Concept Note

“Mobilizing Public and Private Investments in the LDCs For Women’s Economic Empowerment”


When: 13 March 2018, 1.15 pm- 2.30 pm
Where: Conference room 8, UN Secretariat

Introduction
Gender equality is vital to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which envisions a world where “every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed.” With women, especially in the least developed countries on the margins with inadequate access to resources and economic opportunities, the concept of “Leaving no one behind” needs to include a stronger focus on promoting women’s economic empowerment specially in the rural areas.

Fostering the full participation of women in local economic development and entrepreneurship requires overcoming entrenched discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes and challenging existing inequitable social and economic structures. More needs to be done to achieve lasting benefits for improving the quality of life for rural women as they have already limited social and economic infrastructure and thus limited access to basic social services and decent job opportunities.

To unleash the potential of rural women's economic empowerment, public and private investments are required to fund services and infrastructure projects that can reduce the time and effort women spend on unpaid care work and facilitate their access to markets. Investments are also needed to expand women’s economic opportunities and capitalize women’s businesses. Today an exciting array of new investment instruments are being developed to fund such initiatives, including social impact bonds and structured finance tools.

Objective
This side event organized by UNCDF, UNDP and UN Women within the framework of the CSW 62 brings together member states, development practitioners, philanthropies and social impact investors to explore innovative strategies for mobilizing financial resources for gender-responsive investments.

The event will showcase the joint initiative “Inclusive and Equitable Local Development” (IELD), which seeks to promote women’s economic empowerment at the local level by identifying, de-risking and matching gender-responsive investments with public and private domestic capital. The programme engages with local governments in the Least Developed Countries to identify and fund gender responsive local investments that directly promote women's economic well-being. The
discussion will address how these public and private investments can enable the local economic environment to encourage and expand women’s entrepreneurship and empowerment as well as the holistic approach taken by IELD to ensure the success of the programme.

Organizers: Government of Switzerland, UNCDF, UNDP and UN Women

Proposed Speakers:

Chair: Randi Davis, Director Gender Team, BPPS UNDP

Panelists:
- Markus René Seiler, General Secretary, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Switzerland
- Juma Ally Mnwele, District Executive Director of Kibondo District Council Kigoma, Tanzania
- Taslima Sultana Khanam, President, Women Development Forum, Bangladesh
- Joan M. Larrea, Chief Executive Officer, Convergence (TBC)
- Eleni Kyrou, Senior Social Development Specialist, European Investment Bank (TBC)

Closing remarks: UNCDF and UN Women