and non-wage remunerations. The women are often paid at rates so low (often below a living wage) that fails miserably to take care of either the education cost of their children or cover health costs. Apart from the non-permanent character of employment and cheap labour availability on part of the employer, there are other factors involved in the industry which include health risks and violation of basic workers rights. Some of the basic difficulties faced by the women in the industry are listed below:

- The women workers are almost always forced to work overtime in order to meet retailers' demands. Such working hours sometimes extend to as much as 15 hours a day.
- Women working in the industry also complain of health hazards and permanent skin diseases due to excessive exposure to chemicals and pesticides. The workers are not always provided with protective clothing when dealing with pesticides and are sometimes pressurised to return to greenhouses immediately after spraying when it is still unsafe to enter.
- Women workers commonly complain of being subjected to verbal sexual abuse by those in supervisory roles who offer them permanent contracts for sexual favours.
- Women are often prevented from participating in any kind of union activity on many farms.

Given the fact that the horticulture industry is one of the major export earners in East Africa and employs a large number of women, it becomes

absolutely essential to take into account the discrimination and hazardous situations faced by them while formulating policies for the sector. Furthermore, mainstreaming gender in trade policymaking has been a major campaign point for civil societies, NGOs, institutions and academicians dealing with gender issues, human rights and women's empowerment in Africa in the recent times. It is therefore time for such bodies to come forward and take a closer look at the issues involved in the horticulture industry and campaign for addressing gender issues in the labour contracts in this sector.

■ [Compiled by GATI with cited inputs from *Promoting Women Workers' Rights in African Horticulture*, Bulletin 2, Women Working Worldwide, November 2006.]



Select Facts Related to the Economic and

Contd. from page 9

In terms of contribution to the economy, Fiji (77%), Australia (70%), New Zealand (68%), Kiribati (67%), Vanuatu (62%), Tuvalu (56%) and Tonga (50%) are the countries having more than 50 percent contribution to the economy coming from services. In Samoa, 58 percent contribution to the economy comes from industry sector comprising food processing and automobile electrical harnesses. Solomon Islands (42%), Papua New Guinea (35%), Vanuatu (26%) and Tonga (23%) are countries with high contribution of agriculture to the economy.

In terms of export-import basket of the countries of this region, except Australia which exports machinery and transport equipment and metals in addition to wool, meat and wheat, and Nauru which exports phosphates, most of the countries export agricultural

products. Almost all the countries import machinery and transport equipment, crude oil and petroleum products, food and chemicals.

Australia has a world trade share in merchandise and services export of more than 1 percent and New Zealand has around 0.2% - 0.35% share in world trade. Rest of the countries of the region have negligible share in world trade.

Table 7: WTO, Trade-GDP Ratio of the Pacific Commonwealth Members

Countries	Joined CW	Joined WTO	Trade-GDP Ratio# (%)
Australia	1931*	1 Jan.1995	39.5
Fiji	1970**	14 Jan.1996	126.6
Kiribati	1979
Nauru	1968
New Zealand	1931***	1 Jan.1995	58.0
Papua New Guinea	1975	9 Jun.1996	126.4
Samoa	1970	Observer##	88.2(1997-1999)
Solomon Islands	1978	26 Jul.1996	99.1
Tonga	1970	27 Jul.2007	79.9
Tuvalu	1978
Vanuatu	1980	Observer	98.8
AVERAGE			89.56
Coefficient of Variance			44.02

#Ratio is for the year 2003-05 unless mentioned otherwise.

*Statute of Westminster

** Rejoined in 1997 after 10 year lapse

*** Statute of Westminster

##Observer status is regarded as accession in process.

Human Development and Capability Association invites participation in its Annual International Conference on: *Equality, Inclusion and Human Development*

Organised by Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, India
10-13 September 2008

Main issues to be addressed include dimensions of equality that go beyond income inequality, relationship between (in)equality inclusion (or exclusion), formal and informal institutions impacting equality and human development, while also mediating to promote inclusion or mitigate/sharpen social conflicts, locus of equality and inequality: gender, caste, race, religion, ethnicity etc.

Applications are also invited for HDCA Summer School on Capability and Multidimensional Poverty, 29 August-9 September 2008, New Delhi, India

For more details please visit:

www.hd-ca.org / <http://www.capabilityapproach.com/>

International Association for Feminist Economics invites proposals for its Annual Conference on *Women's Work and Education in the Global Economy*

19-21 June, 2008
Torino Italy

Panel proposals and individual paper submissions are invited on any aspect of feminist inquiry into economic issues. IAFFE particularly welcomes submissions that examine the effects of women's and girl's education on migration, political participation, and on family outcomes. Other important themes include comparative studies of social welfare policy, domestic violence, feminist ecology, the intersectional analysis of race, ethnicity and gender, sex work and caring labour. Interdisciplinary approaches are welcome.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.iaffe.org/conferences/annual/index.php>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS



Poverty in Focus - Gender Equality

Number 13
January 2008
International
Poverty Centre

Poverty in Focus is a regular publication of the International Poverty Centre (IPC). Its purpose is to present the results of research on poverty and inequality in the developing world. Support is provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). This issue of *Poverty in Focus* highlights the importance of improving gender equity for pro-

poor growth and improved wellbeing of poor families, with references to recent research literature and sharing of important and policy-relevant results.

For accessing the publication please visit:
<http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/pub/IPCPovertyInFocus13.pdf>



Mainstreaming Gender in Social Protection for the Informal Economy

Naila Kabeer
ISBN No: 978-0-85092-840-2
Number of Pages: 412
Price: £ 20.00

In *Mainstreaming Gender in Social Protection for the Informal Economy*, Naila Kabeer explores the gendered dimensions of risk, vulnerability and insecurity and hence the need for a gender perspective in the design of social protection measures. Her emphasis is on the informal economy because that is where the majority of women, and indeed the poor, are to be found while also being where official efforts for social protection are most limited.

The book will enhance understanding of the constraints and barriers that confine women to more poorly remunerated, more casual and more insecure forms of waged and self-employment, and of what this implies for women's ability to provide for their families and cope with insecurity. Kabeer develops a framework of analysis that integrates gender, life course and livelihoods perspectives in order to explore the interactions between gender inequality, household poverty and labour market forces that help to produce gender-differentiated experiences of risk and vulnerability for the working poor.



Global Rice and Agricultural Trade Liberalisation: Poverty and Welfare Implications for South Asia

Mohammad A. Razzaque, Edwin
Laurent

ISBN No: 978-0-85092-861-7
Number of Pages: 224
Price: £ 20.00

Rice has long been one of the most protected commodities in world trade. Now the probable significant liberalisation of trade in rice is likely to have huge welfare implications for many countries dependent on its production and trade, particularly those in South Asia.

This book explores the poverty and welfare implications of this liberalisation for India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and identifies the effects on different groups within poor rice-dependent developing countries.

The Editors invite any relevant information, analysis, feedback and comment on the newsletter for enhancing its utility. If you have any questions please contact / write in:

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The Commonwealth Secretariat, established in 1965 is the main intergovernmental agency of the Commonwealth, facilitating consultation and co-operation among member governments and countries.

Gender and Trade Initiative (GATI), a programme of SOFCAR, seeks to address gender and trade related issues across South Asia and beyond through research and advocacy. It seeks to strengthen efforts at mainstreaming gender in trade, understand impact of trade on gender and build capacities.