Member States of the WTO adopted a Declaration on Trade and Women’s Economic Empowerment, at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires 10-13 December 2017. The purpose of the Declaration is to provide a framework and platform for members to foster a more inclusive trade agenda as they seek to ensure that trade benefits all. The Declaration affirms that:

- Gender is an essential component of inclusive economic growth, which requires gender responsive trade policies;
- International trade and investment drive growth, and inclusive trade policies can lead to better outcomes for women, growth, and poverty reduction;
- Women face specific barriers to participating in the economy.

The Declaration highlights five key areas where members can collaborate to make their policies more gender-responsive, that constitute the lens applied in the seminar series:

1. Sharing experiences on gender-responsive policies and programmes;
2. Sharing best practice for analyzing trade policies and their effects on women;
3. Sharing methods for collecting, analyzing and using gender-disaggregated data;
4. Working together in the WTO to remove barriers impacting women’s economic empowerment and involvement in trade;
5. Ensuring Aid for Trade provides tools and approaches to make trade policy more gender responsive.

In the first of a 5-part seminar series, experts discussed the status quo, how to affect change through undertaking a gender-sensitive analysis of trade policy, and the kinds of policies and practices that work for women engaged in trade. Four themes will be explored in subsequent seminars: Financial inclusion, public procurement, trade facilitation, and data collection and analysis. Speakers will be drawn from the International Gender Champions Geneva (the originators of the Declaration), intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations.

The target audience included Geneva-based representatives of Member States to the WTO; capital-based policy makers (via live-stream); and those from the private sector (especially women entrepreneurs) and civil society organizations seeking to deepen their understanding of the gender dimension of trade.

The expected outcome is a deeper understanding of trade policies and practices that support a greater integration of women, especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, into the global economy, to assist countries craft more gender-responsive trade and development policies.

A link to the webcast of the first seminar is here: http://pressclub.ch/implementing-the-declaration-on-trade-and-womens-economic-empowerment/?lang=en