

EXPORT TO CANADA NEWS

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THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER INCLUSION IN THE CANADIAN IMPORT MARKET

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



STEVE TIPMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TFO CANADA

I hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy. With March 11th, 2021 marking the 1st anniversary since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, we find ourselves in a very different place than we were a year ago.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone, particularly the world's companies that are led by women. According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the impact was felt more by women because they have a majority presence in the sectors most affected by the global recession; these sectors include hospitality, leisure, retail and aviation. We also cannot ignore that persistent gender gaps in access to technology and by other historical inequalities, such as caring responsibilities, compound the impact of COVID-19 on women. According to the WTO, the effects of the crisis are being felt even more in least developed and developing/emerging countries.

As a non-governmental organization that is focused on the "aid for inclusive trade" nexus, TFO Canada is adapting and responding. Over the next few years, we have a number of key initiatives that will see us working more closely with Trade Support Institutions to develop and provide new services and resources specifically for women exporters. We will also increase capacity in digital skills enabling more exporters to reach buyers through their own websites, social media, and e-commerce platforms. We expect to promote the growth of socially and environmentally responsible business practices in response to the global demand for information and accountability in supply chains. Other important areas for TFO Canada will be our work with women's business associations and continuing outreach with buyers who understand the benefits of gender inclusion as part of their sourcing strategy and making those connections with women-led and women-owned exporting businesses.

I wish everyone to remain healthy and safe. Together, we will get through this!



Tipman's Trade Tip

Steady growth is essential: A common mistake has to do with business owners taking on too much, too fast. They may find themselves taking on a contract that's too large for them to meet the increased demand. To avoid these pitfalls, it is recommended that exporters develop a solid export plan and follow through with it.

CHALLENGES FACING AFRICAN WOMEN EXPORTERS AND HOW THEY CAN LEVERAGE THE AfCFTA

By *Nadia Hasham*

Trade Policy Expert, African Trade Policy Centre, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Women-owned businesses play a critical role in African economies. They are disproportionately micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and informal economy operators (IMSMEs). Challenges in accessing formal finance, productive assets, technology, markets, and information as well as a lower representation of women in decision-making lead to lower levels of investment and compliance with standards. Women in creative industries face threats to intellectual property, and the small size of their businesses makes them vulnerable to anti-competitive practices. Women entrepreneurs therefore lack economies of scale as well as formal benefits and protections. Women are often concentrated in low-value added and low-skilled labour-intensive sectors at risk of automation. Competitiveness in export-led growth of these sectors may be driven by the gender wage gap and may also lead to occupational segregation of women in low-skilled jobs. When trading, women reportedly encounter non-tariff barriers (NTBs) more frequently than their male counterparts, including technical regulations, fees and charges, and complex customs and entry procedures, which are generally considered to inhibit trade more than tariffs. Female cross-border traders, often informal, face additional challenges of harassment and corruption. Limited access to business networks makes it difficult to overcome barriers to entering international export markets, especially for young women. Though digital trade makes accessing a wider market and connecting to larger suppliers easier, the gender digital divide creates difficulties for women exporters to make use of e-commerce, with women having lower access to digital tools, broadband infrastructure, and digital literacy.

Despite these challenges, women play a critical role in economic growth and trade on the African continent, representing 50 percent of the agricultural labour force and up to 70 percent of Informal cross-border traders, who are critical for food security on the continent and in global agricultural value chains. Women in the private sector are innovative, as seen through the aggregation of goods through cross-border traders associations for transport during COVID-19 border disruptions. Women have the potential to lead the charge on digital



trade and utilise the potential of e-commerce to accelerate business growth. Women exporters have the potential to thrive with improved access to markets if their disproportionate barriers to trade are addressed.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement can help tackle these challenges and become a catalyst for women exporters to realise their full potential. With the start of trading on January 1st, 2021, the AfCFTA is expected to strengthen regional value chains and increase exports in female-dominated sectors across agriculture, manufacturing, and services. For women, this presents an opportunity for increased value addition, which can also help attract and diversify investments. The AfCFTA is also expected to be a tool for socio-economic development, creating jobs, supporting food security, and reducing poverty. With more rapid increases in lower-skilled wages expected, some evidence suggests a possible narrowing of the gender wage gap over time, contingent on improvements in trade facilitation.

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Critical for women traders, the Agreement includes an online mechanism for monitoring, reporting, and eliminating NTBs and improving trade facilitation and customs cooperation. The scale-up of successful transport and trade facilitation programmes is encouraged, many of which have been shown to benefit women.

The policy coherence fostered by the Agreement makes trading with multiple African countries more predictable. Women's business associations across borders can also support coordination efforts including sharing experiences, capacity building, access to professional networks, and aggregation to trade larger amounts more cost effectively. To complement this, training and skills development opportunities such as those offered by TFO Canada can help women gain technical knowledge in sectors likely to gain from trade, as well as upgrade their skills for the digital era and even export skill-based services.

For these possibilities to become realities, complementary policies must support inclusive AfCFTA implementation and address gender-based barriers to trade. Women exporters can advocate for inclusive policies at the national level through business associations, in the development of national and regional AfCFTA implementation strategies, with participation in national implementation committees, and through policy engagement forums convened by organisations like the UN Economic Commission for Africa. Women can also leverage capacity building and training efforts made available by partners to develop skills and export capacity. Associations can work to build linkages between larger and smaller players and give women access to networks they often lack and unlock opportunities for access to finance and assets. In addition to promoting e-commerce, the diaspora can identify connections that support linkages between African women exporters and Canadian consumers. Forthcoming AfCFTA negotiations on intellectual property, investment, competition, and e-commerce and a proposed protocol on women in trade, combined with sensitisation efforts, will help ensure women exporters in Africa benefit from expanded trade through the AfCFTA and realise their full potential.

NEW STAFF



Aden Gebremeskel
Project Accountant

Aden brings a wealth of financial and not-for-profit experience to TFO Canada. She graduated from Carleton University with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics with a minor in Accounting. She is also a Certified Payroll Practitioner with the Canadian Payroll Association. Aden has always had a passion for social justice and anti-oppression that led her to pursue a career in youth and women's rights organizations. She started her professional journey with Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights as a Finance Officer. She went on to develop her finance knowledge and experience working at MATCH International Women's Fund and 4-H Canada. Beyond the workplace, Aden has served as a volunteer on several not-for-profit boards, student associations and local events.

Aden was born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She likes desserts and summer.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Tiéoulé Traoré

Senior Consultant, Government Relations at NATIONAL Public Relations

Tiéoulé is Senior Consultant (government relations) for NATIONAL Public Relations, Canada's biggest public affairs firm. Prior to joining NATIONAL in 2019, Tiéoulé spent five years working for various national industry associations, dealing with files such as telecommunications (with the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association) and intellectual property (with the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada). Tiéoulé also had a brief stint on Parliament Hill (2012–2014), where he worked for a member of parliament.

Tiéoulé holds a Master's degree from Quebec City's Université Laval (Political Science). A Canadian citizen since 2016, Tiéoulé also holds dual French/Malian citizenships.



NEW BOARD MEMBER

Hadia Amrane

Senior Finance Professional

Hadia Amrane has over 15 years of operational and strategic experience within diverse industries and sectors, across domestic and International markets. She has been working in the aerospace, transportation and financial industry and brings a strong focus on risk management, corporate finance, international trade and business development.

Ms. Amrane is the Treasurer and Head of Shared Services of MHIRJ Aviation Group (a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries). Prior to her current role, she worked at Bombardier Inc. in Corporate Treasury and HSBC as the Country Head, Client Services Global Trade and Receivables Finance. She has previously served as Senior Internal Auditor and International Trade Manager at National Bank of Canada where she held various management roles.

Ms. Amrane is a member of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Quebec. She holds a Bachelor of Finance and International Management from the University of Ottawa as well as an MBA from the University of Quebec in Montreal.



The Canadian Services Sector

We are pleased to announce the release of our new Market Information Paper for the Services Sector. This guide includes information about the Services industry (I.T, Tourism, Creative and Culture, and Education) and Canada's role as a country that relies on services from different countries. It provides details about how importers can leverage the Canadian market. The full guide is available on our [website](#) in English, French and Spanish. You must be registered with us to access the full document.

Executive Summary

Canada is an important services market. According to UNCTADSTAT, Canada is the 14th largest importer of services in the world. Additionally, Canada is a net importer of services. In 2019, services imports to Canada totalled \$161 billion and services exports \$139 billion.

Information Technology

Canada's fast-growing information communications technology (ICT) sector contributed \$94.1 billion dollars and 4.8% to the national GDP in 2019. 2020 forecasts predict that the sector will continue to grow to over \$99 billion by the end of 2022. In 2019, ICT imports totaled over \$11 billion dollars, growing steadily year after year for over a decade.

Despite the tremendous negative economic impact COVID-19 has had on the Canadian economy, the IT sector has remained, for the most part, resilient for a variety of reasons. This includes the sector's ability to shift their processes quickly and easily to remote locations when compared to other sectors, the increased demand for IT services catalyzed by the pandemic and the resulting social distancing measures as well as the new emphasis placed by businesses on investments in technology in order to drive digital transformation in a post-COVID economy.

Tourism

With very few exceptions, international travel by Canadians had grown steadily year after year for over fifty years. In 2019, Canadian residents made 12.3 million trips to countries other than the United States, spending an estimated \$21.7 billion on travel. Canada, in fact, ranks sixth among all countries in international tourism expenditures.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous negative impact on the global tourism sector. International tourism expenditures in Canada dropped from approximately \$21 billion in 2019, to an estimated \$4.7 billion in 2020.

Creative and Cultural Industries

Canadians are strong consumers of the creative and cultural industries. Each year, over 99% of Canadians participate in 'culture' in some way. Canada is the most ethnically diverse country among modern Western countries. The ethnic makeup of Canada impacts not only the purchasing habits of recent immigrants and their children, but of mainstream Canadians as well, providing ample opportunities for services exporters in this sector.

In 2018, the latest year for which data is available, imports of cultural products (goods and services) totaled \$2.9 billion, an increase of almost 14% from 2014 and accounting for 2.9% of Canada's total imports.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting public health measures have had a tremendous impact on the creative and cultural industries. For at least the short-term, services exports to Canada in this sector will be impacted by factors such as social-distancing measures and the length of time these restrictions stay in place as well as the ability of exporters to connect with their audiences online in the interim.

Education

When it comes to study-abroad programs Canada falls behind many other developed countries, with only 11% of Canadian university undergraduates participating in an international experience during their degree. However, the Canadian government has recently acknowledged the importance of study and work abroad opportunities and, to support and encourage study-abroad initiatives, has launched the International Education Strategy (IES) 2019-2024.

One of the 3 key objectives of the IES strategy is to, "encourage Canadian students to gain new skills through study and work abroad opportunities in key global markets, especially Asia". This provides a timely opportunity for learning institutions, particularly those in Asia and Latin America, to develop programs and marketing initiatives tailored to Canadian students wishing to take advantage of the Outbound Student Mobility Pilot.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Asia and the Middle East



During January-March 2021, the Asia team actively worked with stakeholders to implement program activities through online delivery mechanism in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth (WIT) project, the Asia team has held several online meetings with all stakeholders in Jordan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cambodia, and signed the implementation agreements with Jordan and Bangladesh. The first activity, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) training is planned to be conducted in March 2021 for both countries.

The Asia team is also providing technical assistance for Canadian Trade and Investment Facility for Development (CTIF). The final

phase of the [CTIF ASEAN](#) project was successfully completed in February 2021. Under CTIF ASEAN, TFO Canada has supported four countries who are members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) -Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia- to enhance the capacity of organic producers, particularly women-led SMEs, to increase their business opportunities in the Canadian market and adapt their production processes and products to meet Canadian organic standards. A GESI strategy has been developed for ASEAN Organic Federation based on a baseline assessment. The Market Information Paper for Organic, Global and Fairtrade foods has been developed. In addition, training was conducted for a total of 72 SMEs from the 4 countries and 1-1 consultation sessions provided to 39 SMEs (including 21 women-led/owned SMEs).

PROGRAM UPDATES

Africa & Haiti



During the month of January, the TFO Canada Africa team completed the GESI training for senior management and board for partners of the LUME and WIT projects in Lesotho and Uganda. *"One of the most limiting things about girls and women is that we are raised to be like angels and be perfect. While it's a good thing to be a good person, men and boys are given a pass to be whatever they want to be, the good and bad, and they are able to achieve much more because it's ok for them to take risks. Trade is about risks not perfection."* Mme Khahliso, GESI training participant from Lesotho National Development Corporation.

GESI Executive Seminars will be delivered next for the senior management of WIT partners in Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria.

As we get closer to the end of the first year of implementation for both WIT and LUME projects, annual partner meetings were conducted in Ethiopia and Uganda for LUME and WIT partners and in Lesotho for (LUME). In this meeting the findings of the local market research were validated.

In relation to forging partnerships under the WIT project, the Africa team signed partnership agreements with Ghana Export Promotion Authority, Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency, Zambia Development Agency and Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

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Program Updates – Africa & Haiti Cont'd

A ceremony was held in presence of the Canadian embassy to Morocco to sign the partnership agreement with the Moroccan Association of Exporters (ASMEX). TFO Canada and ASMEX will work together on implementing the WIT project which will focus on three sectors: Agrofood (fresh and processed); interior design and textiles; and services (ICT).

TFO Canada is completing the project entitled: Training of Trainers Project to Promote Access to the Canadian Market for Malian Women Entrepreneurs. Funded by UN Women in Mali and implemented by TFO Canada in partnership with the Embassy of the Republic of Mali in Canada, the Mali Export Agency, and the Mali Agency for the Promotion of Investments, the project has helped strengthen the capacity of 36 Malian trainers (12 women and 24 men) to assess and develop the export potential of Malian women-led businesses to access the Canadian and other international markets. The trainers also received training in digital marketing and e-commerce.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Latin America & the Caribbean



Through the Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth (WIT) project, the Latin American team and the implementing partners in Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia and Peru finalized the partnership agreements. Between February and March, TFO Canada signed agreements with AGEXPORT – Guatemala and Camara de Comercio e Industrias de Cortes – Honduras..

Between January and March, gender-specific research was conducted in the four countries. This included conducting several interviews with local and international sector experts, SMEs, sector organizations and TSIs officials. Specific environmental and human rights/governance issues were identified, along with

the sectoral and market access challenges in the selected economic sectors. The findings revealed the prioritization of products to be promoted in the Canadian and US markets.

Local gender experts were hired for conducting GESI capacity building programs for the lead TSIs' senior management in Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia and Peru. In February, the local experts participated in orientation sessions with TFO Canada's Gender Advisor to provide guidelines for customizing GESI Executive Seminar modules. Likewise, the Latin American team conducted the survey on Women Empowerment Principles to each of the TSIs to identify their starting point. The team also coordinated the logistics of the trainings that started in March for PROCOLOMBIA, PROMPERU and Camara de Cortes.

The team collaborated to design a benchmarking tool to assess the capacity of the TSIs to deliver gender sensitive export support services. In February, the four TSIs completed the assessment and the team designed a consultancy to implement a Training of Trainers program tailored to their needs. The Latin American team also collaborated with the consultant to design the training module and tools under the project's environment component.

Many SMEs and TSIs from the region were supported with information on the Canadian market. Through TFO Canada's website, the team made available on a weekly basis relevant articles and tools in Spanish for SMEs, TSIs and buyers.

SPOTLIGHT ON TFO CANADA ACTIVITIES

Introducing TFO Canada online services

February 2021

TFO Canada organized the webinar "Introducing TFO Canada's On-line Services" in English, Spanish and French. The webinars were attended by a total of 125 participants (SMEs and representatives from TSIs) where they learned how to browse the TFO Canada website to find the information needed and use different tools to create an export plan, search for Canadian importers for their products and services, understand the added value of placing their export offers in our foreign suppliers' database, and how to find industry-specific information, while accessing up-to-date information about the Canadian market. If you missed the webinar, please check out the recording on our [website](#).

Changes in the Agro food Canadian Import Market under COVID -19 Pandemic

Changements dans le marché canadien des importations agroalimentaires à cause de la pandémie COVID -19"

March 4th, 2021

4 mars 2021



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TFO Canada virtual training session for Trade Representatives accredited in Canada

March 4th 2021

TFO Canada hosted the first ever virtual training session for trade representatives and Commercial and Economic Counsellors accredited in Canada. A total of 60 participants attended. TFO Canada Associates and experts Mike Mauti and Bertrand Walle presented on Effects of COVID -19 on

imported fresh and processed food market in Canada. The session also included a all women panel of importers featuring Amira Boulos, Vice president, Amira Enterprises Canada; Adriana Castillo, President, Garden Flavour; Cherie Storms - Canadian Operations Manager at PCB Customs Brokers; and Gloria Terhaar – Canadian Regulatory Analyst at PCB Custom Brokers, the importers shared valuable information on their experience importing into Canada under COVID -19 pandemic

Ontario Regional Report January - March 2021

Webinars have kicked into high gear, with most focusing on food and other trends brought on by the pandemic. This includes the dramatic increase in home cooking, the rise in e-commerce sales and the growing popularity of store brands. See [Eight Canadian Food Industry Trends](#) for 2021 for more.

The Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) show in February featured a session by Dr. Morgaine Gaye, who unpacked trend ideas for the coming years. These include shifts toward more self-sufficiency, nature brought inside, less is more/essentialism, and more colour, texture and creativity.

At the [Restaurants Canada Feeding the Recovery show](#) this year, the industry outlook forecasted a modest increase in foodservice sales in 2021 and full recovery by 2023. Alberta is forecasted to have strongest foodservice sales growth followed by Saskatchewan and Ontario.

WOMEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF MANUFACTURING



Surianti Ang is the director and owner of [Queen Pacific Suksesabadi](#), a trading and shoe manufacturing company based in Jakarta, Indonesia. The company was established in 2007 as a trading company; in 2011, they started manufacturing sandals, flip flops and other types of shoes. Queen Pacific has been successfully operating since 2007, making sales to name brands such as Michael Kors, Hush Puppies, Bata worldwide. Since 2014 the company has been exporting to Peru, Kenya, the USA and Asia Pacific with dreams of reaching even further.

Queen Pacific's success is no simple formula; however, the founder prides herself on the fact that women are big part of

the operations in her company. *"Aside from it being a woman-owned company, the presence of women can be felt everywhere from production to management." Queen Pacific employs and works with 60% of women. Surianti states, "I prefer working with women in manufacturing, and at the office, women more active and careful, and they don't give up easily. The women in my company are very hard working. Don't get me wrong, we do employ men, and their presence is appreciated, but women are really what keeps PT Queen Pacific moving and propelling into the future."*

Queen Pacific was part of the Canada-Indonesia Trade and Private-Sector Assistance (TPSA) project, which TFO Canada was an implementing partner for 2016-2018. The goal of TPSA project was to support sustainable economic growth in Indonesia through intensification of trade and investment that increased trade between Canada and Indonesia. During that time, TFO Canada provided support to the company in communicating with buyers, training on exporting to Canada and pre-and post-trade show readiness. *"Through the support from TFO Canada, we were prepared for a footwear exhibit. We took the information we had learned from TFO Canada, which came in handy when we attended an exhibit for our footwear in Las Vegas back in 2017."* Through the capacity building assistance that Queen Pacific received from TFO Canada, they were able to establish business contacts at trade shows and grow their business portfolio. By 2018 Queen Pacific had double in value (\$10.7 million) from what it was in 2013.

In 2019 Queen Pacific received the Primaniyarta award; the highest award given by the Government of Indonesia to exporters that have made tremendous achievements in the export sector. The award is given by the Government of Indonesia through the Directorate General of National Export Development. This was a big accomplishment for Queen Pacific as a woman owned exporter competing with big multinational companies in the same sector.

"We have stiff competition from both China and Vietnam; so, our priority is to set ourselves apart. To do so, we focus on producing a good quality product. Therefore, teamwork is important to us, a strong and good team creates a strong and good product, but to do that, we have to make sure our employees are in a good work environment and feel like a family. Ultimately having a good team and strong team- which for me includes many women- means that we all succeed, especially the company and the brand".

"The COVID-19 pandemic really impacted the manufacturing." Part of the measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 virus meant many companies had to close completely or enforce social distancing measures, resulting in reduced production. *"Since I started doing business, I have always prepared for the worst-case scenario, whether a natural disaster or a loss of a customer. We have always set aside funds so that our company can survive for two years. In this time, we would adjust to the market and try to recover losses. So I guess in a way, when the pandemic occurred, we were slightly prepared. We can't just wait for the pandemic to pass but what we can do is begin to adjust to the existing conditions and work around this new order."*

"What I want to see for Queen Pacific is that we survive these challenging times. My company is like a family, and they have families. The pandemic was also a wake-up call. I have been producing fashion items, but now I want to focus on merging fashion with supporting local communities around me even further. "

TFO Canada improves lives through the creation of sustainable trade partnerships for exporters from developing countries with Canadian and foreign buyers. We facilitate access to the Canadian marketplace and share Canadian trade expertise for the benefit of smaller male and female owned/managed exporters from developing countries and for the men and women they employ.

Founded in 1980, TFO Canada is a non-governmental, non profit organization.

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