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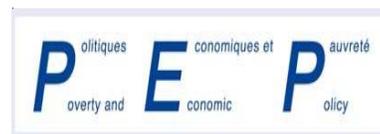
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### Does trade affect women and men differently?

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## **Does trade affect women and men differently?**

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**Summary**—This note reviews recent evidence on the gender effects of trade, identifies research gaps and suggests lessons for policy. Trade policies, like any other economic policy, are likely to have gender differentiated effects because of women's and men's different access to, and control over, resources, and because of their different roles in both the market economy and the household. It is not possible to conclusively say whether trade liberalisation is good or bad for women. The effects of trade liberalisation and expansion for women, both absolutely and relative to men, have been mixed, with both positive and negative dimensions, depending on a range of factors and preconditions. Policy needs to act to reduce gender-based constraints to trade expansion. It also needs to enhance gender-equalising trends associated with trade as well as to offset any negative consequences of trade such as widening overall gender inequalities or specific losses for particular groups of women. This requires first that the gender-differentiated effects of particular trends and policy changes are well understood.



## **Introduction**

Does trade affect women and men differently? The answer to this question is obviously yes. Most economic policies are gendered. On the surface a policy may appear to be gender neutral because it does not target either men or women. But the policy will be gender biased if it fails to take into account the gender differences that permeate economies (Elson 1995).

It is not possible to conclusively say whether trade liberalisation is good or bad for women. Because trade practices and gender relations are diverse, there will always be contradictory effects. Thus the focus of any trade impact assessments should be on understanding the many channels through which reforms may influence women and men's well-being. This note contributes to identifying such channels.

Trade liberalisation alters the distribution of income between different social groups, and between women and men. The main mechanism through which it operates is changes in the relative prices of goods. These, by modifying incentives, induce reallocation of factors of production among sectors that use them with different intensities, and therefore changes in their employment and/or remuneration. The same variations in relative prices bring about changes in real incomes that affect groups differently, due to differences in their consumption patterns. Trade liberalisation is also likely to reduce tariff revenues, and this, in turn, may have group-specific effects on the size and composition of government expenditure.

Trade liberalisation can thus affect gender inequalities at the macro, meso and micro level. For example, it might contribute to reducing gender gaps in market participation if the sectors that expand are more female-intensive than the sectors that contract (macro); it might undermine public provision of social services that favour women (such as health and education), if loss of government revenue from reduced tariffs leads to cuts in such services (meso); it can reduce or extend female control over household spending, depending on whether it destroys or creates sources of independent income for women (micro).

A proper assessment of the gender impact of trade needs to consider all these dimensions simultaneously. It should analyse changing patterns and conditions of work, including paid and unpaid work; gender gaps in wages; patterns of ownership and control over assets; changes in consumption patterns and gender-based power relations within households. It should examine not just whether practical gender needs are met, but also whether outcomes contribute to more egalitarian gender relations in the long term, by reducing the basis of women's economic disadvantage and widening women's options. Some of these dimensions have been explored in the literature more fully than others. The following sections review some of the insights from this literature, identify gaps and suggest a few lessons for policy.

## Insights

Interest in the gender effects of trade policies has been growing. Since 1994, when the first comprehensive review of empirical evidence in this area was published (Joeques and Weston, 1994), several new initiatives have been promoted, in the form of lobbying, awareness campaigns, creation of worldwide networks and new research (Elson *et al*, 2007, provides a collection of recent key quantitative contributions to this field). Despite an intense debate, sound empirical evidence is sparse. Analyses are still limited by the absence of sex-disaggregated data in many areas and the difficulty of disentangling the effects of trade liberalisation from those of other simultaneous changes. Nevertheless a few lessons have been learnt and are summarised below.

*The effects of trade liberalisation on gender inequalities in a country may be either negative or positive.* Many things mediate the effects and are important in determining final outcomes. They include: resource endowments, labour market institutions, systems of property rights and other socio-economic characteristics.

*The effects of trade are likely to vary among different groups of women.* If new opportunities are created, women's ability to seize them will depend on their education, skills and their age, as well as the social norms and obligations prevailing in their households and communities. For example, mothers would be less likely to respond to new incentives than their daughters. Changes in the price of the same goods would affect women differently, depending on whether they consume or produce such goods.

### 1. Employment effects

Resource endowments and systems of property rights are key determinants of women's opportunities from trade. *Women benefit the most in countries that are abundant in unskilled labour and have a comparative advantage in the production of basic manufactures.* This is because women are disproportionately represented among unskilled workers, and because prevailing norms make their entitlements to the rewards from their own labour stronger than those of any other factor of production. Women's weaker property rights in land and other resources, and a rigid gender division of labour, have limited the gains from trade to women in Africa. These forces are also likely to have contributed to the weak supply response of African agriculture to export opportunities (Joeques, 1999b). Evidence that farm output from a given quantity of household labour is less than the maximum that could be produced can be found in Burkina Faso (Udry, 1996 and Smith and Chavas, 1999), Tanzania (Tijabuka, 1994) and Zambia (Wold, 1997).

The varying patterns of female employment across regions and sectors support these hypotheses. *The greater the share of garments, textiles and electronics in a country's exports, the greater the employment-creating impact of trade has been for women* (Wood, 1991, Standing (1999)). The gains in manufacturing employment appear to have been particularly strong in Asia (especially the four East Asian 'tigers', but also Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in South Asia, and Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines in South East Asia), with limited expansion also in Latin America (most notably Mexico, but also Central America and the Caribbean). No other country in Sub-Saharan Africa has matched Mauritius, where employment in manufactures for export grew more than tenfold in seven years in the 1980s (Pearson, 1999).

*Most recent evidence on the manufacturing sector of the African region reports declines in output and job losses due to import displacement.* There is some evidence that import competition has damaged activities in which women are involved, such as basket weaving in Kenya (Joeke 1999a), the textile industry in South Africa (Valodia, 1996) and the informal sector in urban Zimbabwe (Kanji and Jazdowska, 1995).

*The sparse evidence, both from Africa and elsewhere, shows that the impact of expanding agricultural exports is generally less favourable to women.* The picture is mixed, with differences between traditional export crop production and newer exports, such as horticultural products and agro-industry. Many women have recently found employment in agro-industry, but this may not have improved their status as much as manufacturing (Barrientos, 2003).

*Expansion of traditional agricultural exports has created employment in some cases, both on the field and in processing and trading activities associated with increased commercialisation. But the employment gains appear to be larger for men than for women.* It is often found that women work less on the more commercialised crops than do men, and are also less likely to work as hired labourers, who are also mostly men (von Braun and Kennedy, 1994). Women farmers may find it difficult to become independently involved in the production of export crops because of limited access to credit, technology and marketing channels. Even if not directly involved, women often increase their time contributions to their husbands' crops, but are not paid for this work. *The effects evidently vary with the gender intensity of the crops that expand, but this may itself be endogenous.* For example, there is evidence that even when a crop is traditionally female intensive, commercialising it causes men to enter the sector and take over production (for example, groundnuts in Zambia (Wold, 1997) and rice in The Gambia (von Braun *et al.*, 1994)).

*Non-traditional agricultural exports (NTAEs)– comprising flowers, vegetables, and fruits, often produced on a contract basis for foreign buyers and airfreighted out– are a significant growth area in African agriculture, but remain relatively small.* NTAEs are developed in Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa, and, outside Africa, in Chile, Ecuador and most Central America. The NTAE sector includes two distinct types of production: small farm contract growers and large scale commercial farms. In the former type, women work as family labour and own-account farmers and are subject to similar constraints as in traditional agriculture. On large farms, women work as 'modern' agricultural wage labour, and their ability to participate is unrelated to land rights. Women are more likely than men to work as seasonal and part-time worker in these activities (Barrientos, 2000).

*There is some evidence that the expansion of exportable services is another source of employment for women, especially in the information processing sector, ranging from simple data entry to software programming, especially in India (Mitter *et al.*, 2005) the Caribbean and some of the Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) (Joeke, 1995 and Mitter and Rowbotham, 1995), but this area is under-researched.*

A growing body of research (for example Chen *et al.*, 2005) is starting to shed some light on the array of informal sector employment opportunities open to women and men in the context of changes in trade policy. It is likely that this is where the negative effects of trade expansion may be concentrated, through pressure of import competition

from trade liberalisation. On the other hand, small workshops supplying work for larger export concerns are expanding, in line with patterns in the formal sector and amplifying the employment creating effect. Studies show that gains can be captured by women working in the informal sector, if they are able to organise (Chen et al., 2005).

## 2. Constraints on female labour supply and labour mobility

*A constraint that prevents women from seizing new opportunities, both in agriculture and in waged employment, is the heavy burden of household responsibilities that falls disproportionately on them.* Studies from settings as different as the cut flower industry in Ecuador (Newman, 2001), export processing zones in Malaysia (Kusago, 2000), the off-farm informal sector in Guatemala (Katz, 1995) and NTAEs in Kenya (McCulloch and Ota, 2002), all point to the presence of other female members in the household as a determinant of women's participation in new opportunities created by trade. These other female household members might be mothers or elder daughters, who are available to take on household duties relinquished by women who go out to work. Very little is known about the circumstances of these other women and the impact of trade on their welfare.

*Most of these newly created jobs for women do not challenge gender stereotypes, are very 'female' and do not appear to provide long lasting employment opportunities.* Many (Standing, 1999, Barrientos and Dolan, 2003, Kabeer, 2003) emphasise growing flexibility and vulnerability in working conditions in export-oriented sectors. Working conditions generally appear to be poor, although not usually worse than in most other jobs open to women. Some evidence also suggests that young single women, often new migrants to the cities, were the preferred workforce, at least initially, in Asia (Baden and Joekes, 1993). But trends are varied and changing, with higher proportions of older, married and better educated women in the labour force in some countries (Pearson, 1999).

Several studies (Tzannatos, 1999, Gammage and Mehra, 1999, United Nations, 1999) find *little decline in employment segregation by gender* over the last two decades. Female workers have remained confined to female jobs, with little opportunity to enter previously male dominated sectors and occupations. *Women continue to be employed in low-pay and short-term jobs.* There is evidence of a moderate decline in horizontal segregation in some countries. In the NICs, for example, women are increasingly employed in export-oriented services such as information processing, tourism and financial services (UN, 1999). *But vertical segregation appears to be persistent and within sectors hierarchies have become more pronounced.* Such is the case in Bangladesh (Paul-Majumdar and Begun, 2000), Madagascar (Nicita and Razzaz, 2003) and Mexico (Fleck, 2001), where women are increasingly occupying bottom occupations and men taking up supervisory roles.

In Bangladesh female employment in manufacturing has remained highly concentrated in one single activity, ready-made garments, while other textile subsectors are still predominantly male. In knitwear, for example, women constitute only 14 per cent of the labour force (Bhattarchaya, 1999). In Mexico, *maquila* employment for men has risen significantly more than for women in recent years, because of the increased importance of sectors such as transportation equipment. *Women's share of the total labour force in EPZs declined from 77 per cent in 1980 to 57 per cent in 1998* (Fleck, 2001). Similar

declining trends in the share of female employment in EPZs are found in Mauritius, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore (Kusago and Tzannatos, 1998, Gammage and Mehra, 1999).

*It is not always lack of education that prevents women from benefiting from introduction of new technologies, upgrading and reorganisation of production.* For example, the number of educated female workers is significant in Sri Lanka and Singapore, but there is evidence of increasing levels of unemployment among them (Malhotra and De Graff, 1997).

### 3. Effects on earnings

Evidence on changes in female and male wages associated with trade liberalisation is even sparser than that on employment. It is limited to formal manufacturing and to a few (mainly middle-income) countries. Data exclude the informal sector and at times also small firms in the formal sector, which is where many women work, thus providing an incomplete picture even of the manufacturing sector. The information on wages is rarely comparable over time and across countries because of problems in definitions. Often (and surprisingly) wage data for males and females are not disaggregated by skill level. *Overall, the gender wage gap remains large in most countries, even surprisingly where there has been rapid growth in exports that relied on female labour,* a fact for which different studies offer different interpretations.

Trade liberalisation might affect wages by altering the relative demand for various types of workers or by influencing discriminatory practices. Most of the studies available investigate this latter aspect and can be grouped in two different schools of thought.

Some researchers assert that globalisation is likely to lead to competitive pressures that will reduce the scope for employers to discriminate, including discriminating against women. Oostendorp (2002), for example, finds a negative association between openness and the size of the gender wage gap within occupational categories in a sample of both developed and developing countries between 1983 and 1999. However, the study is not able to establish whether the narrowing of the gender gap results from men's wages declining or women's wages rising.

This distinction is of some importance. In Taiwan, Berik (2000) finds that, after controlling for employment segregation by gender and other industry characteristics, greater export orientation is associated with smaller wage differentials between women and men. This result is due to the fact that export orientation has a larger adverse absolute impact on men's wages than women's wages.

By contrast, some studies of East Asian countries explain pay discrimination as a result of the employer objective to maintain export competitiveness, predicting, and finding, that greater openness widens the gender wage gap. For example, Seguino (2000) argues that divergent trends in the unadjusted gender wage ratio in Taiwan and Korea during 1981-1992 are related to differences in the nature of foreign direct investment flows in the two countries. Greater mobility of capital in Taiwan's female labour-intensive sectors leaves women workers more vulnerable to losses of bargaining power in wage negotiations. In Korea, an environment of lesser capital mobility encourages firms to maintain competitiveness by other strategies such as technological upgrading and

improvement in product quality. Seguino (1997) finds that in Korea despite a strong demand for women's labour, female-male wage differentials have narrowed only marginally during 1975-1990. In principle this could have been because of the existence of surplus female labour, but this seems unlikely for Korea, where unemployment rates have been low.

Evidence from Bangladesh (Bhattachaya, 1999) and Morocco (Belghazi quoted in Joekes, 1999a) suggests that, in these countries, wage discrimination against women in the export textile industry was lower than in any other manufacturing sector in the early stages, and has declined over time more than in other sectors. In Bangladesh, trends in female/male wage differentials in garments indicate a narrowing of the gap from 1983 to 1990, but a widening from 1990 to 1997. This change is attributed to a higher proportion of men taking up high skilled jobs and an increase in the number of temporary workers among women (Zohir, 1998; Paul-Majumder and Begun, 2000). A similar trend towards widening of the gender wage gap for similar reasons is predicted in Madagascar (Nicita and Razzaz, 2003).

A study of Mexico (Ghiara, 1999) analyses female wages in two selected industries – tradable machinery and non-tradable social services– and find differences in impact between unskilled and skilled women. While skilled women in the non-traded service sectors have become better off, unskilled women in manufacturing have become worse off. Another study of Mexico (Fleck, 2001) finds that female/male wage ratios in the *maquila* sector vary greatly between industries. The gender wage gap is wider the higher the concentration of women in an industry and the greater its capital intensity.

It is difficult to draw general conclusions from these studies. *One of the factors inhibiting the narrowing of the gender wage gap might be the informalisation of labour contracts through subcontracting and outsourcing* (workers in these arrangements are mostly female). In other words, an increasing proportion of women's work in manufacturing are being shifted into the informal sector where wages are significantly lower than for jobs in the formal sector (Balakrishnan, 2002).

*Being paid does not necessarily entail retaining significant control over income.* Even in the manufacturing sector, there are accounts of women handing over a large proportion of their pay to other family members. A survey of over 800 women factory workers in Pakistan found that 48 per cent of them gave their income to their husbands (Hafez quoted in Elson, 1999). However, most of the evidence shows that women working in export-oriented industries retain some control over their earnings (Zohir, 1998; Kusago and Barham, 2001; Kabeer, 2000)

In agriculture, most studies of NTAEs in Guatemala, Kenya and Uganda (Katz, 1995; von Braun and Immink, 1994; Dolan, 2001) find that women lose control over income and have a lesser say on household expenditures.

*The type of employment matters for control as well as whether the cash is earned as a lump sum or in regular instalments.* Women are likely to have greater control if they work in factories away from male relatives than if they are home based (Kabeer, 2000). *In agriculture, a key factor affecting control is whether women participate in the marketing of what they produce* (Kiggundu, 1996).

#### *4. Allocation of resources and time within households*

By changing employment opportunities and earnings patterns of women and men, trade liberalisation is likely to influence the allocation of time and resources among household members. Since women and men, younger and older people, have different needs and preferences (for example, for health care and nutrition) reallocation of both time and consumption goods will differently affect their welfare. Trade might also affect intra-household dynamics through changes in public provision of social services but no study of this seems to exist.

These dimensions are rarely included in analyses of trade impacts, perhaps because they are more difficult to assess than income and employment effects. Most of the studies that include analysis of nutrition, health and time allocation effects are in agriculture, a sector where the domestic sphere and market production appear to be more intertwined. It seems that the attention paid by these studies to women's work is motivated mainly by concerns about their role as providers of care to other family members, especially children. This emphasis is important but women's own well-being should also be given adequate attention.

The most comprehensive study to date of the impact of cash cropping on nutrition was carried out by IFPRI (von Braun and Kennedy, 1994) using a common research methodology in several countries undergoing agricultural commercialisation: Guatemala, Kenya, Philippines, the Gambia and Rwanda and, with a more limited coverage, Papua New Guinea, Malawi and Zambia. The main strength of these case studies is their detailed assessments of the commercialisation-production-income-consumption-nutrition chain, getting closer than most other studies to a general equilibrium approach.

*Despite reallocation of land to new cash crops, staple food production per capita was maintained or even increased in all countries – a challenge to the commonly held view that agricultural export production is at the expense of food production. Net income gains in overall household income were significant.*

Women's direct control over income from the new cash crops was much less than that of men. In none of the studies did women play a significant role as decision makers and managers of the more commercialised crop production, even when typical 'women's crops' were promoted (e.g. rice in The Gambia). In the Guatemala study (von Braun and Immink, 1994), *reallocation of women's labour time towards the new contract for multinational exporters was at the expense of other off-farm activities, which had been a source of independently controlled income for them.*

In all countries for which information was available, women's income had a beneficial effect on household calorie consumption. Any tendency to spend less on food because of loss of income control by women was however generally small, with greater income from commercialisation still resulting in more food being purchased.

No effect of participation in commercialisation schemes on children's health was found, but this might be due to the relatively short time frame of the case studies. An important finding from the Kenya study of expansion of sugar cane production (Kennedy, 1994) is that increases in women's own income was associated with decreases in their body mass

index. *For many women energy expenditures increase as a result of the additional work involved.* This increase in the energy intensity of activities was greater than the concurrent increase in their caloric intake.

In a study of the impact of growing broccoli and snow peas in the central Highlands of Guatemala, Katz (1995) too finds a loss of control over income by females. In this case, *women's labour contributions to the new male-controlled crops are not at the expense of their own income generating activities but, rather, are made by sacrificing domestic production, which may in part be compensated by increased activity of older daughters.* One of the many valuable contributions of this study is that of differentiating children by age and thus drawing attention to the role of older children in sharing housework. This study is also useful in highlighting factors affecting alternative choices of remunerated labour for women (for example, marketing activities that require women to be mobile are only undertaken by older women with no little children, and independent agricultural activities are only undertaken by women with sons).

A negative impact of NTAEs on young girls' use of time is found also in a study of Uganda (Elson and Evers, 1996b). *Extra demand on women's labour time due to vanilla production is transferred to their daughters.* Pollination by hand at critical stages in the growth cycle is often undertaken by girls at the expense of their schooling.

A study of the effects of employment in the flower industry on the time allocation patterns of husband and wives in Ecuador (Newman, 2001) finds that *husbands of wives working in the flower industry participate more in household work than either husbands of women working in other sectors or husbands of women not involved in paid employment.* This positive effect on the gender distribution of household tasks appears to be stronger when men also work in the flower industry. The author suggests that this might arise because the gender gap in wages in the flower industry is smaller than in any other sector (a significant number of married women in the flower industry earn higher wages than their male counterparts), but this hypothesis is not tested directly. In households where both wife and husband work in the flower industry, overall time devoted to household tasks by both partners is less than in other households and the share of men in total household work is 25 per cent. It should be noted however that the bulk of household work is still performed by women. This study does not consider possible reallocation of household tasks to older children.

##### *5. Individual freedom and self-esteem*

Fewer studies of the manufacturing sector have explored the impact of trade liberalisation on intra-household resource allocation. The studies focus more on individual lifestyles— including women's ability to make independent choices, marriage and fertility decisions— and less on nutrition and children's health. The characteristics and circumstances of women working in export-oriented manufacturing are rather different from those of women involved in agricultural production. Female workers in manufacturing are mostly young and single (although not all of them) who have left their families of origin in the rural areas and have not yet formed new ones. The nature of the work in manufacturing has also fewer direct linkages with food production and consumption decisions than in agriculture.

Most studies are of Bangladesh. Hewett and Amin (2000) find that *female garment workers have a higher age at marriage and at first birth than women of similar socio-economic background who do not work in the garment sector*. Some of the garment workers can even take decisions on whom to marry and have fewer children. They are more likely to have better quality housing conditions and access to modern infrastructure. Women working in the garment sector have a higher propensity than other women to spend their money on jewellery, entertainment, cosmetics and gifts (controlling for income level). *Their nutritional intake appears to be quite high, but they are more likely than other women to suffer from a range of minor health problems*.

Most studies (Kabeer, 2000; Zohir, 1998; Hewett and Amin, 2000) appear to agree that women working in factories feel that their status has improved. Garment work positively affected self-esteem and decision-making with benefits extended to other family members. Kusago and Barham (2001) report that migrant daughters in Malaysia sending remittances home to their mothers have increased their capacity to express preferences.

### **Research and data gaps**

As the previous section shows, some progress in our understanding of the gender differentiated effects of trade policies has been made in recent years, however some gaps remain. The discussion of the main problem areas is organised under three sub-headings: sectoral coverage, methodologies, and gender bias in economic research.

#### *1. Sectoral coverage*

There are still important gaps in the sectoral coverage of the existing research. Sound empirical analysis is lacking particularly with reference to the traditional agricultural sector where information on women's and men's (and children's) changing roles and time burdens continues to be sparse. The problem is compounded by the fact women constitute the majority of unpaid agricultural workers. Standard labour statistics or agriculture censuses should be collecting nationwide data on unpaid workers as well as other type of agricultural workers, including subsistence farmers, but this is unevenly done in practice.

There is growing evidence that the expansion of exportable services is an important source of employment for women in the modern sector. However, it is difficult to disentangle information on internationally traded services which often are not isolated in data from traditional commercial services, or social sector personal services. Sex-disaggregated data on employment in traded services are even sparser. This is an area where further research is much needed.

Significant progress has been made in the last decade in recording and documenting work in informal activities (for example Chen et al, 2005). However the mechanisms through which trade reforms affect informal labour markets need to be better understood.

Very little is still known about the impact of trade liberalisation on female consumers relative to male consumers. A participatory study in Tanzania (Booth et al, 1993) finds that the greater availability of goods at international prices was regarded as a substantial improvement compared with the past, and particularly by women. Other anecdotal

evidence suggests negative effects but the data are very patchy. This is one of the areas most under-researched.

## *2. Methodologies*

The studies reviewed in this note use a variety of approaches-- from econometrics to qualitative methods-- depending on the aspect examined, but most look at specific sectors or households in isolation and neglect economy wide effects and interactions between different dimensions.

There is the need for a more integrated approach, to allow consideration of net impacts and to provide an assessment of economy-wide gains or losses from greater exposure to trade. Of particular importance, from a gender perspective, is the consideration of interaction between market and non-market spheres as a result of women's entry into trade-related activities.

Economy-wide models, when appropriately disaggregated, would be a useful tool in assessing the advantages and disadvantages of policy interventions which might be used to reduce gender inequalities. Simulations run with these models are instructive and should be important inputs into the policy-making process. They can effectively help to identify groups of men and women that are vulnerable, even when trade liberalisation appears to be beneficial on average. Models can only generate predictions, though, and are complementary to, not substitutes for, genuine empirical work on ex post data. Both ex-ante tools and ex-post data analysis are important for an accurate gender impact assessment of trade policies. Very few studies so far have used general equilibrium models with gender features (notable exceptions are Fontana and Wood, 2000; Fontana, 2004; Fofana et al, 2005; Siddiqui, 2005)

Gendered global value chain analysis is also a very promising methodological approach to the study of the gender differentiated effects of trade. The approach involves analysing the full range of activities-- production, exchange, distribution and consumption--that are required to bring a product from its conception to the final consumer. A recent study of six countries commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat (Carr, 2006) provides an excellent example of how this approach can be effectively used for gender analysis.

## *3. Gender bias in economic research*

Gender is not still recognised as an important analytical category in most economic research. For example, a growing number of studies use general equilibrium models to assess the poverty impact of trade reforms (most recently Hertel and Winters, 2006) but none of them include gender features. This even when adding information on the gendered structure of the economy studied could be done at little extra cost at the planning stage of the research. Similarly, most existing value chain analyses do not have a gender dimension.

Problems with nationwide sex-disaggregated statistics are still severe. The result is that researchers who need to undertake gender impact assessments of trade agreements often have to patch together data of uneven quality from a myriad of sources. Specific case studies need to be commissioned. But efforts should also be put in supporting the systematic collection and analysis of basic standard sex disaggregated statistics. The

availability of adequate information on the gendered structure of the economy would greatly help, not just with trade impact assessments but with any other type of economic analysis.

## **Policies**

Interventions aimed at promoting gender equality in a context of trade reforms will vary depending on the structure of the economy, the nature of gender employment segregation and human capital differences. For example, the complementary policies required to enable a more equitable distribution of the gains associated with trade in a country with a large agricultural sector will be different from the policies required in a semi-industrialised country. There is no sufficient space in this note to elaborate on specific measures to improve trade outcomes for women, only a few broad recommendations will be attempted. Policy makers should place particular emphasis on: (1) labour market policies and on (2) policies to address women's multiple roles.

### *1. Labour market policies.*

Policies should be concerned at the over-concentration of women in low-wage parts of the export sector. Measures should be designed to reduce the markedly sex-segmented labour market and facilitate the insertion of women in sectors other than the traditional female sectors. Greater labour mobility should be promoted. Active labour market policies could be considered as part of a range of labour market initiatives that could benefit women. Specialised training in addition to general education should be provided—particularly to women retrenched from the contracting sectors. Efforts to promote greater women's participation in more technical subjects which will equip them better for the market place should be encouraged. Vocational training and other forms of training need to be supported.

### *2. Policies to address women's multiple roles.*

There is a great need to develop policies which address the combined productive and reproductive roles of women. A big gap exists between men and women in their household responsibilities. Greater investment is required to reduce women's excessive time burdens. Time and labour saving infrastructure could play a role, including: greater priority to water supply and sanitation, energy for household needs, access to appropriate means of transport. This could be especially important for women working in agriculture in rural areas. It has been shown that women who are heavily involved in water collection are also more likely to be engaged in part-time casual work (for South Africa, see proceedings of the UNDP-Levy Conference on Unpaid Work, Session Five, October 2005, New York). In cases like these, improving infrastructure would not only be an effective way to enhance competitiveness in global markets, but also would it help in saving precious time for women and enabling them to participate more fully in the new employment opportunities created by trade.

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