

Closing Speech at the Seventh International Conference: Contemporary Issues in International Trade: A Development Lens 2022

By

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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my honour and pleasure to give the closing remarks to the Seventh international conference: contemporary issues in international trade: a development lens, organized jointly by WTO-Chairs of Jordan, Barbados, Chile, Egypt, Mexico, Mauritius, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, and Turkey. First of all, I would like to thank my team in the WTO-Chair committee at the university of Jordan for their enthusiastic and dedicated work while I see that they put their heart and soul to make this event happen.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me on behalf of the University of Jordan, to express my deep thanks and appreciation to the WTO and WTO Chairs Programme at Geneva for their continuous support to the academic institutions from developing countries, our thanks and appreciation extend to all our partner chairs of the other nine participating universities, distinguished speakers, and researchers for their excellent contributions to this conference. My special thanks to Dorotea López Giral the chair from Chile and their technical support department for providing the zoom service for this conference.

I am extremely pleased that the multi-regional conference was well attended by various stakeholders ranging from government officials and policy makers to industry practitioners and experts. What a joy it was to organize this hybrid event in the University of Jordan the mother of all national universities – here in Jordan.

[Recommendations]

The paper presented in our conference were rich and well diversified, which enable us to provide these set of recommendation that are related to the conference themes:

- 1- International trade contributes positively to gender equality and female empowerment and hence to balanced economic growth. Therefore, carefully studied, and gradual trade liberalization is recommended. Also, policy makers should take into account including female enabling statements in the new trade and economic integration agreements.
- 2- Encourage both gradual Trade openness and FDI contribute to expanding and diversifying production capacities in developing countries. This is important to avoid the rigidity of exports response to openness and avoid developing sharp trade deficit.

- 3- Joining WTO Agreement contribute positively to women empowerment; hence we recommend the quick joining of the other non-member developing countries.
- 4- Develop clear policies to raise the rate of women's participation in the labor market through practical programs targeting sectors in which the participation rate of women is low, such as the agricultural sector and private business sector in general.
- 5- Additional research is needed for more intersectional analysis of women's economic participation. Jordan has a diverse society and women face different issues depending on their nationality, race, age, disability and geographic location.
- 6- Government should put more emphasis on industrial sector since it is found more responsive to trade openness compared to other sectors.
- 7- Recommend the policy of supporting higher education and expanding access to skills for female to achieve better women participation in labor market.
- 8- Countries need to adopt reforms in trade policy to promote women empowerment including policy to promote flexible work arrangements and hours, awareness enhancement.
- 9- Removing all obstacles standing against women access to labor market at both the private and public sectors: such as addressing pay disparity, lack of adequate access to maternity and paternity leave benefits, and passing amendments to Labor Law that protect women from harassment and remove gender biased articles.
- 10- Policy makers should pay more attention to develop the digital economy as it proved more effective in time of uncertainty during covid 19 era and served as effective driver for innovation and women empowerment.
- 11- Policy makers are recommended to work more on demand side factors to reduce gender-gap employment, hence, enhancing the females' economic empowerment. Examples of demand side factors are: discrimination in employment based on gender; on-the-job childcare facilities to reduce females 'drop out from the labor market, improve public transportation, improve finance access.
- 12- Policy makers should pay attention to the mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market in Jordan, which is responsible at least partially for increases in gender-based discrimination and segmentation, slowing down job growth, and limits access to productive assets for entrepreneurs and business owners.
- 13- Policy makers should encourage timely training and skills upgrading to female and male equally.
- 14- Empirical research on trade facilitation out of this conference indicated to the important role of trade facilitation on trade flows especially in case of developing countries, hence developing countries should seek WTO assistance for reforming trade facilitation.

With this, allow me to come to a close.

Thank you and see you again.