

The UN Economic Commission for Africa organises a workshop in Marrakesh for promoting women's entrepreneurship in North Africa

Addis Ababa-25 February 2010-ECA- The ECA Office for North Africa is organizing, in cooperation with the Arab Maghreb Union(AMU) and other partners, a workshop in Marrakesh, Kingdom of Morocco, on 1 and 2 March 2010 to consider ways of addressing social, legal and institutional obstacles which hamper activities initiated by North African women entrepreneurs.

The theme of the workshop: ‘ the role of women in developing national economies of the Arab Maghreb Union’ will be discussed by experts from gender and trade ministries, Maghreb organizations of women entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce and international organizations.

The objective of this meeting supported by the Islamic Development Bank is to make women's entrepreneurship a tool for developing and integrating North Africa. Recent studies highlight the ever-increasing number of Maghreb women entrepreneurs. Their contribution to economic take-off, however, has yet to be optimized because of impediments having to do with social prejudices reflected in discrimination, especially when it comes to financial empowerment.

Women entrepreneurs suffer, in this way, from types of discrimination in the economic arena. This is not only exacerbating pressure from the current economic and financial crisis but also preventing women entrepreneurs from seizing business opportunities.

Accordingly, the workshop agenda provides for taking an in-depth look at the economic benefits of women's entrepreneurship, especially on ways to optimize those benefits by boosting the managerial capacity of women entrepreneurs, creating networks of women entrepreneurs and forging partnerships.

The Marrakesh workshop falls within the context of initiatives being taken by the ECA Office for North Africa to promote the development of trade among countries of the subregion with a view to their economic integration.

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