

4th All Pakistan Women Business Convention

Organized by Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Dated: January 27, 2021

Remarks on GSP+ and Trade Activities by:

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Speech Text:

Thank you, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, for inviting me to the 4th All Pakistan Women Business Convention.

I always like to know the problems faced by my audience and in reading up about the challenges you face I found the following:

- Pakistan fear of failure in startups - Startups In 2019 (54.4%) almost doubled since 2012 from 31%. Regional average is 43%.
 - Risk taking is internationally a gender attribute – men are more risk takers than women.
- Entrepreneurs needs networks – culturally these are more difficult for women than men: Today's event is very valuable in this context.
- Access to finance
 - Own Resources - only 3% own property
 - Microfinance - practical impediment - 2 male guardian - 1 nonrelative
- Education - large improvements > scholarships - more successful than men
- 22% of Labour force are women.
- Pakistan has only 12% women entrepreneurs - lowest in the world (18% in South Asia, 34% globally)

I know a lot of initiatives have been started, but the fact that you are here as businesswomen and still going I can only welcome and I can only congratulate you, you have my full respect.

Things are changing globally

- EU Policy - Equal Opportunities
 - Many years > Only slow growth
 - Ursula von der Leyen - 1st President of the European Commission - Half Commissioners are women
 - I am 1st EU female ambassador after over 4 decades of diplomatic relations with Pakistan.

GSP +

- The European Single Market is the largest export destination of Pakistan goods.
- The EU has granted free access to its market for a wide range of Pakistani goods. This set of trade preferences is called GSP+.
- In order to benefit from GSP+, countries need to demonstrate progress on policy areas of sustainable development, namely Human Rights, Labour Rights, Governance and Environment.
- Pakistan ratified 27 conventions which pertain to these 4 priorities.
- The EU continuously monitors progress and liaise with the Government of Pakistan and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) which is reflected in each biennial report.
- The last report was published in 2020.
- Already since 2013, it has increased Pakistan exports to the EU by 65%; and Pakistan's imports from the EU by 44.43% until 2019.
- Exports **€ 7.5 B**
- There is a huge potential as over 66% tariff lines in the whole trade structure are duty- free or on preferential duties.
- One thing to mention is potential is not being utilized to its maximum by Pakistan.
- With GSP+ and with all these benefits, Pakistan's exports to the EU remain highly concentrated in textiles (over 70%).
- The EU received 33% of PK exports (2019); the US 17% while China 8%.
- There is a potential for new sectors and trade activities to benefit from GSP+; I am focusing on bringing new sectors and new partners within the GSP+ trade activity.

SMEs and the EU-Pakistan business forum

- SMEs are at the centre of value addition and jobs.
- I plan to launch a Forum for SMEs' Trade and help them reach out to the EU market.
- The EU Delegation will hold this first forum in Islamabad in April, and I would like to see you all there and share your views on SMEs' export orientation.
- I highlight this to you because in my view women entrepreneurship has a lot of potential through developing SMEs.
- To begin with my focus will be on handicrafts, gems and jewellery, fashion designing and tourism as well as Information Technology.
- I sincerely hope to bring the EU SMEs working in these sectors closer to the Pakistani SMEs so that they get the direct benefit of the GSP+ exports.

What should be done?

- Pakistan needs to engage women in labour force and business decision making - Because it is fair - Because it is profitable for all
- Encourage business to have women labour force and women Board Members on a corporate company. Each woman should ensure that in their companies - women are given a fair chance. Rather than competing for the share of the women pizza slice - fight to increase the slice.

Opportunities:

- Apart from GSP+, the EU is proudly associated with the TVET Programme and is the lead funding agency for technical and vocational training:
 - **Pakistan** has greatly spotlighted the importance of **women's TVET**. According to Economic Survey of **Pakistan**, currently there are 3,842 **TVET** institutes working in the country. The total number of **TVET** institutes for **females** have risen from 236 in 2000-01 to 1,154 in 2018-19. * 4 Times

Erasmus+ (Peshawar, Faisalabad)

TVET - Agriculture, Hospitality, IT, Auto

Exports - 66%

Business Forum - Ideas

Export Standards - B2B - Organic Certifications

Micro-financing - Women Empowerment, Inheritance Laws (MoHR)

Women in rural areas suffer greater mobility and network challenges than their urban counterparts as well.

In order to foster a startup culture that is female inclusive, multiagency cooperation is required Including public private partnerships. The media, education policy makers and government agencies could come together to provide women with improved access to business development services and facilitate local, regional, national and international networks. This would help integration of women entrepreneurs into the mainstream economy and help with job creation and innovation in the country as a whole,

You as role models should be more visible.

Women have varied mentorship and access to market needs than men, these needs should be part of a healthy ecosystem. Women's participation and varied needs perspectives and experience should be viewed as valuable assets towards problem-solving and intelligent evolution of growing market service delivery. not burden.

I hope that these sectors and opportunities will invigorate new trade activities led by women.

I am ready to help any small business (any SME) in their reach out to the EU market.
