

Empowering Women in African Manufacturing: A Catalyst for Economic Growth

Johannesburg, 2 October 2023 – In a dynamic and rapidly evolving African manufacturing landscape, women are emerging as crucial drivers of growth and change. This paradigm shift is not only transforming the industrial sector but also fostering economic development and social progress across the continent.

The African manufacturing sector has traditionally been male-dominated, but recent years have witnessed a remarkable transformation. Women are increasingly taking up leadership roles, innovating in various industries, and contributing significantly to the sector's expansion.

Key Highlights:

Leadership and Entrepreneurship: Women across Africa are breaking barriers and taking the helm in manufacturing companies. They are assuming top-level positions as CEOs, directors, and managers, driving innovation and fostering inclusive workplaces. Moreover, many women are venturing into entrepreneurship, starting their manufacturing enterprises, and creating jobs in their communities.

Innovation and Technology: African women are actively engaging in research and development, bringing innovation and technology-driven solutions to the manufacturing sector. Their contributions range from designing efficient production processes to creating sustainable and environmentally friendly products.

Skills Development: Women are at the forefront of efforts to close the skills gap in manufacturing. They are participating in training programmes, workshops, and educational initiatives to enhance their skills and capabilities, thus ensuring a skilled workforce for the industry's future.

Supply Chain Involvement: Women are increasingly involved in every aspect of the manufacturing supply chain, from sourcing raw materials to distribution. Their roles in procurement, logistics, and quality control are pivotal in ensuring the seamless flow of products.

Sustainability and Social Impact: Many women-led manufacturing enterprises prioritise sustainability and social impact. They are driving initiatives to reduce waste, promote ethical production practices, and uplift local communities through job creation and community development projects.

African women in manufacturing are forging international partnerships, expanding markets, and exporting their products worldwide. This global reach is contributing to Africa's economic growth and positioning the continent as a significant player in the global manufacturing arena.

This shift towards greater gender diversity and inclusion in African manufacturing is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative for economic progress. Women are demonstrating their resilience, creativity, and leadership capabilities, making valuable contributions to the sector's growth and sustainability.

The Manufacturing Indaba, to be hosted in Sandton, South Africa from the 24 – 26 October 2023, prides itself on providing women owned manufacturing business a platform to showcase their manufactured products. This forms part of a showcase exhibition pavilion co-hosted with the Women Economic Assembly (WECONA) and the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme (WEEP). The programme provides sector related skills development and capacitation for women-owned businesses aimed at equipping them to participate effectively in economic activities including access to procurement opportunities across value chains.

As we celebrate these achievements, it is crucial to acknowledge that more work remains to be done to eliminate gender disparities in African manufacturing fully. Governments, businesses, and civil society must continue to promote policies and practices that support women's participation, leadership, and entrepreneurship in the sector.

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