

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

REGIONAL WORKSHOP

ENTREPRENEURIAL STRENGTHENING IN THE TOURISM SECTOR: OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Cartegena de Indias, Republic of Colombia, October 23-24, 2014

RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

The Regional workshop *Entrepreneurial Strengthening in the Tourism Sector: Opportunities for Women* was held in Cartegena de Indias, Republic of Colombia on October 23-24, 2014. The workshop was organised by the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in collaboration with the Regional Port Society of Cartagena and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Colombia, with the support of the Office of Culture and Tourism of the Organisation of American States. The workshop had as its main objectives to identify the needs and challenges affecting Women Artisans and Entrepreneurs with micro, small and medium enterprises operating in the Tourism Sector and also deliver training and capacity-building tools to develop and/or enhance their business.

Twenty-one (21) women Artisan Entrepreneurs participated in the workshop, representing a cross-section of **15 ACS Member Countries** from the four geographic sub-regions. The complete list of participants is attached to this Report as **Annex A**.

I. OPENING CEREMONY

Opening Remarks were delivered by **Julio Orozco**, the ACS Director of Sustainable Tourism who extended greetings on behalf of the ACS Secretary General thanking the participants and presenters for their attendance. He informed that the workshop was the first phase of an initiative developed by the ACS to enhance the participation of women in the Tourism sector as service providers and raise awareness of their role and contribution as entrepreneurs and in employment generation. He added that the overall objective was to bridge the gaps in the contribution of tourism to local economies and to support women's entrepreneurship, the growth and productivity of the Region's craft sector and provide capacity-building tools for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Extending best wishes for successful deliberations and outcomes, Director Orozco encouraged the participants to be fully engaged in the workshop activities.

Remarks were also delivered by **Silvana Giaimo**, Director of Cooperate Affairs, Regional Port Society of Cartagena who welcomed the participants to Cartegena adding that it was an honour for the Port Society to collaborate with the ACS and other partners to host this event. She indicated that Cruise tourism is one of the most dynamic and growing tourism sectors for the countries in the Greater Caribbean. She also expressed that Cruise Tourism was very important to the Port of Cartegena which is a very popular cruise destination and port of call, and that the local Artisans, most of whom are women, benefited greatly from the sales opportunities generated by the Sector. She concluded that this was a very proactive initiative to support the Region's Artisans and encouraged the participants to utilise the information and tools that would be provided by the training to enhance their businesses.

Zully Salazar, Executive President of the Tourism Corporation, Cartagena de Indias, Republic of Colombia, added her welcome to the participants and reiterated the importance of Tourism to the Region. She explained that Tourism is the main economic activity for Cartagena and the Caribbean Coast of Colombia. Most notably the industry has driven business and investment and contributed to social and economic development, through increasing opportunities for entrepreneurship, the formation of micro, small and medium enterprises and supporting the growth of ancillary sectors, which has created viable livelihoods for members of the local community. She expressed that it was pleasure for the Tourism Corporation of Cartagena and the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Colombia to be a partner in this initiative.

II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Director **Julio Orozco**, provided an Overview of the Workshop's Agenda, outlining the objectives and expected outcomes. He then invited the Workshop Participants including the Presenters to give a brief summary of their background and personal profile as well as an overview of their organisation/enterprise. The ACS Secretary General, **Ambassador Alfonso Múnera** later joined the meeting to offer welcome remarks to the workshop participants. He expressed that the workshop illustrated the commitment of the ACS and its partners to support local artisans and contribute to women entrepreneurship and productive employment. He commended and thanked the Regional Port Society of Cartagena and the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Colombia for the collaboration and strong support provided to facilitate the hosting of the workshop. He also noted with appreciation the contribution of the Organisation of American States (OAS) as a sponsor and partner. He extended commendations to the various presenters for the knowledge and technical expertise that would be provided to the workshop participants thanking them for their willingness to be part of this initiative. He concluded by extolling the participants to not only participate fully in the workshop but also to make use of the information and tools that would be provided.

III. KEY NOTE ADDRESS

The keynote address was delivered by **Mr. Kelvin Sergeant**, Specialist, Sustainable Enterprise Development and Job Creation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), who discussed the contrition of women in driving entrepreneurship in the Greater Caribbean. This was followed by an informative presentation highlighting efforts of the ILO to support the economic potential of women's enterprises to contribute to employment creation, gender equality, economic growth and poverty reduction within the framework of the ILO Decent Work's Agenda. The Women's Economic Development Programme (ILO-WED) was highlighted, with various examples given of WED's interventions and best practises as well as lessons learnt and results garnered from initiatives. The presentation entitled *Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurship and Employment in the Greater Caribbean* is attached as **Annex B**.

IV. PLENARY SESSION 1 - The Experiences of Central America linking Women Entrepreneurship and Tourism

Anasha Campbell, Executive Secretary of the Central American Tourist Integration Secretariat (SITCA) presented on the role and contribution of women as Employees and Entrepreneurs in the Tourism industry, highlighting the job profiles of women in leadership and managerial roles across both the formal and informal sectors.

She also shared experiences from Central America to support women's empowerment, SME development and strengthening of the craft sector, to include the Network of Artists and Artisans of Central America, an initiative supported by the Centre for the Promotion of Micro and Small Enterprises in Central America (CENPROMYPE). The presentation is attached as **Annex C**.

V. PLENARY SESSION 2 - Generating Consumer Demand: The Balance between Authenticity, Meeting Consumer Needs and Anticipating Trends

Carola Mandelbaum, Managing Director, Creative Learning-Aid to Artisans (CL-ATA) delivered an insightful presentation outlining key considerations that contribute to the marketability of a product. She explained the importance of Authenticity in production and labelling; balancing the quality and price to more effectively respond to and meet consumer needs; and suggested product innovation and enhancement strategies to assist in anticipating Trends, indicating that this was one of the most effective tactics to drive demand. The presentation is attached as **Annex D**.

Workshop 1: Overview of the Market Readiness of Artisan Products

This workshop was also facilitated by **Carola Mandelbaum**, and was conducted as a hands-on interactive session. The workshop included presentations by the Artisans of their craft products and individual product assessments with feedback being provided on product marketability and sales presentation.

VI. PLENARY SESSION 3 - Government's Responsibility in SME Development: Initiatives of Colombia

Clara Inés Sánchez Arciniegas, Director of Quality and Sustainable Tourism Development of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Republic of Colombia, delivered a presentation highlighting the efforts of Colombia to support the productivity and growth of Women Artisans and Entrepreneurs through policy adoption and targeted intervention strategies at the national and local/community level. She highlighted the important role of the Arts and Craft sector to complement and add to the authenticity and uniqueness of the Tourism industry product and offerings. The presentation is attached as **Annex E**.

VII. PLENARY SESSION 4 - The Promotion of Handicraft in Tourism using ICTs

Juan Miguel Moreno, Course Coordinator for Innovation Expertise and Tourism Technology, of the University of Almería, facilitated a very dynamic and engaging workshop. He firstly demonstrated innovative on-line applications for advertising and promotion utilising popular social networking platforms for peer network marketing. Subsequently, the participants were divided into working groups and given the task to create a concept and deliver a video presentation in the form of a skit that would communicate their concept and strategy. Two presentations were delivered, firstly, on promotion strategies using ICT's and secondly, on Internet Marketing and the use of mobile applications to create and upload videos on the Web. These are attached as **Annex F** and **G** respectively.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK

Workshop 2 - Identifying Priority Needs of Women Entrepreneurs and SMEs in the Tourism Sector

This activity was facilitated by Director **Julio Orozco** and the ACS Sustainable Tourism Adviser, **Amanda Charles**. The aim of this activity was to provide the participants with the opportunity to indicate their needs, challenges and priorities as it relates to the five key areas identified by the ACS Directorate of Sustainable Tourism as critical to SME productivity and development as follows: (i) Access to Finance; (ii) Capacity Building; (iii) Trade Facilitation; (iv) Innovation and Competitiveness; and (v) Policy Framework for SMEs.

In terms of initial feedback, the difficulty faced by SMEs to access financing, inconsistency across the value chain in terms of the escalating cost and the often unavailability of raw materials coupled with inefficiencies in production were indicated. Additionally, the need to increase trade and linkages with other Artisans from the wider Caribbean and Latin America in order to source raw materials, as well as for business networking and the sharing of knowledge and skills were highlighted as priorities. In this regard, an immediate need was to increase access to information and services for the manufacturing of products, training opportunities and the shipment of goods among the countries of the region.

Workshop 3 - Strategies to Address the Needs of Women Entrepreneurs and SMEs in the Tourism Sector

This activity was also facilitated by the Director and Adviser of the ACS Directorate of Sustainable Tourism, and participants were invited to make suggestions, brainstorm ideas and provide recommendations for strategies to address the needs and challenges identified in the five key areas of (i) Access to Finance; (ii) Capacity Building; (iii) Trade Facilitation; (iv) Innovation and Competitiveness; and (v) Policy Framework for SMEs. It was explained that this feedback would be used to formulate a document that outlines the priority needs of women Artisans and Entrepreneurs with Small and Medium Enterprises operating in the Tourism Sector in the Region and further support the development of strategies that could be pursued by the ACS and other Regional partners pursuant to the Workshop.

Recurring recommendations for strategies included inter alia: the need for special provisions for SMEs to access financing; having more such workshops and hands-on training in business management and product innovation related to design and quality; having more direct access to sales opportunities as well as access to information on regional and international trade markets; and the need to enhance marketing and advertising of products particularly through instruction in new technologies.

IX. MEETING CONCLUSIONS

The workshop was a tremendous success with very positive feedback being received from the Artisans. Among the main outcomes the Artisans committed to forming a **Regional Network of Artisans of the Greater Caribbean** for ongoing networking, co-operation and dialogue. As it relates to recommendations for follow-up activities, the Artisans made a special request for a Regional Fair to be organised to showcase and promote the Arts and Craft from the Region to international buyers. Director Julio Orozco applauded the recommendation to establish the **Network** and requested the names of volunteers one from each ACS sub-region to serve as

Petit-Committee to liaise with the ACS in formalising the Network. He also shared that the ACS will hold discussions with its partners and outreach to other regional organisations to define the modalities to support both these activities.

The ACS Secretary General delivering the closing remarks commented that he was assured of the productivity and value of the workshop. He thanked the workshop participants for their attention and active participation, and advised them to put to use the information and tools provided to improve their business. He continued that support for women's entrepreneurship and productive employment was a priority topic for the ACS and as such this was the first step in the development of a strategy to provide Women Artisans and Entrepreneurs with the necessary support and capacity building tools and strategies to enhance the viability of their businesses. He applauded the initiative brought forward by the participants to establish a Regional Network of Artisans of the Greater Caribbean and reiterated the commitment of the ACS to support this and future interventions.

Subsequently **Certificates of Participation** were presented to the workshop participants by a three member delegation comprised of the ACS Secretary General, Ambassador Alfonso Múnera, Clara Inés Sánchez Arciniegas, Director of Quality and Sustainable Tourism Development, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Republic of Colombia and Silvana Gaiimo, Director of Cooperate Affairs of the Regional Port Society of Cartagena.

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annexes are only available in the original language in which they were presented.

- Annex A:** List of Participants
- Annex B:** Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurship and Employment in the Greater Caribbean, International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Annex C:** The Experiences of Central America linking Women Entrepreneurship and Tourism, Central American Tourist Integration Secretariat (SITCA)
- Annex D:** Generating Consumer Demand: The Balance between Authenticity, Meeting Consumer Needs and Anticipating Trends, Creative Learning-Aid to Artisans
- Annex E:** Government's Responsibility in SME Development / Initiatives of Colombia, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Republic of Colombia
- Annex F:** The Promotion of Handicraft in Tourism using ICTs, University of Almería
- Annex G:** Presentation on Internet Marketing and use of Mobile Applications, University of Almería