



# Business & Economy

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## Chamber of Commerce Poised to Remove Regional Trade Barriers

### -Conducts Training for Liberian Women

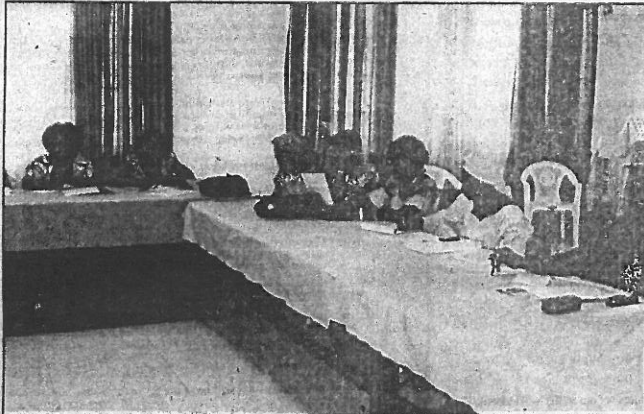
By Keith Morris

The Liberia Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the International Trade Center and Canadian International Development Agency, has begun a three-week workshop to train local women in international trade.

The workshop is intended to educate, train and promote coordination among local businesswomen and other international actors in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries and beyond.

Participants are expected to address several issues on how Liberian women can do cross-border trade with no or less stress in an effort to introduce Liberians to challenges and other complicated issues arising from doing business in the sub-region.

Speaking during the opening of the forum at Chamber of Commerce offices in



Monrovia, Liberia Chamber of Commerce secretary general, David G. Fromayan, stressed the importance of the forum as a way to address and break the barrier that is stalling women's participation in trade in the sub-region.

Mr. Fromayan asserted: "The purpose of this event is

to put an information package together for women who are in business and trying to trade on the international scene but don't have the information to do that. This program will inform them on how they can compete with their international counterparts on regional and international

trade level."

Participants of the program include business women from across Liberia.

These activities are intended to give the women the information they need to upgrade their standard from the informal sector to the formal sector.

In many cases, local women have been producing and trading for the local market instead of the international ones. With the introduction of this forum, business women will now market their goods on the international market for better result.

Women in the sub-region face serious hurdles in doing cross border trade, but the forum is aimed at developing the minds of women to take serious interest in international trade to avoid these hurdles.

Problems ranging from sexual harassment, custom duties and illegal collection of funds from business women are all being experienced by women while doing business across the region.

Workshop organizers said the forum, which also focuses on women in nine different African countries, will ensure that Liberian women in particular should participate meaningfully in the process to open business linkages.

In an interview with the Daily Observer, the Lead Access Trainer for International Trade Center (ITC), Dorothy Tuma, explained that over a long long women have been humiliated while doing business. Concerned with these developments, she said those issues that created the problems must be addressed by stakeholders.

Although women represent more than half of the world's labor force and innovation power, there are many initiatives to unlock women's potential for economic growth.

In the context of its commitment to reach export impact for goods, ITC encourages the development of

new windows of opportunity for a more systematic and beneficial integration for women into international trade and export development.

In addition to its comprehensive and practical training package, ITC stands to assist partner institutions in delivering customized business counseling to women entrepreneurs.

Through a network of highly qualified experts and trainers, ITC helps to develop business strategies, which can potentially make the women-owned and women-operated businesses more competitive for export.

In order to address the various challenges faced by businesswomen in Africa and to support women as dynamic development agents, the ACCESS program is a regional gender initiative of the ITC that is intended to support and improve business services for women through international trade.

With the ultimate objective to increase women's export readiness and success on regional and international markets, the Liberia Chamber of Commerce's partnership will institute a process of building capacity for trade and address particular constraints of businesswomen in the region.

To improve on such network, ITC has developed a website export visibility for women in Africa and strengthens the team spirit and business networks to give special attention to technologies to provide additional online trade-related information and training facilities.