
Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy

The annual Women and the Economy Forum (WEF) was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, from 3 to 7 September 2018 and included:

- A meeting of the PPWE working group
- A public private dialogue on women and the economy
- A high level policy dialogue on women and the economy

The theme of the 2018 APEC WEF was “Seizing Opportunities for Women and Girls to Advance in the Digital Age.” It had four priorities:

1. Empowering women to participate in the digital economy
2. Promoting inclusion and addressing impediments to women’s economic participation in specific sectors
3. Supporting women to advance into leadership roles in business, government, community, and political levels
4. Promoting “champions of change” and engaging more male champions

The [statement](#) issued by APEC ministers and heads of delegations shared the view that gender equality and women’s economic inclusion and empowerment are central to the vision of inclusive and sustainable growth of the 2030 development agenda and noted that the digital age is having an unprecedented impact on women’s economic inclusion and empowerment.

They encouraged the development of concrete and actionable measures to advance women’s economic, financial and social inclusion across APEC fora, and noted the importance of structural reform in women’s economic empowerment, given that many of the barriers to women’s economic participation in the region are behind the border barriers of a legislative, regulatory or policy nature. They also committed further to encouraging gender diversity at management levels, such as in senior leadership and governance structures. Ministers recognized that governments, the private sector and civil society must work collaboratively to create an environment that will enable women to benefit from the changing world of work through their full, equal and effective participation in it.

Ministers and delegation heads also welcomed the outcomes of the Public–Private Dialogue on Women and the Economy (PPDWE). The resulting statement was their contribution to the APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting in November, in Papua New Guinea.

The next WEF, which will be hosted by Chile, will take place from 30 September to 4 October in La Serena, Chile.

Current Initiatives and Projects:

The United States recently completed a project on “**Empowering Women as Managers in the Renewable Energy Sector.**”^[1] Forty-two women working in the renewable energy sector, who represent 12 APEC economies, participated in a six-month training program designed to support their accelerated career advancement through skills building and network expansion, peer-to-peer mentoring and the establishment of a robust alumni network. Further information about the key outcomes and recommendations from this project are [available here](#).

Chinese Taipei is currently leading a project on “**APEC GIFTS A: Promoting Gender Inclusion in Smart Agriculture**” (GIFT: Gendered Innovation for Technology and Science),” which looks for ways to develop the skills of women farmers in innovative agricultural science and technology. It will hold a major event at the 2019 Women and the Economy Forum in Chile.

Chile and Canada are leading a new project on **Women’s Participation in the Mining Industry** designed to determine the primary barriers to women’s increased participation in the mining sector, especially in management and corporate governance roles, and identify best practice solutions. In Chile women account for only 7 percent of the mining industry. The project included a workshop

June held in 2019 in Antofagasta, Chile. Chile is in the process of preparing a key outcomes report that will be available on the APEC website shortly.

Chile has also launched a new “APEC Healthy Women, Healthy Economies Research Prize,” an annual award recognizing research that enables policy makers, business leaders and others to implement measures to improve women’s health so women can join, thrive and rise in the workforce. A prize of USD 20,000 will go to the winner and USD 5,000 each to two runner-ups. The three finalists will share their research at the Women and the Economy Forum in 2019, with the winner featured at an event that will happen alongside the APEC CEO Summit.

With funding from the new APEC Women and the Economy Sub-Fund, in 2018 the United States and Australia continued work on “**APEC Women in STEM.**” They hosted a workshop on promoting and sustaining women in STEM careers, in October 2018 in Brisbane, Australia, on the margins of the 2018 APEC Chief Science Advisors and Equivalent Meeting. The workshop featured new data on the impact of women in STEM roles in APEC with a focus on investing in women entrepreneurs, as well as a targeted discussion on the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs with entrepreneurs from across the Asia-Pacific region.

Viet Nam is currently leading a new project on “**Advancing Inclusion through Enhancing Women and Girls’ Digital Literacy and Skills in the Context of Industry 4.0**” designed to share experiences and policies on facilitating women’s participation in STEM and ICT education and training, and access to digital services. ** **Further information about the key outcomes and recommendations from this project will be made available on the APEC website shortly.

Japan is continuing to lead a project on enhancing women’s leadership, as part of which APEC members are invited to develop annual **Individual Action Plans (IAP) for the Enhancement of the Ratio of Women’s Representation in Leadership.**[3] In their IAPs members share details:

- The current ratio of women’s representation in leadership in their public and private sectors
- Voluntary goals to work towards by the end of 2020

All IAPs, including those for 2019, are available [here](#). As part of this work stream, a review will be conducted in 2020 of progress in the ratio of women’s representation in leadership in member economies.

Papua New Guinea is leading a project on “**Gender Smart Workplaces – Building and Promoting Workplace Health, Safety and Inclusivity to Enhance Women’s Economic Participation and Productivity.**”[4] It hosted a workshop on “Gender Smart Workplaces” in the May 2018 in Port Moresby focused on best practices in ensuring healthy and safer workspaces for women. As part of this project, Papua New Guinea is developing a gender-smart workplace prototype to be used as a voluntary benchmarking tool by APEC economies, which will be made available on the APEC website once completed.

With funding from the new APEC Women and the Economy Sub-Fund, the United States held a workshop in August 2018 focused on tackling **health-related barriers to women’s economic participation**, including social expectation on women as caregivers, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and a lack of family-friendly policies in the workplace. The workshop also launched a guidebook to help SMEs implement elements of the APEC Healthy Women Healthy Economies initiative particularly relevant to them. [Download it here](#).

New Zealand has recently completed a project in collaboration with APEC’s Economic Committee. It looks at how structural reform can help remove barriers and unlock the full potential of women’s economic participation to promote inclusive and sustainable growth.[5] As part of this project, an **APEC Public–Private Dialogue on Structural Reform and Gender** was held in New Zealand in

September 2018. The United States is taking forward this work with the Economic Committee with a new project on “APEC Gender and Structural Reform: Women at Work” which will involve multiple events in Chile in 2019.

The third **APEC Business Efficiency and Success Target Awards** (APEC BEST Awards), an annual initiative designed to build the profile of, and encourage, women-led MSMEs in the APEC region, was held on 5 September 2018 in the margins of the WEF in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Launched in 2016, the APEC BEST Awards was the first annual contest for women-entrepreneurs across the APEC region. The APEC BEST Awards seeks to raise women’s awareness on the benefits of self-employment and help women-entrepreneurs to internationalize their businesses, attract international partners and potential investors from APEC economies. More details are available [here](#). The 2019 APEC BEST Award is scheduled for October in Chile.

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