



د افغانستان د خلکو غږ
صدای مردم افغانستان
VOICE OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE

Statement

National Gathering and Expo of Businesswomen and Entrepreneurs

March 4-5, 2023

Kabul, Afghanistan

The Afghanistan Women Chambers of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce organized the National Gathering and Expo of Businesswomen and Entrepreneurs. The Voice of Afghan People (VAP) facilitated the event.

The gathering brought together over 250 businesswomen, entrepreneurs, craftswomen, and small and medium businesses across Afghanistan. In addition, the IEA high-ranking authorities and the representatives of international organizations joined the gathering.

The aim of the two-day gathering was to provide a discussion platform for Afghan businesswomen and entrepreneurs to exchange ideas and experiences and identify current challenges, concerns, and opportunities. Moreover, the day provided the women the chance to introduce domestic products and find markets.

During the B2B session of the National Gathering of Businesswomen, Nooruddin Azizi, Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, highlighted the national gathering and expo essential and called on the Voice of Afghan People (VAP) and other organizations to support the private sector at the regional and subnational level.

In his turn, Dr. Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy Minister of Economy, joined other IEA officials present in welcoming the initiative and added that the IEA has succeeded in increasing exports, use of domestic products, preventing inflation, and raising national revenue. This, he added, are consistent and aligned with the vision and strategic objectives of the IEA to create an independent and economically prosperous Afghanistan. He highlighted the positive role that women have played and should continue to play in ensuring the prosperity of Afghanistan.

Inamullah Samangani, the acting Director of the Government Media and Information Center (GMIC) of the IEA, also took the podium and addressed the women gathered. He highlighted

the need to earn a halal living for Muslim women and the positive role that women could play in the provision of resources for themselves and their dependents. Moreover, the AWCCI board members briefly talked about women-led businesses and added that they provided 7000 licenses to Afghan women from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Municipalities.

In the latter part of the day, participants split into working groups and discussed various topics. The key outcomes of the discussions are:

1. The participants asked the IEA to provide businesswomen access to relevant institutions at the provincial level, where women can share their concerns and problems with local authorities and receive needed help in finding the solution. Furthermore, they reiterated the need to expand women's businesses and find markets for domestic products inside and outside the country.
2. Businesswomen and entrepreneurs appreciated IEA's support in economic and industrial activities. But, at the same time, they called on the authorities to develop specific policies and guidance, in discussion with businesswomen, for strengthening women's businesses and entrepreneurship.
3. The participants requested the IEA and national and international development institutions to establish industrial parks at the provincial level for businesswomen, entrepreneurs, and small and medium industries.
4. The businesswomen asked the IEA to introduce tax breaks, provide access to small and large loans, and ease the issuing process of working licenses to women across the country.
5. The businesswomen and entrepreneurs called on the IEA to encourage and promote the use of domestic products throughout the country, especially in government institutions. They further asked the authorities to prioritize domestic products while issuing contracts and procurement, to facilitate a conducive business environment for local manufacturers, enabling them to compete in the market.
6. Finally, the participants called on international organizations, including the United Nations, World Bank, and diplomatic missions, to create specific and clear mechanisms and programs for strengthening women's businesses through their extensions and

offices. They asked the donors to allocate special quotas of contracts for women entrepreneurship, business, and industry. This will not only ensure women's economic independence but will also ensure women's presence in public spaces.