

Gender-specific Barriers to Trade: Leveraging Market Access for Women-in-Trade

The market access arrangements like Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) have been an excellent opportunity for Pakistan to augment its export flows towards the European Union (EU). The renewal and (later re-application) of GSP+ status and integration with foreign value chains is indispensable for the stability of Pakistan's external account. While exports to EU have exhibited an uptick, however, broader objectives which included expansion of items in the export basket, increasing share of women-in-trade, and allowing smaller firms (or firms from vulnerable regions) to integrate in EU value chains remains a work in progress.

In view of the above mentioned, this session aims to shed light on the topic and answer the following questions:

1. How have women-focused firms integrated regionally and globally because of market access arrangements on the ground?
2. If there are sub-sectors across agriculture, industry, or services where women-focused firms could not achieve the anticipated gains, what were the key gaps on the public and private sector side?
3. How can the gaps identified above be addressed by various quarters in public, private, and regulatory spaces? Can development partners, global advisory entities, business associations, and knowledge brokers help?

Based on the above-mentioned questions, this sessions will frame a way forward which could lend the gains of global integration, including GSP+ and other market access arrangements. There will be lessons for improved presentation of Pakistan's case for GSP+ and Free Trade Agreement (FTA) dialogues at the government level.

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