

## Concept Note

### IORA Workshop for Women's Entrepreneurship and Skill Development

Date: 27 September 2017

Venue: FICCI, Federation House, New Delhi, India

#### BACKGROUND

The IORA *Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment*, which was adopted at the 16th Council of Ministers Meeting (COMM) in October 2016, in Bali, Indonesia, is a landmark document setting forth a regional consensus to address women empowerment and achieve gender equality in the Indian Ocean Region. Significantly, women empowerment is included within all project proposals along the six priority areas of IORA as an important contributor to reducing unemployment and for the subsequent alleviation of poverty in the region.

At the Council of Ministers meeting in Perth, Australia, held on 1 November 2013, the empowerment of women and girls in the region was identified as an important cross-cutting issue that needed attention as they were identified as important contributors to the economic and social development of the countries in the region. The belief is that empowering women will play an essential role in addressing the larger global goals of overcoming challenges: *food security, poverty reduction and sustainable development*.

Working towards achieving increased women participation, IORA is oriented towards building a *framework* for integrating gender perspectives in its programs and activities and supporting gender analysis and equality in view of scaling up its efforts to close gender gaps, enhance economic growth and strengthen the sustainability of development initiatives undertaken within the region.

**The forum is in favor of supporting initiatives and efforts in the education sector to promote women in the fields of science and technology as well as offer training programs for the empowerment and capacity building of women especially in the domain of *entrepreneurship*.**

IORA is considering offering an international platform for women to interact and share constructive strategies, insights and experiences.

Women entrepreneurs are on the rise in many Indian Ocean Rim countries and could make an important contribution to national economies. Countries that have not yet created enabling environments to support women entrepreneurs would greatly benefit from doing so.

While women make important contributions to a range of supply chains across Indian Ocean Rim economies, significant efforts are still needed to better integrate them into these chains and move them into higher value-added production and decision-making positions.

#### SOME CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN:

a. *Social Programing*

Most women (especially from rural and semi urban areas) are taught from childhood that rough and tumble of doing business is the domain of men.

b. *A Systemic bias*

i. Union leaders use tougher pressure tactics

ii. Banks likely to take budding women entrepreneurs less seriously

c. *Middlemen*

Many cooperatives and start-ups run by women do not have resources to market their products. They end up being exploited by middlemen.

d. *Lack of Mentors*

Rural women and urban poor have no means of training themselves to do business. Yet, within their limited resources, they turn out to be most enterprising.

e. *Lack of Government Support*

There are simply not enough schemes to train women as entrepreneurs or entrepreneurship schools where they could update their knowledge.

f. *Gender pay gap*

Gender inequality and gender pay gaps are significant disincentives for women entering the labor force compounded by gender norms that constrain their ability to take on certain types of roles and jobs. As a result, large numbers of women are living in poverty across the Indian Ocean Rim countries without the opportunity to reach their full potential as economic actors.

g. *Unpaid Care Work*

Women's economic participation across IORA Member States is limited by their disproportionate unpaid care work. This reduces their time available for work outside the home, contributes to occupational segregation and underpins gender pay gaps.

## **KEY FOCUS AREAS:**

### *Education and Training*

Women in Indian Ocean Rim countries are catching up with and in some places even surpassing men in years of completed schooling. However, greater efforts are needed to encourage girls and women to pursue non-traditional studies and careers, including in science and technology.

### *Gender equality laws and initiatives*

Important legal advances have been made in some Indian Ocean Rim Member States to protect women at work. Yet, significant efforts are still needed to provide the legal foundations for equality in the workplace and to ensure that these are put into practice.

### *Social Security and Financial Inclusion*

Across all Indian Ocean Rim economies, women need greater access to financial services, credit and productive resources including land, which serves as collateral and provides the foundation for starting and growing businesses.

## **PROPOSAL**

To achieve the aim of equipping the representative to be successful entrepreneurs FICCI is proposing a Workshop for Women's Entrepreneurship and Skill Development in New Delhi. This workshop will create a conducive environment to share best practices and experiences in overcoming challenges in IORA; and gain insights to the business models adopted in the Indian industry for replication.

To achieve the aims and objectives of promoting Women Entrepreneurship amongst IORA countries, we propose a pilot Workshop to be conducted in Delhi that shall cover the following domains relating to Women Entrepreneurial ventures:

- a. Strategic Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- b. Entrepreneurial education
- c. Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurial Finance
- d. Entrepreneurial Legal support
- e. Skill based trained workforce
- f. Safe work environment
- g. Technology as communication and branding

S. No.	Domains	Points for Discussion
1	Strategic Entrepreneurship and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Entrepreneurship approach and Innovation for Brand sustenance and growth</li> <li>• Social Entrepreneurship, Start Up Accelerators and Incubators</li> <li>• Best practices sharing across IORA representatives</li> </ul>
2	Entrepreneurial education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to formally skill up to become an entrepreneur</li> <li>• Refresher programs for entrepreneurs</li> </ul>
3	Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurial Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro-financing to crowdfunding</li> <li>• Art of Fundraising</li> <li>• Investment ready reckoner</li> </ul>
4	Creating a Safe Work Environment and Entrepreneurial Legal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies for Human Resource Management</li> <li>• Harassment at Workplace</li> <li>• Ethic based practices</li> <li>• Ready reckoner for every Entrepreneur</li> </ul>
5	Technology as communication and branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of ways entrepreneurs can reach their audience</li> <li>• Technology to build your brand</li> <li>• Best of Social marketing in India</li> </ul>
6	Interactive Session with Women Entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks by Women Entrepreneurs from IORA countries</li> </ul>