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VENUE: SECRETARÍA DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES  
MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

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## SECOND ANNUAL WOMEN VENDORS EXHIBITION AND FORUM

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### Background

The size of procurement markets is considerable. The average Fortune 500 Company, the majority of which have supplier diversity programmes, spends US\$6m per day on indirect purchasing.<sup>1</sup> In 2002 the total size of the government procurement sector was an estimated 15%-20% of GDP across OECD and non-OECD economies.<sup>2</sup>

Despite their significant participation in the economy, with over 34% of firms worldwide having female participation in ownership, women-owned companies are not getting their fair share of contracts. Their access to trade and procurement opportunities is constrained by a number of factors including limited information on procurement guidelines and regulations, and limited knowledge about selection and bidding procedures. Women's share of corporate procurement is estimated at less than 1% and even in the United States, where there is a government-wide mandated procurement goal of 5%, only 4.1% of contracts are awarded to women-owned businesses.<sup>3</sup>

The Women Vendors Exhibition and Forum (WVEF) is the annual event of the Global Platform for Action on Sourcing from Women Vendors, launched in September 2010 at the International Trade Centre's (ITC) World Export Development Forum. Under a ten year strategy to link buyers, sellers and institutions to build the capacity of suppliers to meet buyers' requirements, the Global Platform aims to leverage powerful partnerships to increase the share of corporate, government and institutional procurement secured by women vendors, and in so doing, bring greater economic benefit to women and their communities in developing countries.

WVEF brings together corporations, governments, trade support institutions (TSIs) and women vendors to establish relationships with the objective of generating business transactions over time. The inaugural WVEF, held in Chongqing, China in September 2011, was attended by 300 delegates from the public and private sectors from 19 countries, including senior procurement officers from multinational corporations such as Accenture, Boeing, Marriott International and Walmart.

Women business owners signed contracts worth USD14.8m during the meeting, and in subsequent months partners such as Full Circle Exchange and the International Women's Coffee Alliance teamed up resulting in the purchase of 1,200 pounds of women's coffee, distribution on Walmart's e-commerce platform and a 200 retail store test in November 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, E-Procurement

<sup>2</sup> The Size of Government Procurement Markets, [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/34/14/1845927.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/34/14/1845927.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Women Impacting Public Policy

**Format**

The six selected sectors for the second annual Women Vendors Exhibition and Forum are as follows:

- Information Technology and Business Process Outsourcing;
- The Built Environment (including Clean & Green Technology, Construction and Mining);
- Trade Facilitation;
- Textiles and Apparel (& Silver Jewellery);
- Coffee;
- Agribusiness (Mexico only).

Through a rigorous selection and matching process, women vendors from developing countries are brought together with senior representatives of corporations, government and trade support institutions. At WVEFII, participants will have the opportunity to develop partnerships by engaging in Buyer Mentor Groups (BMGs) in the target sectors, and to further these partnerships through facilitated one to one buyer seller meetings on a selected basis. The BMGs are led by senior mentors who have substantial experience of making buyer seller linkages and have also been tasked with ensuring that linkages are made between women vendors, promoting south-south cooperation.

In addition to a high profile signing ceremony showcasing agreements reached between buyers and sellers, as well as participating organizations, there will be presentations from dynamic speakers sharing their practical experiences in successfully participating in and implementing diverse supply chains.

The Exhibition will comprise an electronic showcase of select companies, and the capacity building workshops will focus on key issues such as market analysis and information, standards and certifications, and other market access topics.

**Outcomes**

Expected outcomes of WVEFII include:

- Agreements to enter into commercial transactions between women vendors from developing countries and large corporations, as well as between women vendors themselves;
- Collaborative relationships established between women vendors;
- Establishment and strengthening of strategic partnerships to advance the goal of increasing the share of procurement contracts accessed by women;
- Commitments to develop capacity building projects to promote the increased participation of women in global supply chains;
- Increased knowledge and capacity of participants to increase the share of women's access to procurement contracts.

The second annual Women Vendors Exhibition and Forum is jointly organized by the International Trade Centre, the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, ProMéxico, WEConnect International and La Asociación Mexicana de Mujeres Empresarias (AMMJE). Additional support for WVEFII is provided by the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW), Vital Voices Global Partnership, the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA), Full Circle Exchange, the Women's International Textile Alliance (SPINNA) and Quantum Leaps.