

Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa and the Arab World

Paper Presented by

Dr Amany Asfour

President

**Egyptian Business Women Association (EBWA)
Business and Professional Women-Egypt (BPW -Egypt)
African Alliance for Women Empowerment (AFRAWE)
AfroArab Network for Women Empowerment
Chair of COMESA Business Council (CBC)
(Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa))
Member and Focal Point of
African Union ECOSOCC (Economic ,Social and Cultural Council)
Chair New faces New Voices- Egypt Chapter
World Vice President International Federation for Business and
Professional Women BPW International**

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Introduction

The Arab speaking Nation is 22 Countries with 10 African countries and 12 Countries in Asia.

The African Continent is 54 Countries including the 10 Arab Speaking Countries where Arabic is a native African Language unlike ,English,French,and Portugese which are languages of colonization in the African Continent .

The Afro Arab region is one of the largest in its Natural Resources and Human resources .

Africa is the richest continent on Earth yet it is the poorest of them all . Why ? Because we don't invest in our Human resources including women and Youth We don't build the capacity of our African People .We don't manage our own natural resources and add value to it . We don't empower our grass root people ,women and Youth and our Micro,Small and Medium Enterprises ((MSMEs) on the ground. The distribution of wealth in Africa is not reflected on the grass roots . Social and Economic Justice should be the base for economic development in Africa to address , Unemployment ,lack of distribution of wealth among all sectors of the society . There is crucial need to engage all sectors of the society in the economic growth in Africa .The economic transformation should focus on developing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises(MSMEs) as the back bone of the Economy in Africa and building the capacity and empowering all human resources through Education and capacity Building including women and youth. This could be done through promoting Science and Technology for value addition to the natural resources and to ensure the empowerment of the private sector and the informal sector which also contributes greatly in the economic growth of Africa and building the capacity of our Human resources including women and youth

Resources in Africa and The Arab World

◆ Human Resources

- ◆ -Natural Resources
- ◆ -Cultural Resources

A-Human Resources in Africa and the Arab World : 1 Billion of projection of 2.3 Billion in 2050

B-Natural Resources

Africa and the Arab World are rich in Natural resources but there is No management of natural Resources

C- Cultural and Touristic Resources

- ◆ **Africa and the Arab World are rich and diverse with their cultural and Touristic Resources**

In order to achieve economic Growth there has to be investment in natural resources and building capacity of the Human resources including women and youth to be productive .So it is a Business case ,It is not about Women or men it is about building capacity of our Human capital that is why it is crucial to promote

Economic Empowerment of Women

Year of 2015

The year 2015 is a crucial year declared by African Union “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063” At the level of the African Union year 2015 also marks the celebration of African Women Decade +5

At the level of United Nations This year 2015 is coinciding with the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the start of the post 2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).2015 also marks the celebration of Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)+20

At the level of the Arab league it announced the Declaration of the Arab Region for the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the Beijing Platform for Action for Women Empowerment

In all these developmental agendas Economic Empowerment of Women is a corner stone and a core to achieve these goals .

Africa's Developmental Agenda

In the vision of the **Africa's Agenda 2063** The Africa we want is a **P**rosperous,**P**owerful,**P**eaceful,**I**ntegrated,**I**ntellectual ,**I**nclusive Africa driven by its citizens . It is crucial to have real Economic growth and prosperity with real economic transformation with a social dimension that will ensure not only all basic needs but **Quality of life for our African people** .This can never be achieved except with the Economic Empowerment of women and youth.

2-What should be the Key Goals and objectives of Agenda 2063

Pillars for Human Development 4Es

- ◆ - Education
- ◆ - Empowerment
- ◆ -Entrepreneurship
- ◆ - Employment
- ◆ FOR
- ◆ Economic prosperity

How to achieve Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth

What is Power ?

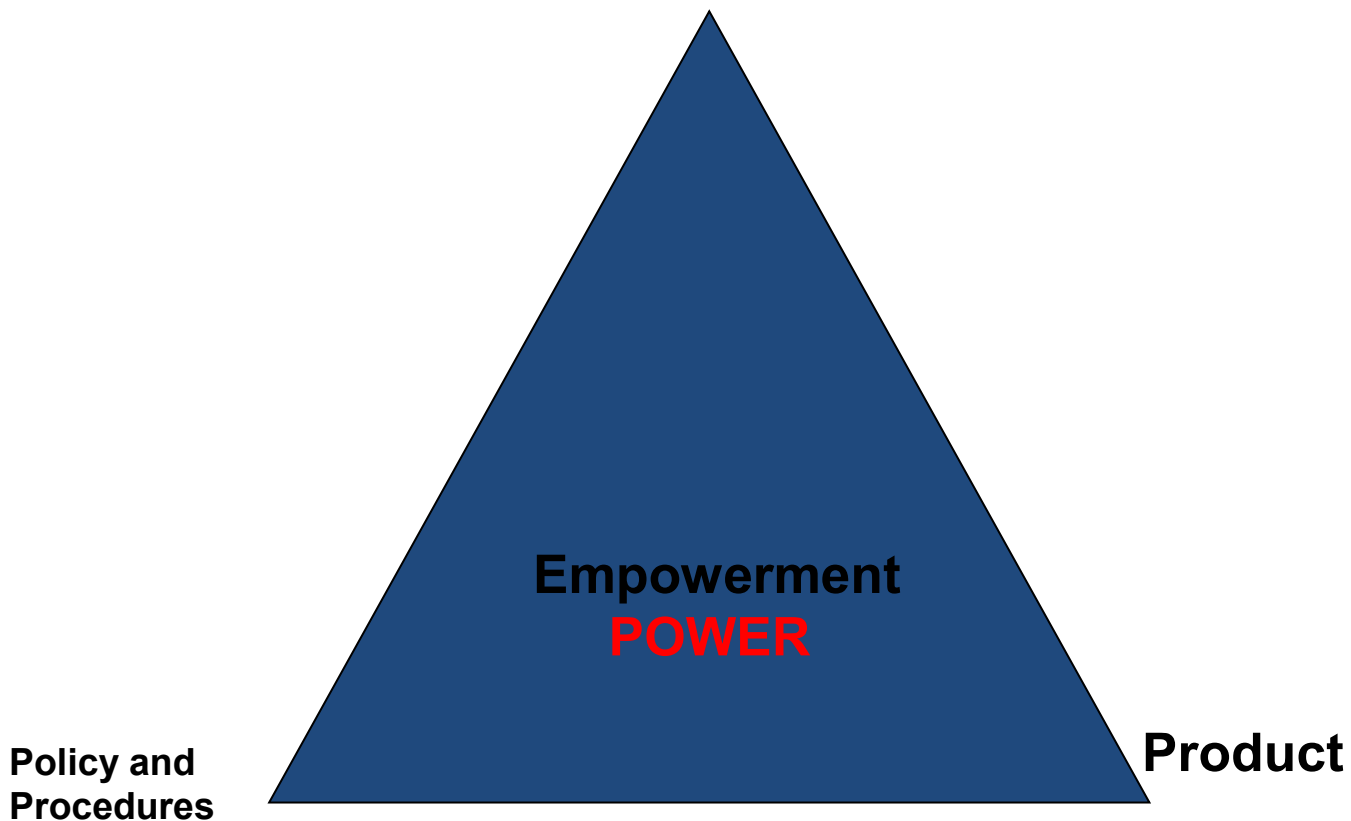
- ◆ The right definition of Power

Power is potency - the capacity to act, to implement.



Triad of Empowerment

People (Investment in Human Resources including Women and Youth)



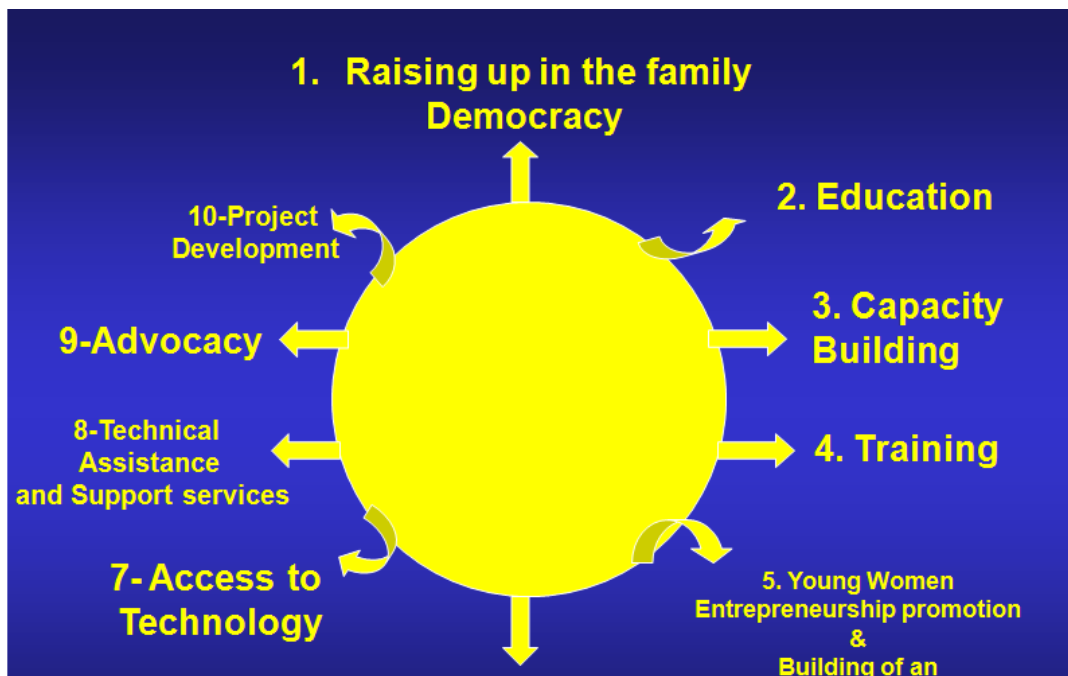
Triad of Empowerment

The strategy of AFRAWE (African Alliance for Women Empowerment)and the Afro Arab Network for Women Empowerment depends on working on 3 pillars which is the triad of Empowerment (Triangle of Empowerment) depending on the **3 Ps**

- **First P : Personality** : Which is building the capacity of the women entrepreneur and training her and mentoring her and support her to have her confidence and self Esteem and be able to start her business or lead her enterprise professionally and confidently .And to educate her with all the tools she needs to play her role in the economy and be a decision maker

- **Second P : Policy and Procedures** : Which requires the lobbying and advocacy to promote policies , legislation and laws for mainstreaming of Gender in the Policies and putting laws in place that will promote women Entrepreneurship and empower women and owners of SMEs and women in the informal sector . Also how to monitor the implementation of these policies and laws which is the real empowerment as there are lot of laws and policies but not implemented .
- **Third P: Product** : What product the women have to offer to the society ? Is it a Product of good quality ? Is it competetive ? Does it have a Trade Mark ? is it meeting the standard At this point where The real value addition of the product should take place so the women entrepreneur will have a good product and able to compete in the market based on market studies ,branding of her product, Packaging , designing , or even if it is a service industry ,how to have all the skills and talents for having a good quality service industry .And at all levels how to do marketing tools to have access to the market

Methodology to achieve this Strategy



**Economic Transformation
Economic Empowerment of all
Segments of Society**

- ◆ Youth
- ◆ Women
- ◆ Rural and grass roots
- ◆ Micro ,Small and Medium Enterprises(MSMEs)

In Africa and the Arab World More than 95% of Enterprises are Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises .

The Development of our African and Arab Economics Depends on

Building the capacity of our Human Resources.

- Managing our own natural resources.
- Enhancing Economic Integration
- Empowering our Private Sector and SMEs
- Economic Empowering of all sectors of the Society including women and youth

Pillars of Inclusive Growth Development and Economic Transformation 10 IN s

- 1-Indigenous capacity and Human Resources
- 2-Internal Policies and Reforms
- 3- Increase Productivity and Upgrading Value chain
- 4-Innovation and Scientific Research and Technology
- 5-Information and communication
- 6-Infrastrucrure and Energy
- 7-Investment ,Finance , access to credit
- 8-Integration regionally
- 9-Industrialization
- 10-International and Regional Markets

Milestones to achieve Inclusive Growth

1-Integrity and Accountability

2-Intergenerational Dialogue and Transfer of Knowledge

3 -Inclusion and diversity

4-Institutional Capacity

5-Incentives and enabling Environment

Role of Partners in Development of Inclusive Growth through economic Empowerment of Women

- ◆ -Government
- ◆ -Civil Society Organizations
- ◆ Private Sector
- ◆ Media

Objectives of AfroArab Cooperation and Strengthening Relations

- ◆ -Building bridges for exchange of knowledge and Experiences
- ◆ -Transfer of technology
- ◆ Value Addition for raw materials
- ◆ -Investing in MSMEs and promoting Business Linkages and Joint Ventures
- ◆ -Opening new markets

Example of Efforts of Civil Society for Economic Empowerment of Africa and Support of Micro,Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

Project of

- ◆ **Egyptian Business Women Association**

◆ **African Alliance for Women Empowerment**

◆ **AfroArab Network for Women Empowerment**

**Establishment of AfroArab Training Center for Women Empowerment and Support of MSMEs
Hatchepsut Women Business Development Center and Business Incubator (HWBDC)**

MISSION

To promote economic Growth through support of Women Owners of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Women Entrepreneurs

Goals:

- ◆ The Economic Empowerment of women and Youth
- ◆ The creation of employment and jobs
- ◆ Building the Economy and enhancing Economic Growth
- ◆ Promoting the Entrepreneurial Culture

Target Groups

- 1-Start ups of Business and Women in the Informal Sector
- 2- Women Owners of Micro ,Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)
- 3-Women owners of Companies with potential growth and Export
- 4-University Students and Graduates

Special Target Groups

- 1- Women at the grassroots and rural areas .
- 2- Cross Border Women Traders

3-Women in Conflict Zones and Fragile States

The **HWBDC** comprises three activity Centres:

- ◆ **A-External Training Centre (ETC)**
- ◆ **B- Business Incubator Centre (BIC)**
- ◆ **C-Centre for Strategic Reorientation (CSR)**

1. **The Business Incubator Centre (BIC)** offers

- premises for starting-up the company;
- services for supporting technical, logistical and legal issues;
- access to information and communication technologies;
- services focusing on product development including design, packaging, branding;
- marketing services and support for to access to finance.

2. **External Training Centre (ETC)**, which continuously convene training programs and courses relevant to the needs of the women entrepreneurs and women owners of MSMEs.

3- Centre for Strategic Reorientation (CSR), assisting women whose project was not selected to be incubated physically in the incubator to put them on the right track. These women are able to benefit from guidance and professional reorientation service that they receive in the Assistance Centre of the HWBDC

Focus of AfroArab Cooperation

- ◆ Arab/Africa Cooperation in development.
- ◆ Arab/Africa mutual investments.
- ◆ Reinforcement of Arab/African trade and related fields.
- ◆ Cooperation between Arab and African NGOs in development activities.

Cooperation among Business Women and Women Entrepreneurs Associations

- ◆ -Exchange of Knowledge and Experience
- ◆ -Value Addition and joint Ventures
- ◆ Opening new investment opportunities
- ◆ Opening New markets

Fields of Cooperation

- ◆ Agriculture and Agribusiness
- ◆ Mining
- ◆ Garments and Textiles
- ◆ Fashion Industry
- ◆ Energy and Infrastructure
- ◆ Tourism and Cultural Industries
- ◆ Construction and infraStructure
- ◆ Telecommunications etc...

Recommendations

1- Building Bridges between Business women in Africa and women in the Arab World for exchange of knowledge and expertise

2- Establish data base for women

- Entrepreneurs and SMEs in in Different Sectors
- Companies, Industries, Experts in Africa and the Arab World

3- Create Linkages and network with Business Communities and Business Associations and Councils of RECs (Regional Economic Communities)

4- Organization of Forums and Trade promotion Fairs and Exhibitions

5- Match making programs and Business to Business Programs

6- promoting Investment in SMEs and Joint Ventures between Business Women in Africa and The Arab World

7-Joint projects for building capacity of Business Women in different fields

8-Joint projects for access to finance

Role of Legislative Power and Women Parliamentarians in Legislation for Economic Empowerment for Women

Special Laws should be promoted to promote Economic Empowerment of Women

- Allocation of Funds for Economic Empowerment of Women to have access to finance and credit and for establishment of Business Development Centers and Business Incubators
- Certain Percentage of Government Procurement Policies for Women Owners of SMEs
- One stop shop for registration of Companies
- Special Funds for Economic Empowerment of Women in Conflict Areas