

Women in International trade: Driving Economic Empowerment and Growth

Hosted at the German Embassy Residence

May 7, 2018

Welcoming remarks by **Maureen Boyd**, Director, Carleton Initiative for Parliamentary and Diplomatic Engagement; H.E. **Sabine Sparwasser**, Ambassador of Germany to Canada; and **Pamela Goldsmith-Jones**, M.P. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

Maureen Boyd

- Expresses her happiness to partner with Embassy of Germany to promote women's empowerment

Sabine Sparwasser

- Gender equality is a main priority for the G7, the Canadian government and the German government.
- There has been a lot of progress made thus far, yet there is still a long way to go.
 - For example, the World Economic Forum has stated that it would take 279 years to close the gender gaps worldwide.
- After a legislated standard was established, Germany met its goal of 30% of women in the boards of the largest companies (2017 statistic).
- Considering the executive side of businesses, women compose only 6%.
- Only 1/3 of companies are run by women.
- There remains a great deal of work to do for women in international trade.
- Expresses that it is a great time to push the issue of women's equality.
- Offers thanks to Maureen.

Pamela Goldsmith-Jones

- Explains that while she has been a member of Parliament she has seen the government take large steps to improve on women's participation in peace and security agenda.
- References RBC's trade accelerator program.
- Comments on how only 4% of Canadian businesses trade internationally. We need to diversify our markets.
- Currently, women contribute to 30% of Canada's GDP, we should strive to make it 50%
- Equality within businesses would bring an extra \$150 billion to Canadian GDP in 5 to 6 years.
- Bringing women into international trade would strengthen Canada on the world stage and serve as a positive example to other countries.
- Explains how she has spoken to women worldwide to help empower them to break down the significant cultural/societal barriers that constrain women to household duties.
- Advocates for more programs to help facilitate women entrepreneurs.

- Budget 2018 equality of access and opportunity a central pillar worked into trade agreements.
- Happy to recognize the gender chapter within the Canada-Chile trade agreement
- Currently in the midst of planning largest trade mission of women.
 - First LGBTQ mission in USA
 - Working on indigenous chapter for entrepreneurs
- Gender advisory council at the G7 to ensure women are included a central theme in all discussions.

The panel discussion begins with the following panelists:

- **Ailish Campbell**, Chief Trade Commissioner of Canada and Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Affairs Canada.
- **Meredith Lilly**, Associate Professor and Simon Reisman Chair in International Affairs, Carleton University and former Foreign Affairs and International Trade Advisor to Prime Minister Stephen Harper.
- **Nicole Verkindt**, CEO of OMX, Dragon on Next Gen Den, winner of 2017 Women Entrepreneur Award.

The panel is moderated by **Maureen Boyd**, Director, Carleton Initiative for Parliamentary and Diplomatic Engagement.

Maureen Boyd asks the question: *We know that women owned businesses that export are more productive than women owned non-exporting businesses and that women owned exporting businesses are more productive than men owned exporting businesses. We also know that they create more and better paid jobs for women. How do we get more women owned businesses to export?*

Ailish Campbell responds:

- Currently, “only 11% of those female owned businesses export.”
- Evidence shows that “when women are in the right places, good things happen.”
- We need to focus on what prevents women from gaining these positions.
- Look at child care to help women participate.
- In part, it’s a knowledge issue that prevents women from exporting.
- We need to mainstream women into programs, trade mission, exporter conference, outreach, tradeshow, CEO roundtables. Awareness and transparency must continue.

Maureen Boyd asks: *What challenges do you see and what should be done, by whom?*

Nicole Verkindt responds:

- There isn’t one solution. The correct action depends on the stage that the business is at.
- “I’ve always thought that procurement is the most powerful lever that government and corporations have.” If the government takes the lead as a stakeholder, this will act as form of encouragement.

- For entrepreneurs, it always comes down to sales.
- Sales are the most important piece in allowing women to take their business to the next level and export.
- The root of problem is culturally based. The first step to counter this culture is to have the government include women's role in businesses into conversations.

Maureen Boyd asks: *We know trade policies are not gender neutral. Women have different skills, roles and knowledge than men within society. Are trade negotiations that focus on gender in any way different from genderless negotiations?*

Meredith Lilly responds:

- "Trade negotiations that have a gender chapter are very different than trade negotiations that think about gender throughout".
- Globalization has allowed some people to be lifted out of poverty which is generally good for women.
- One big challenge south of border – which has happened less in Canada – is job loss in the manufacturing sector. This has mostly impacted men and had impacts such as a loss of health care. Women have been affected less, however women are still working jobs that are highly precarious, with low pay and little benefits.
- "What I would like to see is hard provisions in trade agreements. I would like to see quotas around temporary entry provisions. Right now we have a 3:1 ratio of men to women arriving in Canada in high skilled jobs in the ICT sector." Hard provisions to be included in NAFTA, CETA and TPP will go a long way in helping women who come from countries such as India. Furthermore, it will help balance the labour market.
- "I would like to see women not treated as chapters at the end of a trade agreement but instead gender be addressed much more fundamentally throughout."

Maureen Boyd asks: *When is it time to persuade and when is it time to coerce?*

Ailish Campbell responds:

- Ailish began asking business people who she sat beside on planes how many women they had on their boards. The numbers (if known) were relatively low. The responses Ailish received were that people never thought about making their boards more balanced.
- Ailish wants to make sure women are streamlined into every single competition
 - Must push network to ensure that candidates considered for positions are half women.
 - Voluntary guidelines do not work. Guidelines should be made mandatory.
- We don't have 135 years to wait for pay equity.

Maureen Boyd asks: *When should government make guidelines mandatory?*

Nicole Verkindt responds:

- Nicole went on that journey three years ago. She was innovation person. “embrace innovation and a more digital economy... understand that a more diverse company is going to be more profitable.” She tries to implement this into companies. CEOs can sometimes make very nice speeches but not make real changes in their supply chains. Unless there’s a number that tells CEO’s there will be a risk if they don’t take certain action, then they will be hesitant to act. More specific targets will make change happen.

Meredith Lilly responds:

- Do both
- “Encourage where you can’t coerce.”
- Can’t force women into STEM careers or men into nursing.
- Believes we need to coerce. That government needs to set targets.
- Canada released guidelines around Canada research chairs in Canadian universities but nothing happened for a decade. Now 30% of CRC’s are held by women. However, 26/27 CERC’s are held by men. That will likely not change until a female Minister of Science says it is a problem and sets targets across the board.
- The current target of women on boards is 30%. We should phase in some hard targets and over time achieve 50%.

Maureen Boyd asks: *How do you get women owned businesses to scale up and move up the value chain?*

Ailish Campbell responds:

- It is important to “reach customers effectively” to ensure sales.
- Protectionism is challenging right now but NAFTA still exists – we should make use of this resource. The Canada-EU trade deal, the CPTPP & our deal with Japan makes 1.5 billion of the world’s richest consumers now accessible.
- How rational should economic actors be? If we have to pay up to 50% of a risky international business venture, it will be worth it, because it will ultimately expand our trading partners.

Nicole Verkindt responds:

- Agrees with Ailish.
- Asks for transparency around partnership.

Meredith Lilly responds:

- Let’s not send messages to women that women can do digital media from home while still having time to spend with family – since this assumes that there is a male breadwinner with benefits.

Maureen Boyd asks: *We started this with a G7 theme, how can women of G7 countries help women internationally. How can we help women in other countries trade?*

Meredith Lilly responds:

- Make sure that protectionism is not on the rise.
- The poor are disproportionately women.
- “Make space for women at the big table” and ensure that “their views are sought after explicitly.”
- Lilly makes fun of ‘manels’ (panels that are entirely male). Furthermore, at panels, when the first three questions from the audience come from men it becomes highly unlikely that women will be fully engaged and ask questions. To counter this, we need to ensure that women’s voices are heard.

Nicole Verkindt responds:

- Women in media.
- People in different countries working together in trade agreements or supply chains will begin a momentum. A first trip to Indonesia may turn into a long-term business relation. The first agreement is the biggest challenge but it acts as a catalyst.

Ailish Campbell responds:

- Encourages people to find someone within their network that they can sponsor (more than a mentorship). Ailish tells the audience to find someone who is very different from who they are – “someone who will challenge you as much as you will help them.”
- Pathways aren’t there for some minorities and immigrants.
- Cultures sometimes focus on specific industries. We should challenge these barriers.
- Ailish has noticed a big difference in herself in the past two years. She is now more confident to call a man out for inappropriate comments. She encourages women to put the blame back on the man. She strives for a more respectful workplace culture.

The audience is invited to ask questions.

Audience: Comments on how the panelists discussed double standards and unconscious bias in businesses. Also comments on indicators such as sales to determine success. She asks the panelists if there are ways to measure whether women in businesses are getting the support they need.

Nicole Verkindt responds

- It is a very complicated situation. She emphasized sales because sales are what will ultimately support a business and its potential success.

Audience: Comments on how she participated in the DFI discussion. Decision was that funding 300-500million for smaller entrepreneurs in developing will not be conditional on feminist international policies or development goals. Comments that message has not gotten across at all levels.

Ailish Campbell responds:

- We will see financing improve soon. Ailish has spoken with Minister Freeland and Minister Bibeau about it.
- Mandate is to get out 300 million to leverage other investments such as infrastructure, entrepreneurship financing and other rubrics to help benefit women.
- DFI is an opportunity to track success from the ground up.

Audience: The last federal budget included a women entrepreneurship strategy. In terms of procurement, the government committed to increasing the number of contracts with women owned businesses from 10-15%.

Nicole Verkindt responds:

- Nicole raises the concern that this may not reach new businesses but be limited to increasing the number of contracts with the same few women owned businesses. She comments on the challenges of spreading information to other women and how success can be tracked.

Audience: Where do we go in terms of trading with China or countries that do not share our values?

Ailish Campbell responds:

- We have to be who we are. We must uphold our cultural views. The Canadian commitment to equality is one of our values.
- Let's do everything we can.
- Mainstream inclusive growth.
- On the topic of China, we are going to put things on the table that align with our values and then China will counter. We can remind the Chinese about their own commitments to some of their values. Women Chinese entrepreneurs are leading some great businesses.
- Comments on how many state leaders worldwide are ready to lead on gender equality as a core value.

Meredith Lilly responds:

- Raises the question, where do we go from the progressive trade deals?
- It is not known by many Canadians that alongside signing CETA we also signed a strategic partnership agreement (which is a value based agreement). Values are something that Europeans have wanted to negotiate as part of their trade agreements for some time now.

- It's one thing to sign progressive elements with countries that share our values on these issues. However, when we think about our future trade agreements it becomes unclear what role values will play.
 - China: should it be strong labour rules that will benefit both genders?
 - If we don't pursue a gender chapter then what will that say about Canada?
 - Do we only negotiate with likeminded others? The like-minded minority?

The Ambassador to Chile comments:

- The gender chapter in the Canada-Chile trade agreement is a political message.
- The new Chilean government is also working on gender issues. Chile thinks that the chapter on gender is important because it allows Chile to work with women entrepreneurs within the export area.
- More importantly, there exists a committee that will work with Canada to share experiences and continue to develop.

Closing remarks by **Dr. André Plourde**, Dean, Faculty of Public Affairs.

- Thank you to panelists, organizers and guests.
- André was struck by the discussion of gender data and performance indicators. He encourages people not to fail to act based on the lack of data (and thus ability to track effectiveness).
- André wants gender to be brought into frameworks that have not been designed with gender in mind. We need to move the agenda ahead.
- Do we focus too much on trade agreements? A lot happens outside of trade agreements. How do we, the initiators, to move the gender discussion outside of trade agreements?
- Leadership is most important to catalyze change.