SIDE EVENT
RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

30 October
8:30 - 9:45
Room XXVII, Palais des Nations

NOTE ON THE SIDE EVENT
Rural women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia contribute greatly to the economy through paid and unpaid work but are often among those that benefit the least from the economic development of the country. Entrepreneurship helps to harness women’s potential, increases incomes for women and improves the well-being of their families and communities.

The Women’s Resource Centres in Azerbaijan have had transformative impacts on women’s lives by developing women’s business and technical skills, giving them mentoring support and market access and launching them as entrepreneurs in different fields.

The event will feature women entrepreneurs from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in a conversation on what has worked and what more can be done to promote rural women’s economic independence, with a focus on support provided by entrepreneur associations, international organizations and government.

BACKGROUND
The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of Azerbaijan has partnered with UNDP Azerbaijan and UN Women Georgia to establish and strengthen Women’s Resource Centres in rural areas of the country. The centres have provided women with crucial space to embark on entrepreneurship, giving them the confidence, capital and connections, they need to succeed. The Central Asia Crafts Support Association’s Resource Centre in Kyrgyzstan has been working with rural women in remote communities for the past 20 years. In partnership with FAO, the association formed craft groups, helping rural women improve their skills and upgrade the quality of traditional products made of felt and wool, leading to higher sales and incomes.

OUTCOME
The event will present successful models of support for rural women entrepreneurs that help progress towards a critical area of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action: women and the economy. It will help foster collaboration among countries and demonstrate the linkages between SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).
OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness of women’s achievements and challenges in entrepreneurship
- Highlight unique models and strategies that have been effective in advancing women’s entrepreneurship in different contexts
- Suggest further steps that governments and development partners can take to support rural women’s entrepreneurship
- Showcase the potential of rural women’s entrepreneurship through success stories

AGENDA

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| 8:30 - 8:40 | Opening Remarks  
  Professor Hijran Huseynova, Chair, State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, Government of Azerbaijan |
| 8:40 – 9:20 | Moderated panel discussion  
  Panel chair: Professor Hijran Huseynova, Chair, State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, Government of Azerbaijan  
  - Aygun Aliyeva, Coordinator and NGO leader, Women’s Resource Centre, Sabirabad, Azerbaijan  
  - Elnara Iskendarova, Woman entrepreneur, Women’s Resource Centre, Khazar region of Baku, Azerbaijan  
  - Dinara Chochunbaeva, Founder, Central Asia Crafts Support Association, Kyrgyzstan  
  - Madina Kasimbaeva, Woman entrepreneur, Uzbekistan |
| 9:20 – 9:40 | Discussion open to the floor  
  Moderator: Professor Hijran Huseynova, Chair, State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, Government of Azerbaijan |
| 9:40 – 9:45 | Closing remarks  
  Professor Hijran Huseynova, Chair, State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, Government of Azerbaijan |

PARTNERS

NGO “Support to Sabirabad Women’s Social Development”, Azerbaijan; Central Asia Crafts Support Association’s Resource Centre, Kyrgyzstan

DONORS

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