



PRESS RELEASE

Women entrepreneurship – A must for the success of the SDGs

Durban, South Africa, November 3 2015 – In every region of the world, more and more women are seeking economic opportunity and self-determination through enterprise creation. The growth of women’s entrepreneurship is frequently cited on an anecdotal basis, and is increasingly covered and commented upon in the business media.

It is expected that by the year 2018, 9.72 million small, business-related jobs will be created and female entrepreneurs will contribute more than 50% in this job creation space. Statistics of this nature prove that women are becoming more comfortable in assuming leadership position and creating job opportunities on a large-scale¹.

“Women starting up in business tend to provide a more immediate contribution to the economy: Around one in five women come into self-employment from unemployment compared with around one in fifteen for men,” said Mrs Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong, the Director of Programmes at the NEPAD Agency.

Mrs Fotabong gave her key note statement at the *2nd Conference for Women in Agribusiness*, in Durban. She emphasized that women have power to contribute more the African economies. Mrs Fotabong also stressed that entrepreneurship is critical to the success of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the inter-governmentally agreed set of targets for international development leading up to 2030.

“At the heart of the strategy for agrarian transformation is the development of the small-scale farmer,” said Mr Cyril Xaba, MEC for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in KwaZulu-Natal. “If the statistics are examined more closely, it actually means unleashing the potential of women in agriculture,” he said.

Dr Martha Mbatha, Chairperson of the Agribusiness Development Agency, maintained that women are still the major producers of food in Africa, producing between 60 to 80 percent of the food output. She insisted that it is important to take heed of women’s voices in agribusiness, whose humility is at times mistaken for ignorance.

Dr Tobias Takavarasha, FAO Representative for South Africa, concurred with Dr Mbatha in reiterating that women play an indispensable role in agriculture and food security. Dr Takavarasha further stated that partnerships in maximising women’s potential in

¹ Guardianlife.com



agribusiness entrepreneurship remain critical. Therefore, women who excel in the agrarian sector need to be given due recognition.

The exhibition at the conference provided female exhibitors the space to showcase their value-add agricultural products. About 200 participants at the conference had the opportunity to also dialogue and share their experiences in agribusiness. In addition, capacity building training was also provided in the area of agribusiness processes.

For more details and to arrange interviews

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