Empowering Women in Business through Trade Agreements

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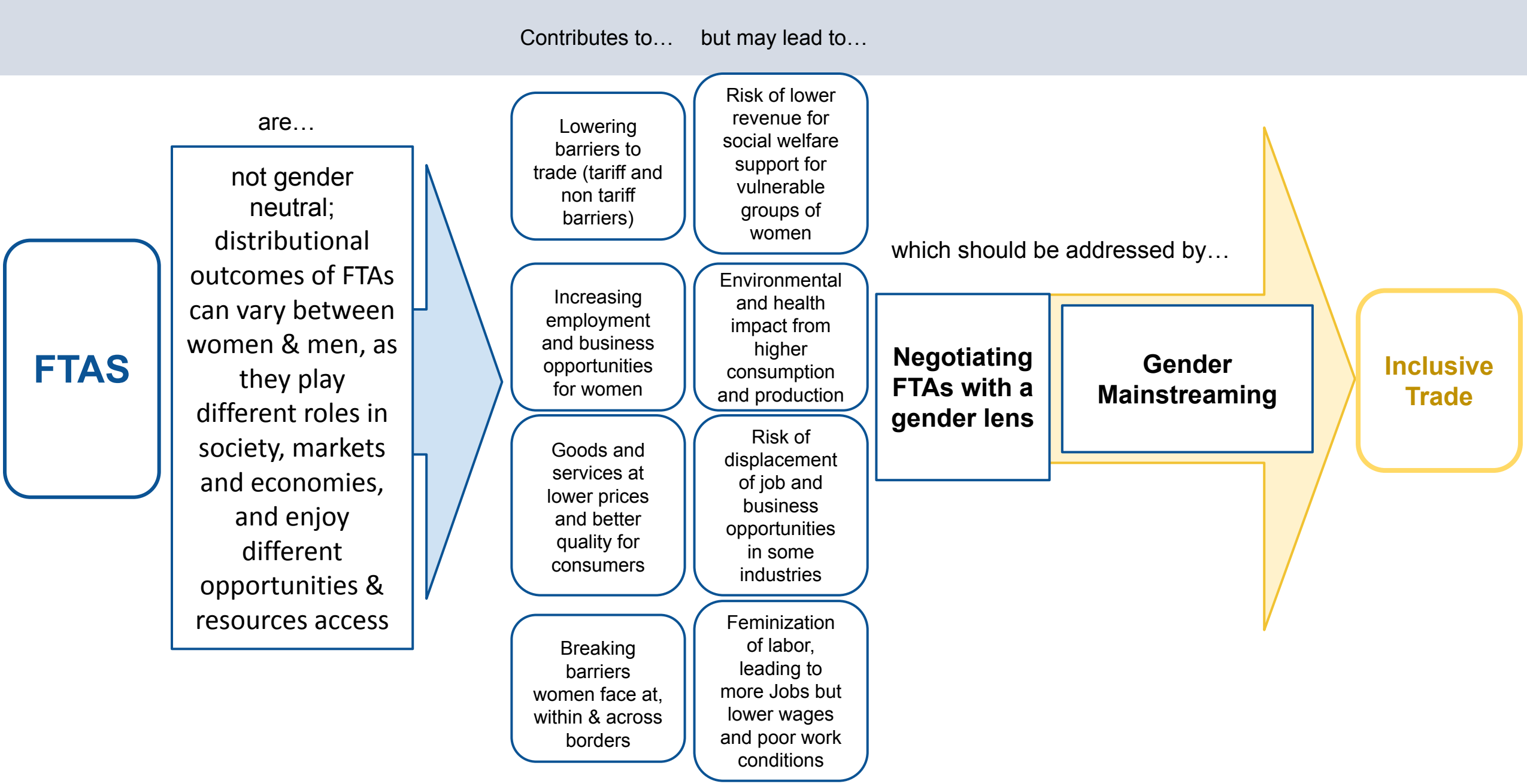
Contents

Why use trade agreements for women's business interests?

How trade agreements can benefit businesses?

How trade Agreements include women's business interests?

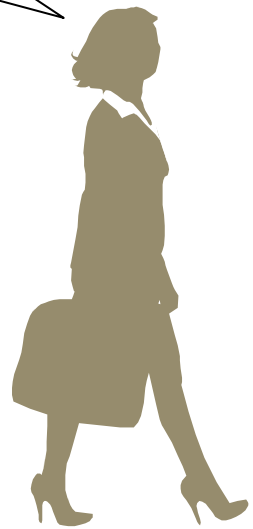
What more can be done?


Contributes to…
but may lead to…
FTAS
are…
not gender neutral; distributional outcomes of FTAs can vary between women & men, as they play different roles in society, markets and economies, and enjoy different opportunities & resources access
Lowering barriers to trade (tariff and non tariff barriers)
Risk of lower revenue for social welfare support for vulnerable groups of women
Increasing employment and business opportunities for women
Environmental and health impact from higher consumption and production
Goods and services at lower prices and better quality for consumers
Risk of displacement of job and business opportunities in some industries
Breaking barriers women face at, within & across borders
Feminization of labor, leading to more Jobs but lower wages and poor work conditions
which should be addressed by…
Negotiating FTAs with a gender lens
Gender Mainstreaming
Inclusive Trade

Why Use Trade Agreements to Empower Women?

Breaking Barriers

Breaking Barriers at borders, within borders and across borders:
Access to resources, labour standards, maternity needs protection, education and health, physical safety, breaking trade barriers, exploitation, discrimination, and others



Creating Opportunities

Creating new employment and business opportunities for women:
Jobs creation with higher salaries & better work conditions, new markets & clients, participation in value chains, market access expansion, e-commerce & flexible work opportunities, and others

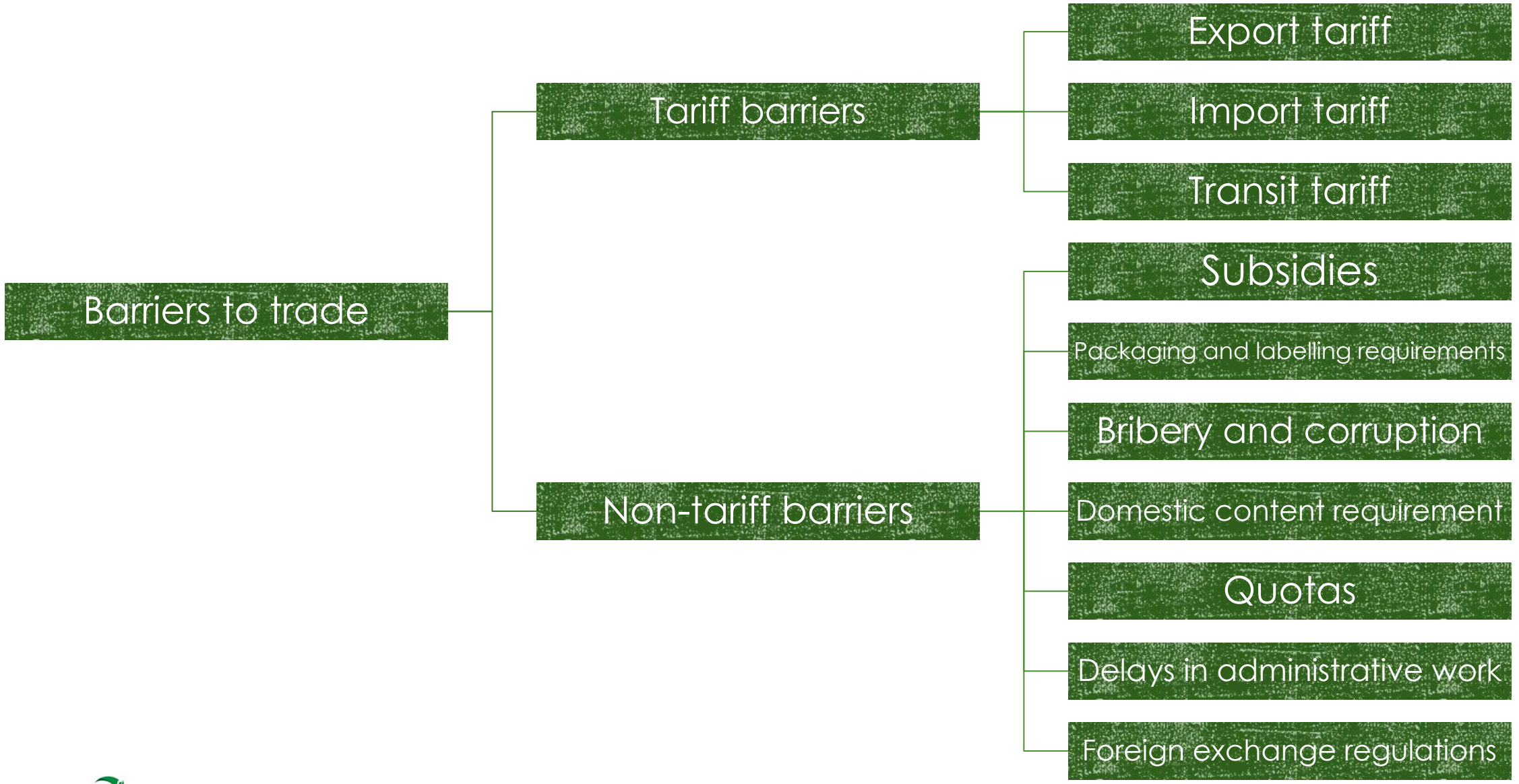


FTAs have economic benefits for businesses…

A free trade agreement (FTA) can be defined as an agreement among two or more countries to decrease trade obstacles. Goods and services can be purchased & sold across international borders with little or no government taxes, quotas, subsidies, or bans impeding their interchange under a free trade policy.

- **They promote increased economic activity in the country, leading to creation and expansion of business and employment opportunities from increased trade and investment potential.**
- **They provide companies and customers the access to a broader choice of competitively priced goods and services, modern and emerging technology, and creative practices.**
- **In addition to cutting tariffs; FTAs also minimize resolve non-tariff barriers that might otherwise hamper the flow of goods and services between borders; and they enhance regulations governing intellectual property, e-commerce, and government procurement.**
- **They encourage regional economic integration & the development of common approaches to trade and investment among trading partners, boosting investment in the region and linking economies for access to new markets and clients.**
- **FTAs can help less-developed nations expand economically, and they can promote greater people-to-people and business-to-business ties, which strengthens bilateral partnerships among stakeholder.**

What are the different types of trade barriers that FTAs help to overcome?



How trade agreements can benefit women in their different roles? (1)

Women as mothers

- Increased access to health services, physical safety, medical insurance for pregnant workers, and other maternity benefits
- Better work conditions for nursing/breastfeeding workers
- Reservations to maintain or adopt any measures with respect to childcare and child nutrition
- Promotion of family planning programs and mother and child care support schemes.

Women as employees

- Promoting gender equality at workplace and eliminating discrimination based on sex in respect of employment, occupation and wages.
- Eliminating violence and harassment at workplace.
- Promoting labor standards such as equal pay for equal work and better and flexible working conditions.
- More skill development and capacity building of women workers.

How trade agreements can benefit women in their different roles? (2)

Women as decision-makers

- Improving representation of women in decision making.
- Improving women's representation in positions of authority in public and private sectors, including on corporate boards.
- Ensuring gender balance in appointment of staffs and compositions of organs and institutions
- Improving participation of women in legislative bodies and other political offices

Women as social and cultural actors

- Elimination of prejudices and stereotypes, discriminatory legislation and procedures against women.
- Mobilizing awareness on the need to strengthen women's empowerment and its role in economic growth and poverty eradication.
- Setting up safeguards for protection of special categories of data, including data concerning sex.
- Physical safety of women against gender-based violence and conflicts.

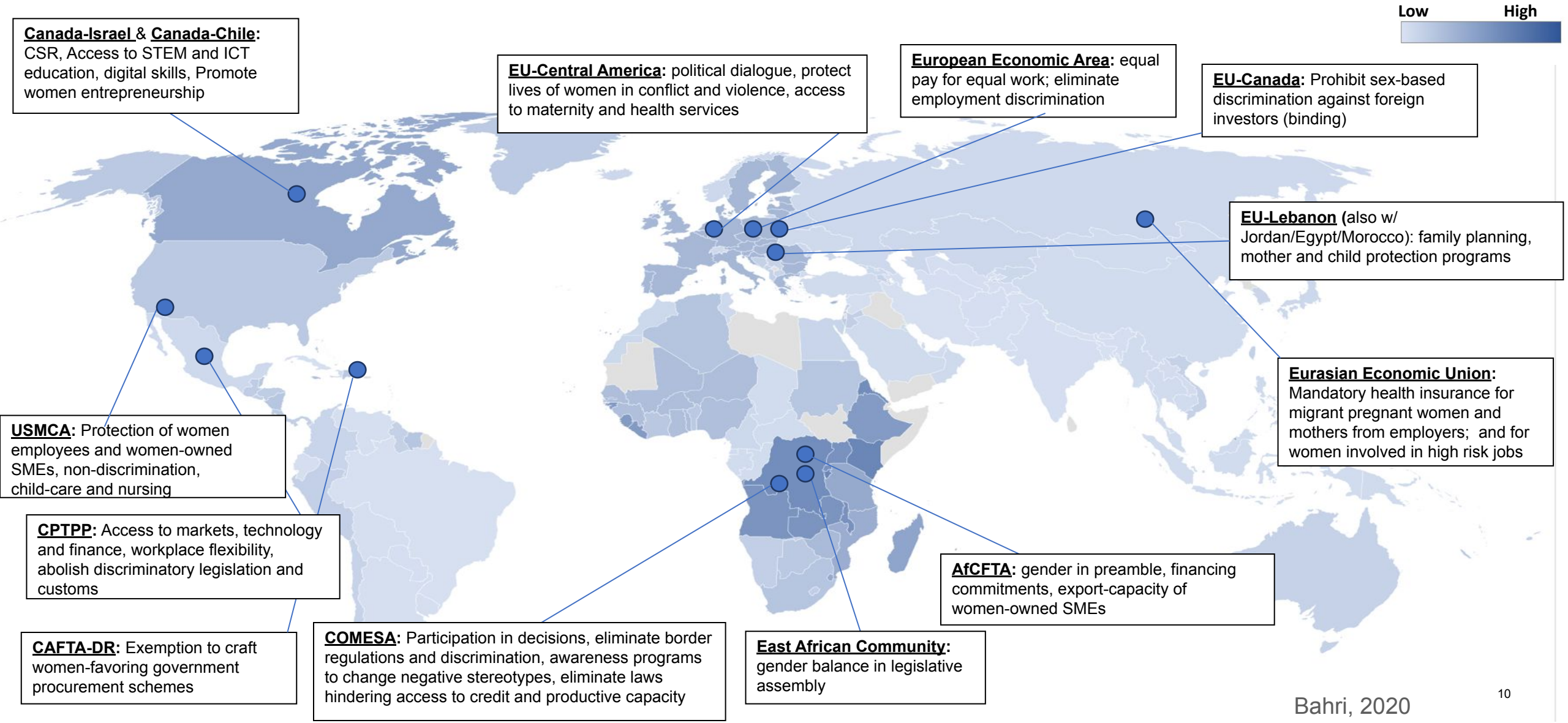
How trade agreements can benefit women in their different roles? (3)

Women as entrepreneurs

- Providing support measures to further entrepreneurship & export capacity, enhancing market share and export potential of SMEs owned by women.
- Developing business networks & improving flow of information among women businesses through such networks.
- Creation of new markets, increase in market access & reduction of tariff & non-tariff barriers to trade.
- Improved access to resources, including land, finance, digital technology, & education.

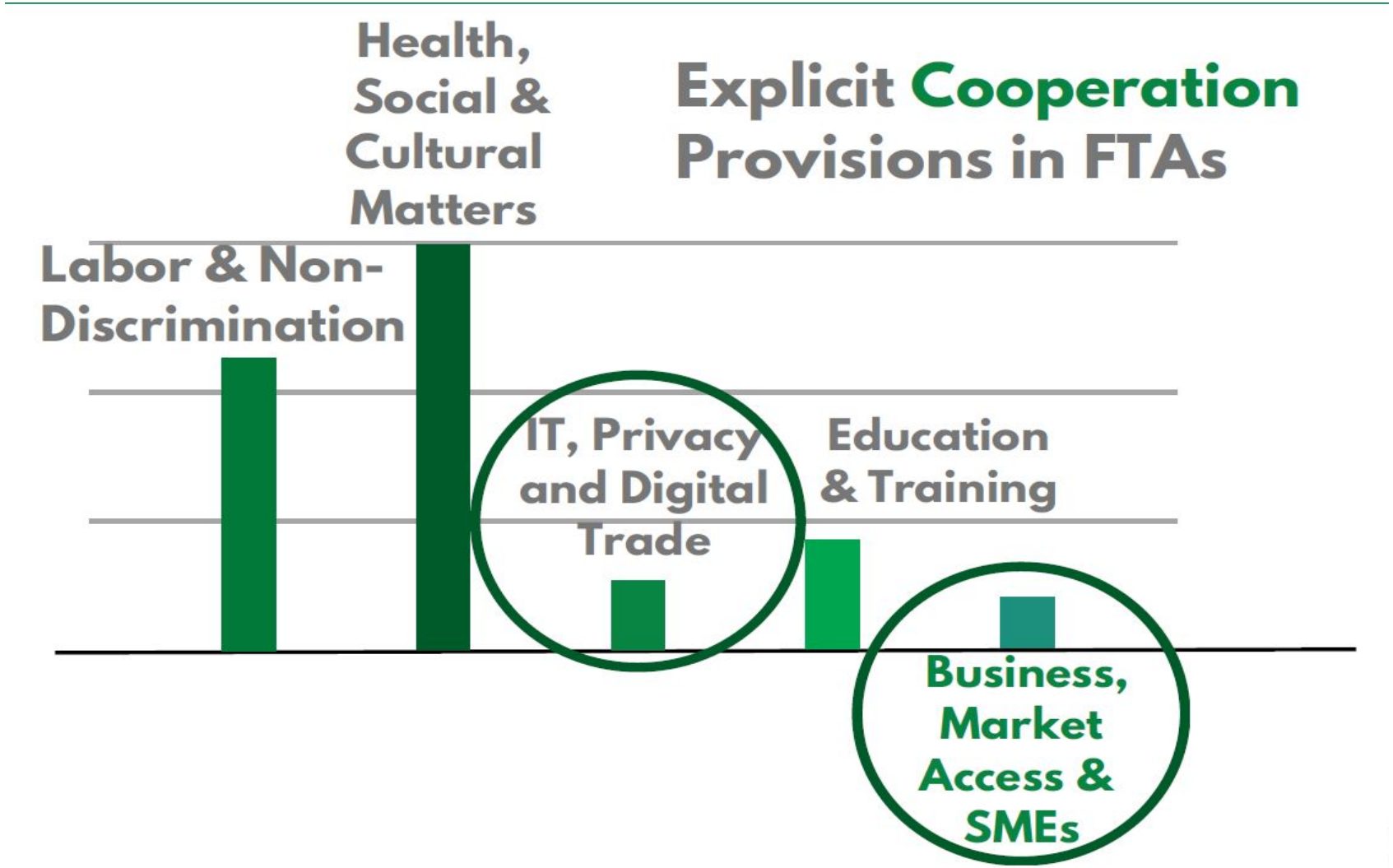
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Trade Agreements can Help Women: Practice Examples



Bahri, 2020

Most agreements overlook business interests….



Globally, about 252 million women are entrepreneurs.

Women own close to 10 million micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in emerging economies.







Amrita Bahri and Nadia Hasham, "Integrating Gender Considerations in Trade Agreements: An Experiential Look at Focus Areas,"

EFTA - Philippines

United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Preamble

DESIRING to create favourable conditions for the development and diversification of trade between the Parties and for the promotion of commercial and economic cooperation in areas of common interest on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, non-discrimination and international law;

REAFFIRMING their commitment to democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with their obligations under international law, including as set out in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;



Article 11.1
Sustainable development

Context and Objectives

1. The Parties recall (…) the UN Sustainable Development Summit Outcome Document "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"

Objective 5: Achieve the equality between genders and empower all women and girls.

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USMCA

The agreement provides opportunities for SMEs in the region to increase their exports and their participation in global and North American value chains.

1. Promote cooperation between the Parties' small businesses through dedicated SME centers, incubators and accelerators, and export assistance centers

2. Engage in activities to promote SMEs owned by under-represented groups, including women

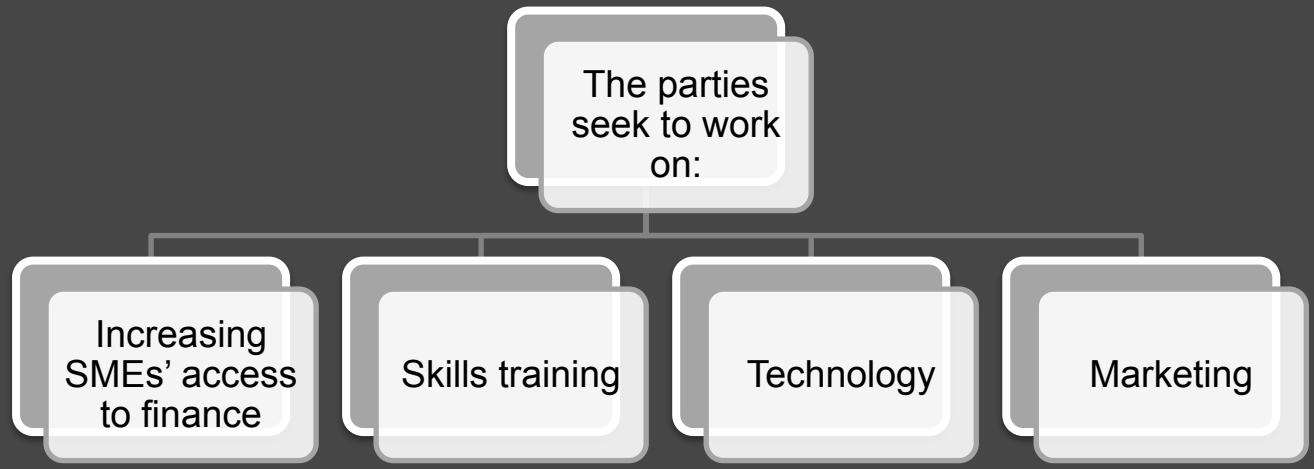
3. Work on improving SME access to capital and credit, SME participation in covered government procurement opportunities, and helping SMEs adapt to changing market conditions

4. Encourage SMEs participation in web-based platforms to share information and best practices to help them connect with international suppliers, buyers, and other potential business partners.

Amrita Bahri and Nadia Hasham, "Integrating Gender Considerations in Trade Agreements: An Experiential Look at Focus Areas,"

EU–South Africa FTA

Enhance the market access of MSMEs in South Africa



Providing them with appropriate technical support and establishing appropriate channels to improve the flow of information relating to business trends and opportunities, market access opportunities, and joint ventures.

Amrita Bahri and Nadia Hasham, "Integrating Gender Considerations in Trade Agreements: An Experiential Look at Focus Areas,"

Simplification of processes and documentary requirements

EAC and COMESA

Simplified Trade Regimes (STRs) allow customs officials to issue a simplified certificate of origin and simplified customs declaration forms to traders for goods on an agreed-upon list and under a certain value.

Evidence from the EAC suggests that STRs have benefitted women most and have shown promise in reducing NTBs for small-scale traders, particularly since they are often accompanied by other gender-sensitive trade facilitation measures.

Amrita Bahri and Nadia Hasham, "Integrating Gender Considerations in Trade Agreements: An Experiential Look at Focus Areas,"

Digital inclusion



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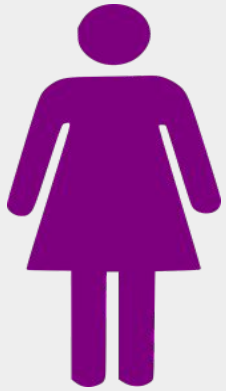
Three roles of women in business, and possible provisions

Informal vendors & migrants



- Incentives for formalization
- Healthcare, safety and benefits such as insurance
- Migration facilitation
- Mutual recognition schemes

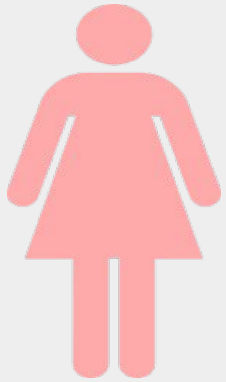
Cross-border traders



Possible Provisions

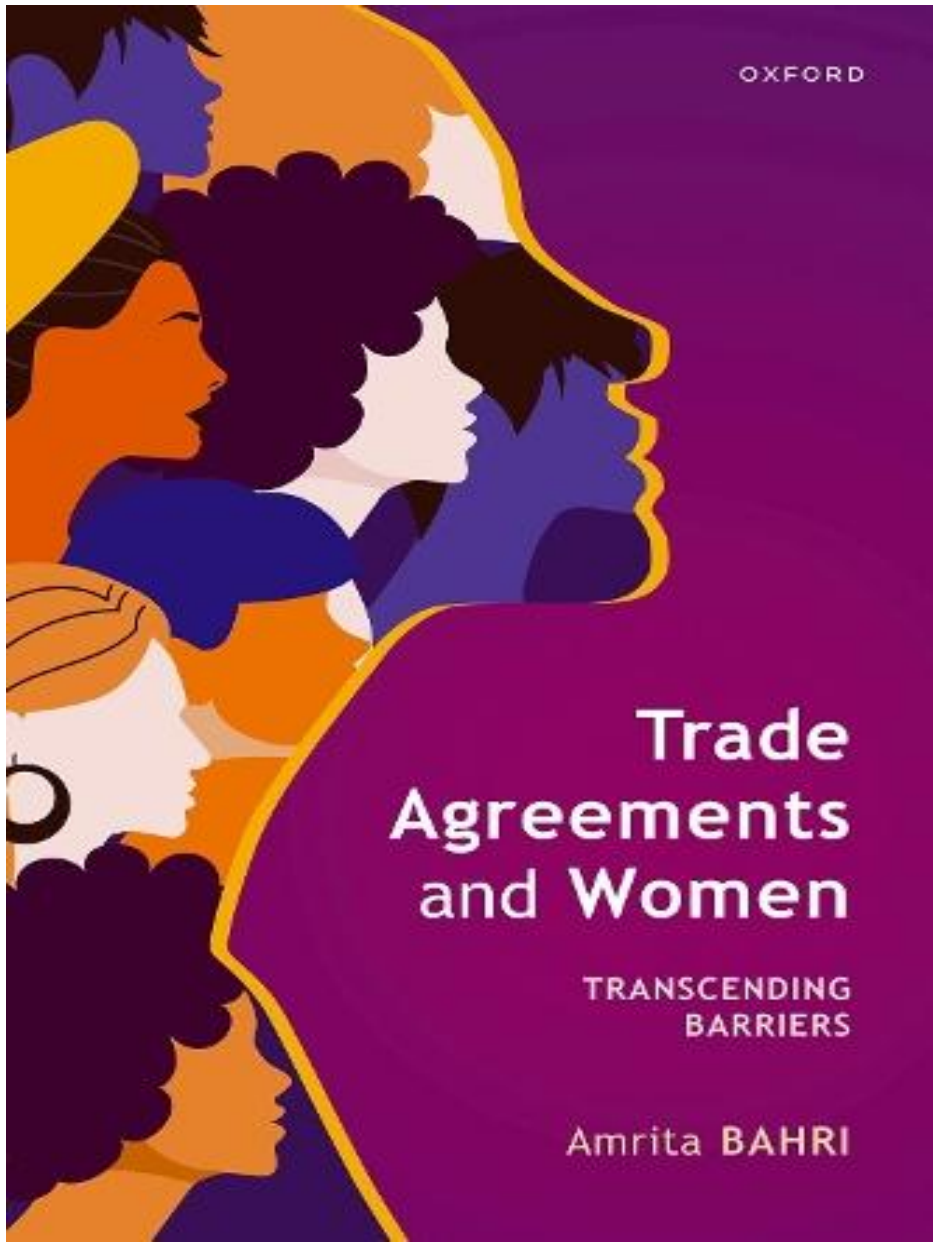
- Elimination of harassment and corruption
- Border facilities
- Enhanced information and awareness
- Simplified border procedures and formalities

Formal business-owners



- Access to resources
- Financial inclusion
- Market access
- Business capacity and training
- Business networks
- Digital literacy
- Access to internet
- Digital safety and privacy

Recent Publication



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