Chamber of Commerce Poised to Remove Regional Trade Barriers

Conducts Training for Liberian Women

By Keith Morris

The Liberia Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the International Trade Center and Canadian International Development Agency, has begun a three-week workshop to train local women in international trade. The workshop is intended to educate, train, and promote coordination among local businesswomen and other international actors in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries and beyond.

Participants are expected to address several issues on how Liberian women can take steps in building trade with no or less stress in an effort to introduce Liberian women to challenges and other opportunities to learning in doing business in the sub-region.

Speaking during the opening of the forum, the Chamber of Commerce Director General, Mr. Francis T. Frimpong said, "The purpose of this forum is to create an information package and to train women who are in business and trying to sell on the international market. Women in the sub-region face serious barriers in doing cross-border trade, but the forum is aimed at developing the minds of the women to take serious interest in international trade to avoid these barriers."

Problems ranging from sexual harassment, customs duties and illegal collection of fees from business women are all being experienced by women who are doing business across the region. Workshop organizers said that the forum, which focuses on how women can participate in trade in the sub-region.

Mr. Frimpong said, "The forum is intended to give women in different countries the information about their situation that they need and the international counter-parties on regional and international trade levels."

Participants of the program include business women from across Liberia, Malawi, and Tanzania. The program is intended to give women the information they need to upgrade their understanding and access to the international market.

Many women have been producing and trading for the local market, but they are not in the international market. With the introduction of this forum, business women will now market their goods on the international market for better results. Women in the sub-region face serious barriers in doing cross-border trade, but the forum is aimed at developing the minds of women to take serious interest in international trade to avoid these barriers.

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One of the participants, Mrs. Lila Ofori, said that women should not be afraid of the international market. "We are not afraid of the international market," she said. "We are ready to participate in international trade, but we need the information to do it."

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