



**PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**Statement**

**by**

**Ms. Olga Algayerova**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**

**Executive Secretary**

**of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**at the**

**UNIDO International Forum**

**“Increasing the contribution of women to economic growth and prosperity: Creating an enabling environment”**

**Interactive session III: Tools to empower women-entrepreneurs to succeed in global markets: Dialogue with successful business women**

**St. Petersburg, 23 May 2018, 16:30**

**Conference Hall F3**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be with you today in the UNIDO International Forum devoted to increasing the contribution of women to economic growth and prosperity.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), as one of five regional commissions of the United Nations, aims to promote pan-European economic integration. UNECE includes 56 member States in Europe, North America and Asia.

For over a decade, promoting women's economic participation, including through entrepreneurship activities, has been a key priority in UNECE work. Entrepreneurship development has proven to be an effective, relevant and strategic approach for women's economic empowerment in our region and beyond.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reconfirms the role of women in building the foundation of a sustainable and inclusive society and acknowledges their driving power to accelerate progress in many areas, specifically in economic growth, entrepreneurship and innovation (SDG 8 and SDG 9).

To become agents of change, and transform existing business models into new ones, women entrepreneurs must be able to access and use resources that are critical for strategic decision-making. In UNECE, we are committed to helping our member States achieve the SDGs, and of course SDG 5, including working towards creating such an enabling environment for women entrepreneurship development. We aim to address gender issues in all areas of our mandate. This can take many different form, for example: collection of gender-disaggregated empirical evidence and statistical data; it can reflect gender aspects in legal and business environments, or it can debate how to involve women entrepreneurs in public private partnerships.

At UNECE we consider it vital to train women in entrepreneurial skills, and provide knowledge on how to successfully set up, manage and grow their own

---

businesses, network, use new information and communication technologies, etc. UNECE has collaborated with the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center and Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation since 2006, providing biannual training workshops for professional women from Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia. These workshops cover support systems for women entrepreneurs and information and communication technologies. Women entrepreneurs from government institutions and SME support agencies, NGOs dealing with small business support and development, women's business associations and academia from the CIS continue to receive training, share experience, discuss new business models and develop joint projects. Our most recent workshop on economic empowerment of women took place just this month.

I would like to assure you that UNECE will continue to implement the strong mandate of the international community to promote equal opportunities for women in all areas of our work. Our endeavours will remain focused on providing a gender lens in economic policies.

And we look forward to expanding our partnership with many of you.

Thank you for your attention.

---