

## ITC and GEPA launch business counselling component of ACCESS

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The International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA) has launched the Business Counseling component of the ACCESS programme for Ghanaian businesswomen with the aim to prepare their enterprises for exports and also improve on the existing exports.

The programme would introduce selected women, the trainers and provide an overview of what was expected in the component.

Mrs Agnes Adjei-Sam, ACCESS Focal Point Institution Representative, said on Wednesday that African business women were being marginalized and lack real support in their efforts to grow their businesses.

In this direction, she said, GEPA was forging strategic partnership with some institutions to continue to run the ACCESS programme to enhance capacity of the women after the funds had run out.

Mr Christian Planchette, Senior Training Officer, ITC said the ACCESS Programme was regional initiative aimed at improving business support services for women engaged in international trade with the ultimate objective to increase their export readiness and success on regional and international markets.

ACCESS, he said, was tailored to answer the various challenges faced by businesswomen in Africa by enhancing their access to a comprehensive package of trade support services, including exporters' training mentorship, business counseling, product and market development, business networking and trade intelligence.

He said the business counseling component in the phase II of the programme would continue to addresses the particular constraints of African businesswomen by means of enhancing their access to a package of trade support services, including exporter training, peer mentoring, business counselling, financing, trade information and networking.

The overall objective is to complement programme activities by creating specific opportunities for African businesswomen and by providing improved business development services, which are more gender-responsive and help women upgrade their export management capacity in sectors with high export potential.

Mr Planchette said ITC's mission was to enable small business export success in developing and transition-economy countries, by providing, with partners, sustainable and inclusive development solutions to the private sector, trade support institutions and policymakers.

Mr Stephen Normeshie, Director Internal Audit, said GEPA would continue to encourage the women entrepreneurs, who were selected for the Business Counselling component to work hand in hand with the counselors and maximize the benefits of this programme

GEPA would also continue to work with partner institutions like the ITC to provide such programmes for the women entrepreneurs, he said. GNA

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