BPW Intervention at ITC’s 47th JAG

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women – known as BPW International represents 30,000 women in business and professions in 98 countries across 5 continents. BPW works strategically to increase women’s participation in power and decision making roles. Established in 1930 BPW holds General Consultative Status with ECOSOC since 1947.

BPW’s mission is to increase the representation of women in decision making roles and facilitate our membership to realise their full economic potential. We stand as empowered women leading business - from the top, at all levels and in the communities in which we serve and live.

What the world needs now is leadership and the time to lead is now. No economy can afford to exclude women and we must find ways to have greater participation of women in the economy and enhancing their efficiency and productivity to ensure greater competitiveness and growth of our economies. Today, there are more than 200 million women entrepreneurs worldwide and economists predict that women owned businesses will create nearly a third of the new jobs anticipated over the next seven years and many of these come from <LDC and developing countries. Women are the drivers of growth: earning USD10 trillion every year that they put back into the economy. In many developing countries women’s incomes are growing faster than men’s — albeit from a low base. Women’s entrepreneurship is a vital source of growth that can power economies. What we need is concerted action and a level of innovation that ITC brings.

That’s why BPW International is proud to be a founding partner of the ITC Global Platform for Action because it is about putting money in the hands of women: achieving the empowerment of women through trade.

As the President of BPW International it has been encouraging to hear the distinguished delegates from the UK, the United States, Norway take the floor in support of ITC’s work on women and trade at the 47th JAG. We commend Columbia, Egypt and Tajikistan for their recognition of the important role women play in their economies. BPW congratulates ITC and in particular Executive Director, Patricia Francis, who has recognised women as the key that unlocks the door to economic empowerment of women. Others have seen it, but Patricia Francis has guided her organisation to make the changes others only talk about. This is history in the making.

BPW looks forward to working with the growing number of Member States working with ITC to empower women and power trade and with ITC’s senior management team, including Mme Francis’ successor.