



## **Flyer**

### ***Introduction***

Access to education and training, the introduction of labour saving technology and significant social change over recent decades have contributed to ever increasing numbers of women in the labour market. Today, there are indications that they are excelling and even outperforming men in many fields, representing a critical, but at times untapped, talent pool. While companies are increasingly seeing women's skills, resourcefulness, creativity and perspective as a bottom line issue, there are many enterprises still to realize the competitive edge that gender balance brings. As a result women may take their talent elsewhere to other companies or start their own businesses. In addition, women as consumers often play the lead role in managing family income as well as increasingly having more disposable income of their own.

Despite their advancement across all walks of life, women still find themselves hitting against the so-called "glass ceiling" when it comes to their role compared to their male counterparts in top business management and decision-making functions. There have been many initiatives and studies over the last decade on the "glass ceiling". There has been some progress, but it has been much slower than the economic and technological changes that are rapidly transforming the social landscape and gender relations. It is important to take stock of these trends and their impact on different types of enterprises (small, medium, large sized, multinational, different economic sectors, etc.) as well as to critically examine how progress can be speeded up so that companies can better benefit from the available talent in labour markets across the globe.

The ILO-Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) aims to provide support to employers' organizations to play a more strategic role in assisting companies at the country level to better respond to the rapidly changing gender roles in economies and societies around the world. To this end ACT/EMP plans by the end of 2012 to produce a global report on the current status and trends of women in business and management through surveys, statistical analysis and secondary research. Information gathering through the ACT/EMP, IOE members and ILO networks in the regions will constitute key inputs to the report. An international conference will be held in early 2013 to examine the report and identify the way forward for employers' organizations and enterprises.

As part of information gathering for the global report ACT/EMP is organizing a series of regional workshops on Women in Business and Management during 2012. The workshops also provide a venue to strengthen networking between employer's organizations, businesses and gender experts.

### ***Regional workshop in Beirut***

The overall purpose of the Workshop is to strengthen employers' organizations to support enterprises at the country level to develop and implement policies on advancing women in business and management as a strategic business goal.

Specifically the aim of the Workshop is to:

- Share information on the situation of women in business and management in the region
- Analyse and discuss the trends on women's role in business and management
- Identify good practices with regard to policies and strategies of employers' organizations and at the company level on advancing women in business and management
- Propose strategies and the way forward for employers' organizations and businesses to work together to increase the proportion of women in business management at all levels
- Contribute to networking among employers' organizations, enterprises and experts so as to strengthen a community of knowledge and practice on promoting gender equality in the business environment within the region.

## *Profile of Participants*

Two employer representatives from the following ten countries will be invited to participate in the workshop: Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, oPt, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Yemen, Oman and Jordan.

Participants should be knowledgeable and experienced on issues related to women's position in business and management in your country. The persons can be either male or female. Ideally, they should be in a position to make a strategic contribution to follow up on the regional workshop at the country level to support women in business and promote more women in top management. Therefore, members of the board of the employers' organization or high-level managers from key member companies of the employers' organization would be suitable participants.

Should member-companies of employers' organizations be interested to send additional participants to the regional workshop at their own cost, this would be most welcome.

By the end of the workshop, participants will be expected to make suggestions on the way forward for employers' organizations to provide services to member companies on how to advance women in management and business at the country level.

## **Programme**

The workshop will be for 2.5 days. Please see attached the programme schedule for the workshop.

## *Resource Persons*

The main resource person for the regional workshops and preparation of the global report is Ms Linda Wirth, a former ILO official who was Director of the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality before becoming Director in 2005 of the ILO office in Manila.

Ms Wirth is familiar with the ILO having worked in the Sectoral Activities Department in Geneva where she produced the report on "Breaking through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management" for a sectoral meeting of the banking and financial services sector in 1998. The report was later developed into a book with the same title that was published in 2001 and became an ILO best seller. Ms Wirth is competent on the subject of women in business and management and in a good position to review progress over the last decade.

In addition the ILO Specialist for Employers' Activities, Gary Rynhart, and Project Manager in ACT/EMP, Anne-Brit Nippierd will also assist in facilitating the Workshop.

## *Pre-workshop Assignment: Country briefs*

Participants are requested to provide a **10-15 page** country brief on the status of women in business and management as well as information on company initiatives in their country to advance women in decision-making.

The country brief should be submitted to ACT/EMP at least 10 days before the workshop, preferably no later than **4th May**, to allow time for the consultant to prepare and circulate the regional synthesis paper before the Workshop.

Guidelines for the preparation of the country brief are given below.

Participants will not be required to present their country briefs at the workshop. However, the country briefs will be made available to all participants.

A regional paper will be prepared synthesizing the country briefs. It will also incorporate other available sources of information, in particular from countries not represented at the workshop.

### *Guidelines for Country Briefs*

Below is a list of areas to be covered in the country briefs to the extent possible and according to availability of information together with the expected time frame.

1. Most recent available statistics and data on:
  - the number of women in business and management;
  - women's share of management compared to men at different levels of management;
  - any statistics that show change over time would also be desirable;
  - data on the number and percentage of women CEOs and the proportion of companies (small, medium, large, multi-national) in the country with women CEOs;
  - data on number of women on company boards and committees;
  - data on women-owned businesses compared to men;
  - data on women in management in the public sector by way of comparison.
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2. Gender issues affecting women's access to managerial positions particularly at the higher levels of businesses;
3. Information on company policies and initiatives to promote women in business and management. These could include areas such as equal employment opportunity, recruitment and promotion procedures, training, work and family, sexual harassment, mentoring, diversity approaches, recognition awards (company level, industry level, government, women's organizations), and setting of targets. To the extent possible, indication of which type of company (small, medium, large, multi-national, etc.) and any available information on the number and proportion of companies in the country that have such policies and initiatives and how this is changing over time.
4. Information on initiatives of employers' organizations and/or chambers of commerce to provide assistance to member companies on advancing women in business and management.
5. Information on women business associations.
6. Information on government initiatives, including through the women/gender machinery and labour and industry ministries, to advance women in business and management.
7. List of country specific studies on women in business and/or management, if possible with electronic links.
8. List of institutions to which further information can be requested.
9. List of useful websites – employer's organization, chamber of commerce, women's business associations, management schools, institutions and so on.

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