



FOURTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

ILO strategy on promoting women's entrepreneurship development

I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Employment and Social Policy requested the Office in November 2007 to prepare a strategy paper on women's entrepreneurship development (WED) for its consideration. The first section of this paper presents the background to the issue within the Office and introduces the case for an enhanced focus on WED. Section II outlines the evolution of WED activities within the Office. Section III presents the lessons learned, while Section IV outlines a proposed future strategy (also summarized in Appendix I). Finally, Section V describes how the strategy would be put into effect.
2. The promotion of decent employment through entrepreneurship development is the fifth core element of the Global Employment Agenda (GEA) and within this context the ESP Committee in November 2006 stipulated that "specific measures may be required to enable women entrepreneurs to start, expand, and formalize their businesses". The proposed WED strategy follows the International Labour Conference's conclusions on sustainable enterprises of June 2007 that "women's economic empowerment is crucial for sustainable societies". The conclusions call for "targeted programmes in women's empowerment and entrepreneurship". Similarly, ILO Recommendation No. 189 concerning general conditions to stimulate job creation in small and medium-sized enterprises posits that "members should encourage support for female entrepreneurship, recognizing the growing importance of women in the economy, through measures designed specifically for women who are, or wish to become entrepreneurs".
3. Women entrepreneurs often face gender-based barriers to starting and growing their businesses,¹ namely:
 - discriminatory property, matrimonial and inheritance laws and/or cultural practices;
 - lack of access to formal finance mechanisms;
 - limited mobility and access to information and networks;

¹ GB.289/ESP/1.

- an unequal share of family and household responsibilities and lack of maternity protection.

A large percentage of women entrepreneurs operate micro and small businesses in the informal economy. In the developing world, women workers make up around 60 per cent of non-agricultural employment in the informal economy – including up to 90 per cent of street vendors and up to 80 per cent of home-based workers.² Consequently they often remain outside the scope of laws and regulatory mechanisms aimed at providing basic health and safety standards, and workers' rights.

4. Gender discrimination denies women their rights and is economically unproductive. Gender-based asset inequality affects resource allocation within the household and labour productivity. The World Bank estimates that gender inequality in education and employment has reduced sub-Saharan Africa's per capita growth from 1960 to 1992 by 0.8 per cent per year.³ Many governments have adopted equal opportunity legislation and ratified the relevant ILO Conventions.⁴ However, more proactive, targeted policies are needed for women entrepreneurs. In the United States, where women entrepreneurs have been identified as a target group for specific policy measures, women-owned businesses have become increasingly important to economic growth and employment. For the past two decades in the United States, majority women-owned firms have grown at around twice the rate of all firms (42 per cent v. 24 per cent).⁵ Women business owners employ a gender balanced workforce (52 per cent women and 48 per cent men), whereas men business owners employ, on average, 38 per cent women and 62 per cent men.⁶
5. Women's entrepreneurship can make a particularly strong contribution to the economic well-being of the family and communities, poverty reduction and women's empowerment, thus contributing to the first and third Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁷ Where women have more control over the resources of the household, the pattern of consumption tends to be more child-focused and oriented to meeting basic needs. For example, a World Bank study on microcredit in Bangladesh showed that men put 11 per cent of the money into the household, whereas women put in 18 per cent (i.e. over 60 per cent more).⁸ A study in South Africa showed that an increase in women's income was accompanied by

² ILO: *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture*, 2002.

³ World Bank Group: *Gender, growth and poverty reduction*, Issue 129, Feb. 1999.

⁴ These include the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183).

⁵ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), 2005, Report on Women and Entrepreneurship, 2006.

⁶ "Key Facts about Women-Owned Business", at <http://www.womenowned.com>

⁷ MDG 1 is to "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger" and MDG 3 is to "promote gender equality and empower women".

⁸ D. Leipziger, Vice-President and Head of the Network for Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, World Bank address to the Conference on Women's Economic Empowerment as Smart Economics, Berlin, 2007.

more money being spent on children's education.⁹ Overall approximately one third of businesses in advanced market economies are owned and managed by women.¹⁰

II. Evolution of the ILO's work on WED

6. In line with the ILO's gender policy, the Office's approach to WED seeks to redress existing gender imbalances in enterprise development through approaches and activities aimed specifically at women, while simultaneously working with constituents to ensure that all small enterprise initiatives address gender in their formulation and roll-out. The Office's work to date has been in four main areas:
 - the development of a knowledge base on women entrepreneurs;
 - the development of a variety of support services for women entrepreneurs and their service providers;
 - supporting advocacy; and
 - developing internal and external partnerships.
7. The Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (SEED) has been the hub for WED activities in the ILO since 2000. Some initial research and pilot studies in the late 1990s were followed by a programme with the assistance of Irish Aid, currently operational in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Irish Aid also supported WED activities in Banda Aceh (Indonesia) following the tsunami of December 2004. This latter initiative is continuing with the assistance of New Zealand AID.
8. SEED is not the only focus of WED activities within the ILO. Between 2001 and 2006, 29 programmes and projects have contained a WED component, mainly as a means to achieve another objective.¹¹ For example, the "Promoting the Linkages between Women's Employment and the Reduction of Child Labour" project in the United Republic of Tanzania and the "Prevention and Elimination of Bonded Labour in South Asia" project in Pakistan, promote women's entrepreneurship as part of efforts to combat child and bonded labour.
9. In Pakistan, since 2002, the Office has also worked with the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority to develop a Women's Entrepreneurship Development Cell. The initiative led to the creation of the Pakistan Women's Business Information Centre, and the establishment of an online Women Entrepreneurs' Information Network web site which in 2007 received over 700,000 hits. It has also provided various business development services to over 1,000 women entrepreneurs.
10. SEED works with the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) to promote WED in Africa. A regional workshop was held in Lusaka in May 2006 with 16 African employers' organizations to develop action

⁹ A.R. Quisumbing and J.A. Maluccio, 2003: "Resources at Marriage and Intra-household Allocation: Evidence from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and South Africa", in *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 65(3):283–327.

¹⁰ S.E. Jalbert: *Women Entrepreneurs in the Global Economy*, CIPE, 2000.

¹¹ GB.298/TC/1.

plans on supporting women's entrepreneurship development. As one example of follow-up, the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association has created a women entrepreneurs' network with 120 members. A similar initiative took place in Bangkok in 2002 with 13 employers' organizations in Asia.

11. The Office partners with workers' organizations in Ethiopia and Zambia as a means of assisting laid-off workers. Following a meeting with the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions in 2006, ten of its members have been trained as Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) trainers, and 96 women workers have been trained in SIYB. In Ethiopia, retrenched women workers were provided with training in starting and managing a small business. In all seven programme countries the Programme Advisory Committees have included representatives of government, workers' organizations and employers' organizations.

Knowledge base

12. The Office has developed a methodology for research on women's entrepreneurship and has worked with national partners to overcome the lack of adequate national data and analysis on women entrepreneurs in 15 countries.¹² For example, primary research based on detailed interviews was conducted among 379 women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. The main findings of the research were:

- women entrepreneurs do not have the same access to networks as men;
- women entrepreneurs have difficulties accessing premises due to, among other things, a lack of property and inheritance rights;
- women's lack of access to titled assets that can be offered as collateral for loans adversely affects the growth of their enterprises;
- women entrepreneurs lack access to formal finance and rely on loans from family and community;
- women entrepreneurs tend to be grouped in particular sectors, particularly food processing and textiles;
- business development service providers do not give adequate time or effort to target women entrepreneurs – they do not offer flexible arrangements in respect of the timing and location of service delivery;
- women often experience harassment in registering and operating their enterprises.

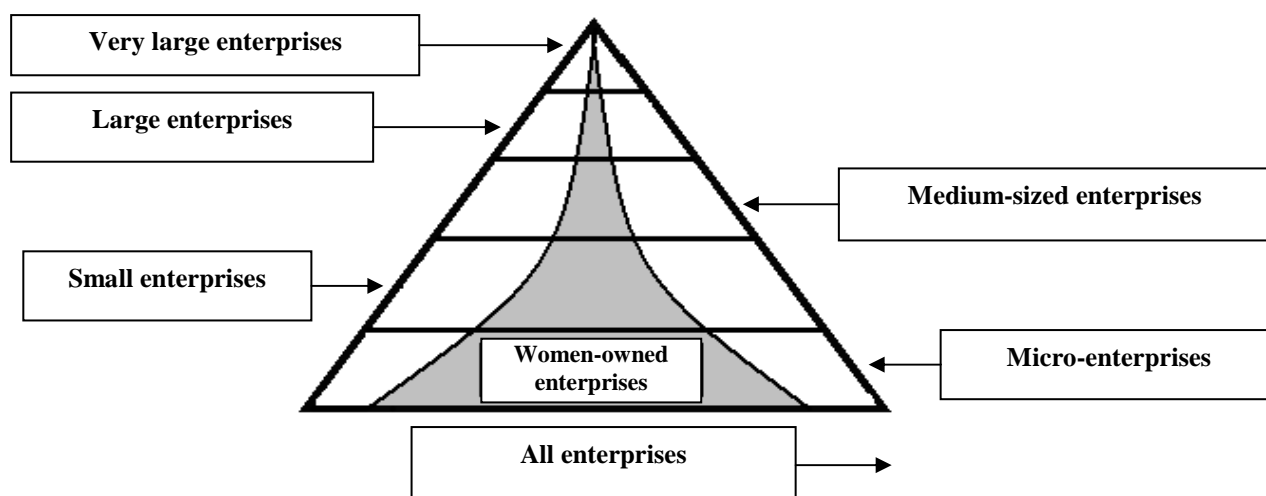
13. A significant finding of this and other research is that women entrepreneurs tend to expand horizontally (i.e. take on a second business) rather than vertically. For example, while the women employed eight people on average,¹³ only 13 (3 per cent) of the businesses

¹² Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nepal, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia.

¹³ P. Richardson, P. Howarth and G. Finnegan: *The challenges of growing small businesses: Insights from women entrepreneurs in Africa*, ILO-SEED, 2004.

employed more than 20 people, thus confirming the scale bias in women's business ¹⁴ (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Gender scale bias in business ownership ¹⁵



14. As women tend to be overrepresented in micro- and small enterprises (MSEs), and since they generally invest more in the well-being of their families and communities than men, women-targeted programmes at this level can be a particularly effective means of poverty reduction. At the same time, more jobs, and more sustainable employment creation, can be achieved by focusing on women-owned enterprises with growth potential. The Office, in association with the African Development Bank (AfDB), developed the Assessment Framework for Growth-Oriented Women Entrepreneurs (GOWE). The Framework assists governments to develop enabling policies for women, with particular emphasis on those whose businesses have growth potential. The framework has been applied in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda (see Appendix II).

Support services

15. On the basis of the findings of the research undertaken by the Office, the Small Enterprise Programme has developed and tested a suite of tools, described below.

Creating an enabling environment for WED

- The GOWE is a research methodology that promotes understanding of the way the social, cultural and business environment affects women in business.
- The Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis (GSVCA) guide is designed to investigate how gender relations and biases impact on different parts of a value chain.

Institutional capacity building

- The Female and Male Operated Small Enterprises (FAMOS) is a self-assessment "gender audit", specifically for organizations working with MSEs.
- The Women Entrepreneurs' Associations (WEA) capacity-building guide is a training package designed to help build the administrative, organizational, technical and financial capacities of member-based organizations.
- The WED capacity-building guide is a training package aimed at imparting requisite concepts and skills to the staff of intermediary institutions and development projects.

¹⁴ The Uganda Business Register (UBOS 2003) indicated that only 15 per cent of businesses with 50 or more employees were woman owned, as compared to 65 per cent of businesses with four or less employees.

¹⁵ G. Finnegan: Presentation to the Governing Body special session on gender equality, March 2000.

Training tools for service providers	■ The guide to the “Month of the Woman Entrepreneur” aims to assist organizations engaged in the promotion of entrepreneurship to systematically plan and implement various events to promote women’s entrepreneurship
	■ Gender and Entrepreneurship Together: GET Ahead for Women in Enterprise can be used to train poor women entrepreneurs in business skills and on how to obtain support through groups, networks and institutions.
	■ Improve Your Exhibition Skills (IYES) prepares facilitators to conduct trade fair training workshops for women entrepreneurs.

16. These tools are being used by constituents and partner agencies within the seven programme countries and beyond. The tools are targeted at women entrepreneurs and service providers. However, as gender equality is about women and men, both sexes are encouraged to participate at all levels. Table 1 gives a breakdown of activities in the WED programme in 2007, disaggregated by sex.

Table 1. Services provided under the WED programme, 2007

		Financial services	Training courses	Advocacy workshops	Total
Lao PDR	women	10 531	272	50	10 853
	men	9 330	227	23	9 580
Cambodia	women	2 648	5 040	101	7 789
	men	455	1 079	142	1 676
Ethiopia	women	146	197	541	884
	men	n/a	7	186	193
Kenya	women	13	123	213	353
	men	n/a	19	62	81
United Republic of Tanzania	women	n/a	73	165	238
	men	n/a	21	33	54
Uganda	women	n/a	17	512	529
	men	n/a	10	23	33
Zambia	women	n/a	458	981	1 439
	men	n/a	8	48	56
Total		23 110	7 551	3 039	33 753

17. The wide differences in direct outreach stem from a number of factors. In Africa the programme worked primarily on institutional capacity building, advocacy, and with governments to ensure policy and regulatory reform. Interventions at these levels take longer before their impact becomes apparent, and are less readily assessed. There are therefore radically fewer direct recipients in Africa than in South-East Asia, where the main intervention was basic business skills training combined with improved access to financial services.
18. More than 10,000 women entrepreneurs in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic benefited from the WED programme in 2007. As the table below illustrates, the programme enabled them to increase their sales fourfold and their profits by 50 per cent. The project also resulted in an increase in their husbands’ participation in income generation and household work. Furthermore, research among 250 MSEs in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic showed that women-led enterprises, while smaller overall,

employed twice as many women as male-led enterprises, thus supporting the hypothesis that women tend to employ more women than men do.

Table 2. Impact in the WED programme in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

	Before programme	After programme
Businesses actively engaged in marketing	15%	40%
Businesses engaged in formal bookkeeping	22%	38%
Monthly sales	US\$490	US\$2 150
Monthly profits	US\$180	US\$270(+50%)
Businesses providing full-time employment	12%	19%
Husbands undertaking household chores	0%	11%

19. In order to maximize the employment creation potential of women's entrepreneurship it is also necessary to integrate gender into generic programmes. The SIYB methodology has been gender mainstreamed, has reached 940,000¹⁶ entrepreneurs over the last decade and helped to create 1.2 million jobs. As table 3 illustrates, in both China and Viet Nam roughly equal numbers of women and men were trained, but many more jobs were created for women. In China a strong emphasis on jobs for women is a characteristic of the MSE sector. Eighty-five per cent of the entrepreneurs reached work in services and trade, an area experiencing rapid growth and high rates of female employment. Impact analysis from the SIYB programme in Sri Lanka also indicates that women entrepreneurs trained in SIYB are more likely to provide employment than men.¹⁷

Table 3. Impact of SIYB on women and men in China and Viet Nam

	Viet Nam	China ¹	Globally
SIYB trained	25 628	760 000	940 000
Women	12 197 (48%)	456 000 (60%)	540 000 (57%)
Men	13 431 (52%)	304 000 (40%)	400 000 (43%)
Jobs ILO helped create	15 119	1 000 000	1 200 000
Ratio of trainees to jobs created	5:3	3:4	4:5
Jobs for women	9 576 (63%)	680 000 (68%)	n/a
Jobs for men	5 542 (37%)	320 000 (32%)	n/a

¹ The impact data for China is based on sampling carried out at an impact assessment in 2004 and the findings have been extrapolated for the outreach until 2007.

¹⁶ Based on an extrapolation of the SIYB global outreach report 1998–2003 and the SIYB China evaluation report 2004–07.

¹⁷ Twenty-five per cent of the women entrepreneurs increased employment in their businesses after SIYB training compared to 8 per cent of men.

Advocacy

20. The Office has increased the representation and voice of women entrepreneurs through promoting business associations and linking them with social partners at the national level. A training manual has been developed to build the organizational and governance capacities of women entrepreneurs' associations, and to date has been introduced in Banda Aceh (Indonesia), Ethiopia, Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the MSE Promotion and Development Office included an association building programme in its national MSE Development Plan and delivered it to more than 100 business associations in all 16 provinces of the country.
21. As a direct result of the Office's work in WED, gender issues are included in the revised MSE Development Strategy of Ethiopia. The strategy now explicitly recognizes that women constitute a significant part of the MSE sector but that cultural and economic constraints have put them at a disadvantage. It commits the Government to identify factors restricting women from going into business, and to take appropriate action to address them.
22. The "Month of the Woman Entrepreneur" is held annually in Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (and planned for Kenya in 2008). Trade fairs, training programmes, and promotional events take place over the course of a month in order to draw attention to the achievements of women entrepreneurs, including those living with disabilities and those living with HIV and AIDS. The events are planned and organized with governments, social partners and local organizations. During 2006, 3,200 women entrepreneurs participated across the four countries. The events showcased women entrepreneurs as role models, gave women entrepreneurs the opportunity to advocate and lobby on issues relevant to them, and facilitated the exchange of good practices in WED.

The Amhara Women Entrepreneurs' Association, Ethiopia

The Amhara Women Entrepreneurs' Association (AWEA) in Ethiopia increased its membership from 40 in 2002 to more than 2,600 in 2007 and, through negotiations with the local municipality, has managed to secure 6,000 m² of land to be used for constructing business premises for 200 of its members. Having gained wide government and NGO recognition, AWEA representatives are representing WEAs on the board of directors in five major government agencies.

A group of 40 AWEA members won a bid to supply food for 10,000 students at a university. The women made 12,000 birr (US\$1,350) each from the company's profits: most of them used it to upgrade their own businesses and some started new business ventures.

Partnerships

23. The Office has made special efforts to enhance the employability and entrepreneurial skills of women with disabilities, of women living with HIV and AIDS, and of women refugees. The programme has partnered with ILO-SKILLS to support the inclusion of women with disabilities and the consideration of disability issues throughout all programme activities, and has partnered with ILO-AIDS to include women living with HIV and AIDS in East Africa. Between 2005 and 2007, 17 per cent of programme participants were women with disabilities and 8 per cent were women living with HIV and AIDS. The programme has worked with ILO-CRISIS and UNHCR to promote women's entrepreneurship in refugee camps in Mozambique, and among returnee refugee women in Angola.
24. Following from the application of the Assessment Framework for Growth-Oriented Women Entrepreneurs, the AfDB and the ILO are partnering with the International Finance Corporation on a programme in Kenya that:

- provides lines of guarantee to selected commercial financial institutions to facilitate loans to women entrepreneurs;
- promotes increased access by women entrepreneurs to business development services;
- provides capacity building in association building;
- provides gender mainstreaming capacity building to the SME loan departments of the selected financial institutions.

The women in the GOWE programme are trained in human resource management in support of business growth. This includes decent work concepts such as conditions of employment, arbitration, workers compensation, workers rights, freedom of association, health and safety, gender equality. The ILO's normative instruments are the framework for this section of the training.

25. During 2007, as a result of the joint programme, three Kenyan banks have facilitated credit to 13 growth-oriented women entrepreneurs, averaging US\$133,000 each. Following advocacy training by the ILO in March 2007, a group of Kenyan women entrepreneurs' associations, supported by the GOWE programme, succeeded in ensuring that the Kenyan MSE Bill is gender sensitive, and secured a minimum of 30 per cent women members in the Small Enterprise Council being established by the Bill.
26. In Indonesia, under a World Bank sponsored programme, the ILO's GET Ahead training course is used by the Kecamatan Development Programme. In Cambodia the Asian Development Bank is supporting the Ministry of Women's Affairs to introduce various women's entrepreneurship tools to 3,000 women in its Women and Development Centres. The Office is also partnering with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in assessing the enabling environment for women entrepreneurs in Central Asia.

III. Lessons learned and the need for an ILO strategy

27. There are a number of lessons emerging from the ILO's experience in promoting women's entrepreneurship since 2001, namely:
 - entrepreneurship can be an effective means to empower women and create employment;
 - promoting women's entrepreneurship can lead to women becoming more empowered in the family and wider community;
 - supporting women entrepreneurs' associations, and organizing events such as the Month of the Woman Entrepreneur can be very effective advocacy tools for women entrepreneurs;
 - strategic partnerships with other agencies with different competencies can enhance and complement the ILO's work in WED.

While results of ILO research and interventions are encouraging, questions remain in respect to the significance of many of the findings – in particular in relation to the number and quality of the jobs being created; whether the jobs provide a decent wage for employers and employees alike; whether there is access to social protection; and whether the employees of these enterprises have access to collective bargaining mechanisms.

Undoubtedly further research and impact assessment is needed to fine tune the programme so that it meets with the core standards of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

28. The demand for ILO support in WED among constituents has been steadily increasing. During the 2006–07 biennium, the Office received more than 20 formal requests for assistance in WED. At the time of writing, 25 of the 38 Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) which have been finalized have indicated that WED is a priority.¹⁸ Other UN agencies have also expressed a desire to partner with the ILO in this area.
29. There is a clear need to scale up and develop a viable strategy for replicating and building upon achievements to date. However, there are currently no formalized institutional structures for the expertise and knowledge gained to be shared throughout the Office. While some knowledge management has occurred, it has been somewhat ad hoc.
30. The Committee on Technical Cooperation debated women's entrepreneurship in March 2007 and suggested that the Office should place an enhanced focus on working with constituents to create an enabling environment for WED, and develop more robust knowledge sharing, evaluation and impact assessment systems.¹⁹ A thematic evaluation of the women's entrepreneurship programme carried out by independent consultants in August–September 2007 supported these conclusions.

IV. ILO strategy on WED

31. The Office proposes to launch a substantially expanded WED programme to meet the increased demand within the current biennium and beyond. The target is to work in most countries where there is a demand for WED inputs as part of the DWCPs (estimated to be approximately 35 countries by the end of the next biennium). The strategy seeks to unleash the economic potential of women's enterprises to contribute to the creation of quality jobs, gender equality, economic growth, and poverty reduction within the framework of the Decent Work Agenda, the GEA and in line with the guidance provided by the conclusions on the promotion of sustainable enterprises (see Appendix I).
32. The strategy seeks to reduce the vulnerability of women's enterprises relating to: working conditions; safety and health at work; social protection; lack of organization, representation and voice; access to appropriate financial services; and all forms of gender-based discrimination. The emphasis in the longer term will be on working to remove the underlying causes of women entrepreneurs' vulnerabilities (including the particular barriers faced by women with disabilities). However in the short to medium term the Office will also work to treat the symptoms of these vulnerabilities.
33. In line with the Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming, announced by the Director-General in 1999, the strategy will continue to undertake women-targeted actions, and simultaneously seek to ensure that all enterprise programmes are gender mainstreamed.
34. The strategy will have a particular focus on women entrepreneurs whose businesses have growth potential, as a more strategic way to create sustainable jobs and decent work. Enabling more women to pursue enterprise growth through a more favourable support

¹⁸ The countries are: Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Senegal, South Africa, Tajikistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zambia.

¹⁹ GB.298/TC/1.

environment generates employment, empowers women and brings social and economic benefits to women and to society at large (see Appendix II).²⁰ Business with growth potential will have a greater ability to provide their employees with good working conditions; representation and voice; and social protection.

35. In line with Recommendation 193, the Office will place an emphasis on promoting women's entrepreneurship through cooperatives. Cooperatives have a proven track record in providing large numbers of people with decent and sustainable employment and in advancing the core values of the ILO.
36. In line with the fifth core element of the GEA and the International Labour Conference conclusions on sustainable enterprises, the strategy will take account of the diversity of enterprise types, sizes and structures – informal and formal; micro, small and medium; individual and group-based; cooperatives and community enterprises. Following from Recommendation No. 189, the key operational levels of the strategy are:
 - creating an enabling environment for WED that generates quality jobs;
 - institutional capacity building in WED;
 - development of tools and support services for women entrepreneurs.

In addition, the strategy will have a strong focus on research and impact assessment.

Creating an enabling environment for WED

37. The Office will seek to promote a policy and regulatory environment that supports the creation and growth of women's enterprises which generate quality jobs. The reform should be based on dialogue between governments, employers' and workers' representatives, women entrepreneurs' associations and other stakeholders to assess the constraints in the enabling environment that impede women entrepreneurs.

Institutional capacity building in WED

38. In collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, the Office will work to build the capacity of governments, employers' and workers' organizations, business development service providers, financial service providers, NGOs, donor agencies and other intermediaries, to deliver expanded, more cost-effective and larger-scale support to women entrepreneurs so as to enable them to create quality jobs. Further to this, the Office will work to promote an increase in women's representation at the institutional level.

Development of tools and support services for women entrepreneurs

39. The Office will work with constituents and other stakeholders to develop and refine tools and approaches to expand market opportunities; improve access to finance; and upgrade management skills of women entrepreneurs. The Office will continue to ensure that workplace rights and working conditions are integrated into all WED tools. In addition, the

²⁰ *Assessing the enabling environment for women in growth enterprises* (AfBD/ILO, 2005).

programme will look at more systematic ways to target women entrepreneurs, for example, through cluster development, area-based approaches and value chain upgrading.

Research on women's entrepreneurship

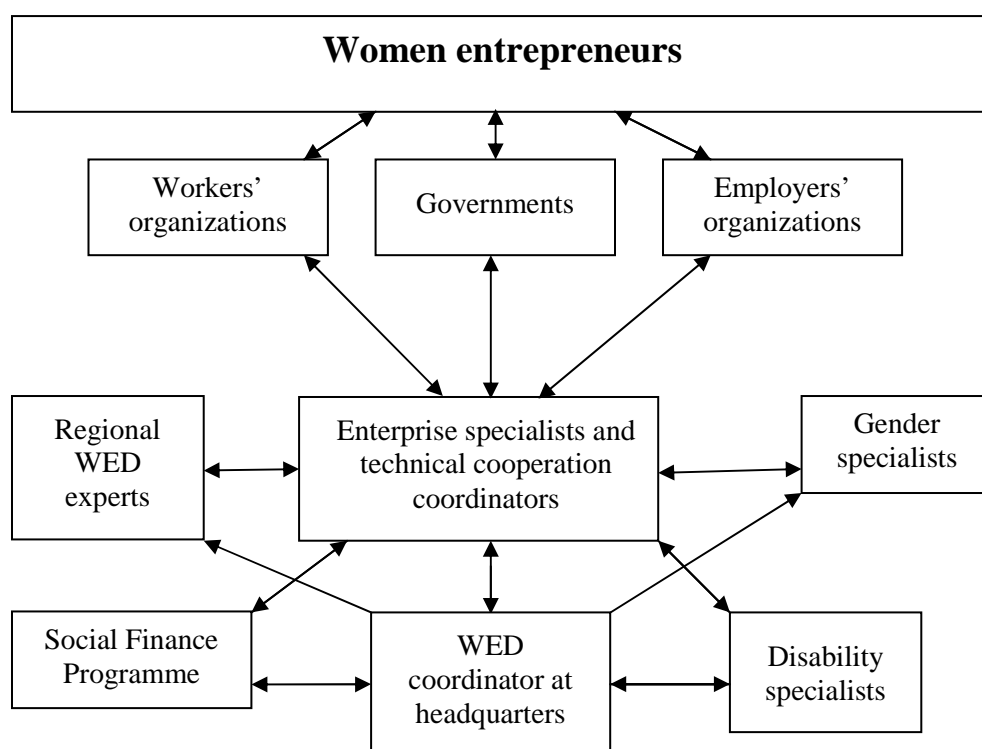
40. The work undertaken by the Office to date suggests that investing in women's entrepreneurship is a strategic way to generate employment, combat discrimination, empower women, and reduce poverty. However, it is clear that more research is needed to establish how best to reach and support women entrepreneurs. The research will focus on answering questions such as:
- At which levels of intervention and for which target groups can WED best contribute to gender equality, the creation of decent work, and poverty reduction?
 - What is the impact and cost-effectiveness of focusing on WED in terms of the creation of decent work and women's empowerment?
 - What is the quality (in terms of decent work) of the jobs being created by WED programmes?
41. The Office will develop a guide on the monitoring and evaluation of WED projects. It will have robust qualitative and quantitative indicators to track the progress and measure the impact of WED activities within the context of decent work. It will also include guidelines for practitioners planning and executing ILO projects in the field, as well as for those designing, monitoring and evaluating these projects. The manual will be developed by the Small Enterprise Programme with the assistance of ACT/EMP, ACTRAV, EVAL, INTEGRATION, CODEV and GENDER.

V. Action plan and global roll-out

Organization and operations

42. To achieve the foreseen scale and impact, substantial increases in human and financial resources will be required. During the previous biennium Irish Aid funding enabled the Office to employ one associate expert at headquarters, a full-time WED specialist in Africa, and a half-time WED specialist in Asia. Moreover, national programme coordinators were employed in each of the seven programme countries.
43. Under the proposed strategy, a women and youth entrepreneurship coordinator will be housed within the Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department at headquarters. The coordinator and two WED specialists (with proposed funding by Irish Aid under a technical cooperation project) will provide technical assistance, support and training to the enterprise specialists to carry forward the WED strategy in those countries in which there is a demand. The enterprise specialists will work closely with employers' and workers' specialists, gender specialists, employment specialists and with the Social Finance Programme. In addition, the Office will build a global network of consultants to support the strategy's implementation. In April and May 2008, the above-listed stakeholders will gather in Dar es Salaam and Bangkok to roll out the strategy in Africa and Asia respectively.

Figure 2. Organization chart of the ILO's roll-out of WED activities



44. The WED programme will establish a knowledge management system to capture, store and disseminate knowledge on WED. It is envisaged that the enterprise resource platform on the ILO web site will be used as a host for this purpose. The work of the ILO in WED could be strengthened and made more effective by further developing partnerships with other multilateral agencies to leverage the comparative advantages of different specialized agencies of the UN in the spirit of “Delivering as One”.

Resource mobilization

45. WED activities in the past have been largely dependent on Irish Aid, with US\$5.7 million provided between 2002 and 2008. The proposed strategy will require substantially more resources to meet the demands articulated in the DWCPs. The Office will prepare a resource mobilization strategy together with CODEV targeting extra-budgetary resources for technical cooperation, and also seek assistance from the Regular Budget Supplementary Account to implement the strategy.
46. *The Committee on Employment and Social Policy may wish to recommend to the Governing Body that it:*
- (i) *endorse the WED strategy; and*
 - (ii) *invite donors to provide financial support for the programme.*

Geneva, 13 February 2008.

Point for decision: Paragraph 45.

Appendix I

ILO WED strategy

Vision: ILO: Global leader in Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED)

Strategic objectives:

- Gender equality and women's economic empowerment
- Creation of decent work and productive employment and combating discrimination in the labour market
- Poverty reduction

Activities:

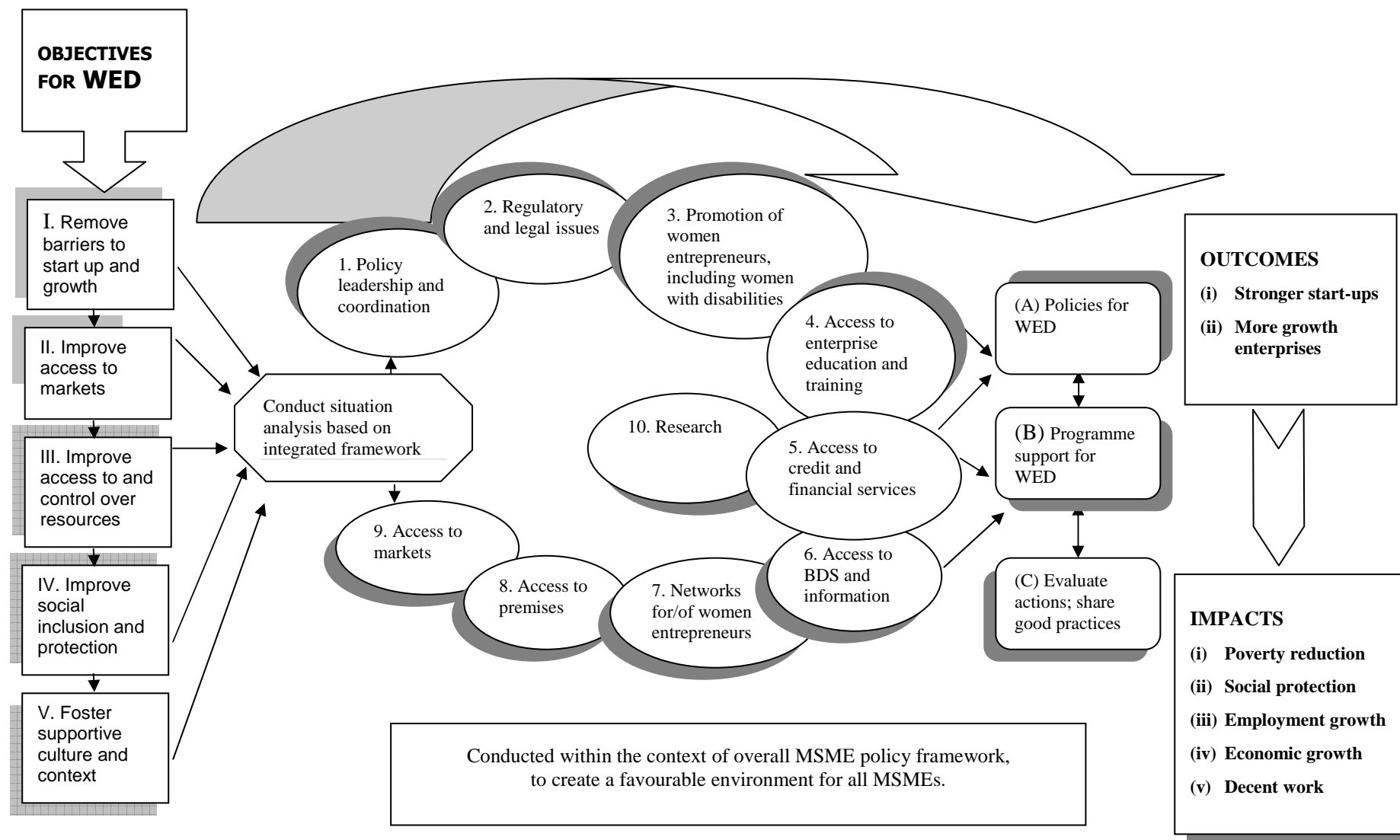
- Gender-specific actions *and* gender mainstreaming
- Assisting constituents and partners to assess and redress distortions in policy and regulatory structures, and to remove socio-cultural constraints to WED – with a particular focus on businesses with growth potential
- Building and strengthening the capacity of constituents and intermediary agencies to promote and support WED
- Reinforcing the capacities of women entrepreneurs **to create decent work** through new and existing ILO tools
- Research

Roll-out:

- Enterprise/gender/employment and technical cooperation specialists in the field
- Close collaboration with constituents, priority to DWCPs
- Continued partnerships and knowledge sharing
 - internal
 - with multilateral and bilateral agencies
- monitoring and evaluation; impact assessment
- WED knowledge management hub in EMP/SEED

Appendix II

The AfDB/ILO integrated framework: Growing women's enterprises



Source: L. Stevenson, A. St-Onge: *Assessing the enabling environment for women in growth enterprises: An AfDB/ILO integrated framework assessment guide*, AfDB/ILO, 2004, p. 7.

