

Foreword

Gender equality is a key factor for equitable pro-poor growth and sustainable human development. Trade, as an important aspect of globalisation and a major source of growth and development, can have major implications for gender equality. Yet gender analysis has not been integrated either into the substantive areas of trade policy and agreements or into non-trade concerns, such as food security, public health and labour standards, that have increasingly formed part of the negotiating framework for trade. The processes of globalisation and trade liberalisation are presumed to be gender neutral; they often ignore the fact that gender inequalities within society and the economy mean that trade policies do not have the same effects on women and men. Contributing to these differential impacts are gender differences in roles and responsibilities in the household, in the composition of a country's workforce and key export industries, and in access to resources – material, financial, technological and social.

Understanding these inequalities leads to the conclusion that incorporating gender analysis into trade policy research, formulation and implementation will enable trade policy-makers to strengthen the potential outcomes of their work towards the ultimate goals of pro-poor growth and sustainable development. To that end, the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 encourages member governments and commits the Commonwealth Secretariat to take various actions, including ensuring that trade and general macroeconomic policies are designed to promote women's empowerment and do not cause adverse gender impacts, and promoting the integration of gender analysis in trade policy and negotiation of trade agreements. These commitments are reflected in the Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2008–2012.

In 2004, when the Commonwealth Secretariat published *Chains of Fortune: Linking Women Producers and Workers with Global Markets*, we were concerned to ensure that the benefits of globalisation, actual or potential, were enjoyed by women as much as by men. The case studies that were brought together demonstrated how women producers and workers in the informal economy (who in many parts of the world comprise the majority of the economically active population) could contribute much more to the growth of output and exports if they were enabled to do so.

This new publication, *Trading Stories: Experiences with Gender and Trade*, is part of a wider Commonwealth Secretariat programme that has worked systematically to build capacity at national and regional level with the key government ministries and private sector institutions involved in

trade policy formulation, implementation and negotiations. Twenty case studies focus on the gender impact of trade frameworks such as the General Agreement on Trade and Services and sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and on best practice models that link women with global markets, including fair trade, organic, niche and mainstream markets. By bringing together these case studies into one accessible publication, *Trading Stories* is an invaluable contribution to the Commonwealth's commitments on gender equality, pro-poor growth and sustainable development, and a much-needed addition to a growing resource base that will advise and assist trade policy-makers and other stakeholders. Previous Commonwealth publications in this area include not only *Chains of Fortune*, but also *Gender Mainstreaming in the Multilateral Trading System* and *Gender and Trade Action Guide: A Training Resource*.

This book is the result of a collective effort by many groups and individuals. We would like to thank all the contributors for their inputs, former colleagues Sarojini Ganju Thakur and Fatimah Kelleher for their work on the project as it developed, and in particular the editors, Marilyn Carr and Mariama Williams, for their ongoing commitment to its completion. In addition, we would like to thank those who have reviewed the text and suggested revisions and improvements, as well as the production team, who have turned it into a finished publication.

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