



REPORT

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024 'INVEST IN WOMEN, ACCELERATE PROGRESS' AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND DIGITAL SKILL TRAINING:

EAC HQ 2323 ARUSHA TANZANIA





KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Thirty-two (32) women entrepreneurs and SMEs were trained and equipped with knowledge about gender inclusion and pandemic preparedness, prevention and response in East Africa and financial management and digital skill training
- The introduction covered the roadmap for the establishment of initiatives to invest in women, accelerate progress, emphasizing the critical need to channel resources and support towards women's empowerment, particularly in the realm of financial inclusion.
- The workshop was aired on Capital TV (English) (Annex II)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

March 8 is globally recognized as the International Women's Day (IWD), a significant celebration of women's social, economic, cultural, and political achievements, coupled with a powerful call to advance gender equality. In the vibrant landscape of East Africa, the EAC Secretariat and the East African Women in Business Platform (EAWiBP) stands as a dedicated force, committed to empowering and advancing the economic inclusion of women in the region in policy, business, and trade.

One of the key challenges in achieving gender equality by 2030 is an alarming lack of financing with a staggering USD 360 billion annual deficit in spending on gender-equality measures. The time for change is now! Join us on 8 March 2024 for International Women's Day as the EAC Secretariat in collaboration with the EAWiBP, regional private sector association (EABC) and civil society organizations (EACSO) with the financial support from the EAC GIZ Programme rallies behind the call to "Invest in women: Accelerate progress".

These partners have envisioned a dynamic event dedicated to celebrating and amplifying the impact of women across diverse sectors. This event was not only meant to celebrate the remarkable achievements of women in business but also served as a catalyst for inspiring continued progress toward gender equality and the economic empowerment of women in East Africa.

In this year's IWD event, the EAC Secretariat partnered with EAWiBP with the financial support from the EAC GIZ to advance awareness on gender equality as the central consideration in advancing investments in women for economic development and social progress in the EAC on 8th – 9th March 2024 at the EAC HQ 2323 Arusha Tanzania.

2.0. OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKSHOP

1. To stimulate debate and build knowledge of communities including financial institutions/banks on gender and financial inclusion.
2. To identify entry points for advancing the investments in women and their role in financial markets in the EAC.
3. To mobilize and encourage financial institutions to play a crucial role in investing in women, directing resources (loans) toward supporting women-owned businesses and initiatives.
4. To provide opportunities to advance women's financial literacy and digital skills capabilities.
5. Advocate for greater support, increased long-term, sustainable investments from banks, and other financial institutions to women MSMEs.
6. To connect EAWiBP members to financial products and services including exclusive opportunities offered by the Bank and beyond.
7. Dialogue on the inclusion of women in pandemic preparedness, prevention and response in East Africa.

3.0 PARTICIPANTS

The workshop brought together over one hundred participants comprising of entrepreneur SMEs, women in business and representation from EAC Secretariat, GIZ-EAC, EACSOE, EABC and regional non state actors in East Africa based in Arusha. The women SMEs included EAWiBP members and non-members, women associations led by Wauvi SMEs owners, women entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and stakeholders from sectors like food & beverage, leather, fruits, edible oil, vegetables, cosmetics, jewelry and Digital space.

(Annex I – List of participants)

4.0 OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Irene Charles Isaka - Director of Social Sectors, EAC Secretariat



During the International Women's Day, The guest of honor, Dr. Irene Charles Isaka, Director of Social Sectors, EAC Secretariat opened the event with a remark on behalf of the EAC Secretary General, Hon, Dr Peter Mathuki, noted that gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial for decision-making processes in both the workplace and at home. However, a lack of financing for gender equality measures hinders progress towards achieving gender equality by 2030.



Dr. Irene recommended creation of programs that support women and girls into leadership, decision-making, business, and women's economic empowerment in East Africa, and encouraged women and girls to participate in the cultural industry and sport through available incentives for women and girls with great creativity and artistic talents.

Ms. Janice Kimaro- Regional Coordinator (EAWiBP)



In her Remarks, Ms Janice Kimaro on behalf of the Chairperson of East African Women in Business Platform, emphasized the commitment of

EAWiBP to empowering women entrepreneurs and professionals across the region. “We firmly believe that investing in women is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic imperative” remarked Janice quoting the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who astutely said, "Investing in women is not only the right thing to do. it is the smart thing to do."

She added that women represented a vast reservoir of untapped potential, and by investing in their empowerment, we can unlock unprecedented opportunities for development and peace.

Ms. Lilian Kimaro, Chief Executive Officer, EACSO



Ms. Lilian Alex Kimaro representing the East African Civil Society Organization (EACSO) applauded the strides made in fostering inclusivity in East Africa and stressed the pivotal role of women and youth in regional development. She added that women were vital to advancing the equitable development of society and that women's voices needed to be included and informed decision-making at all levels.



Mr John Bosco, Executive Director, EABC



Mr. John Bosco Kalisa, CEO of the East African Business Council (EABC), unearthed the disparities in economic participation and empowerment between genders based on the gender gap report 2024. He noted a 21% pay gap and the

underrepresentation of women in STEM fields. He outlined the significant initiatives that EABC was championing in promotion of women’s economic empowerment through the SMEs platform, removal of NTBs, trade facilitation and policy engagement. He concluded by urging the EAC Partner States to promote equality, inclusion, and diversity to accelerate gender parity, access to affordable finance, fostering innovation, promoting STEM education for girls, implementing effective gender policies, sharing trade information, raising awareness on gender issues, and creating a supportive environment for women and girls to benefit from the AfCFTA protocol on women and youth in Africa.

Mr. Bjoern Richters, Cluster Coordinator, EAC-GIZ Programme



In his opening remarks, Mr. Bjoern Richter, Cluster Coordinator, EAC-GIZ, highlighted the importance of promoting women inclusion in all aspects. He commended the EAC Partner States for promoting female leaders at the Secretariat, demonstrating political will to

promote inclusive decision-making and leadership. He urged relevant partners to support women's economic livelihoods, financial and digital inclusion to ensure gender equality. Mr Bjoern also alluded to the work the EAC-GIZ programme does with the EAC Secretariat, regional private sectors, and civil society in promotion of gender equality and in contribution to closing the gender digital divide, ensuring an effective pandemic response within the EAC borders, and improving cross-border trade for women SMEs. He urged the EAC Partner States to increase their contributions towards inclusive gender-policy development, programming, and implementation to foster inclusivity in the region's economic development.



5.0 PRESENTATION ON GENDER INCLUSION AND PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PREVENTION AND RESPONSE IN EAST AFRICA

The dialogue presentation and discussion were led by Mr. David Mbulumi, EAC-GIZ Health Technical Advisor who highlighted the differential impact that pandemics often have on women compared to men, with disparities in infection rates driven by factors such as occupational differences. For instance, he noted that during outbreaks like Ebola and COVID-19, frontline health workers, who are predominantly women, were often the first to get infected due to their close contact with patients. Women working in sectors like hospitality and retail, which also have a higher representation of women, were also at higher risk of infection.

He noted that social roles also play a significant role, particularly in Africa, where women are often expected to be primary caregivers. This he emphasized that limited their ability to seek healthcare for themselves or prioritize their own well-being. Additionally, he noted that access to healthcare was also challenging for women due to financial constraints, decision-making power often resting with men, and the fact that women are more likely to be employed in the informal sector, making it difficult to balance work and healthcare needs.

In terms of caregiving responsibilities, he mentioned that women were also significantly burdened, especially during pandemics when children may be home because of school closures or when elderly family members fall ill. This increased burden can lead to mental and physical stress for women, with potential long-term impacts on their health.

Economically, women are often more affected as they are more likely to work in vulnerable sectors like hospitality, retail, education that are often heavily impacted by pandemics. This can have a significant impact on women's livelihoods, especially if they are the primary breadwinners in their families.

To address these challenges, Mr. David recommended that it was crucial to incorporate gender perspectives into pandemic preparedness, prevention, and response efforts. This included ensuring gender-sensitive plans, policies and responses, representation of women in leadership and decision-making roles, tailored communication strategies for different genders, addressing barriers to healthcare access for women, and supporting women in vulnerable sectors.

He encouraged investment in women, particularly market traders, who can also benefit for pandemic preparedness and response. He alluded that women market traders often played a crucial role in identifying outbreaks, disseminating information, and implementing preventive measures in their communities, thus supporting them would enhance community resilience and improve public health outcomes during pandemics.

In conclusion, David advised that addressing the differential impact of pandemics on women requires a multifaceted approach that should consider the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by women and should seek to empower them as key partners in pandemic preparedness and response efforts.



6.0 PRESENTATION ON INVESTMENT IN WOMEN IN FIGURES

During the session led by Ms. Edith Jandundu from Exim Bank, it was emphasized that women in Tanzania face significant challenges in accessing financial services, despite their crucial role in the economy, particularly in agriculture and small-scale businesses. Ms. Jandundu noted that according to a 2023 report, women's participation in the workforce was only at 2%, highlighting a significant gender disparity in economic engagement.

One of the major barriers to financial inclusion for women was cited as the lack of proper documentation. Financial institutions often require documentation that many women do not possess, such as proof of income or collateral. Additionally, women often lack awareness of financial products and services that could benefit them, further limiting their access to financial resources.

In response to these challenges, Exim Bank has introduced the Superwoman account, a specialized savings account designed to cater to the needs of women in Tanzania. The Superwoman account can be owned by individuals or groups, providing flexibility for women who may prefer to save individually or as part of a collective.

One of the key features of the Superwoman account is its competitive interest rate of 4% per annum, which is higher than most standard savings accounts in the market. This interest is calculated based on the amount saved by the account holder(s), incentivizing women to save regularly and build their financial reserves.

Another advantage of the Superwoman account is its flexibility. In addition to saving for future goals, account holders can access funds in case of emergencies. The account allows for loans of up to 90% of the account balance, with a minimal interest rate. This feature provides women with a financial safety net, enabling them to address unexpected expenses without resorting to high-interest loans or selling productive assets.

Overall, the Superwoman account is designed to empower women economically by providing them with a secure and accessible savings platform. By addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by women in accessing financial services, Exim Bank aims to contribute to greater financial inclusion and economic empowerment for women in Tanzania.

7.0 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING SESSION

Mrs. Fatuma Delloh, Chairperson of SHEAL TANZANIA,



In the financial session, participants were trained by Ms. Fatuma I Delloh, Chairperson of SHEAL TANZANIA, who shared invaluable insights into crucial financial issues. Through Ms. Delloh's guidance, attendees gained expertise in maintaining accurate financial records, optimizing resource allocation, and developing strategic financial plans tailored to their

business needs.



8.0 DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING SESSION

Ms. Safi Risase Ndama, an expert in digital marketing and technology.



In the digital skills session, participants were trained by Ms. Safi Risase Ndama, an expert in digital marketing and technology. Ms. Ndama provided comprehensive training on various digital marketing strategies, including search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, content creation, and email

marketing. Participants learned how to leverage digital platforms to enhance their online presence, engage with customers, and drive business growth.









9.0 ANNEXE I LIST OF PATICIPANTS



Participants List
IWD 2024.xlsx

ANNEXE II MEDIA LINKS

<https://www.youtube.com/live/GvTd4hgoflQ?si=6r34Y9WuglS9YAmq>