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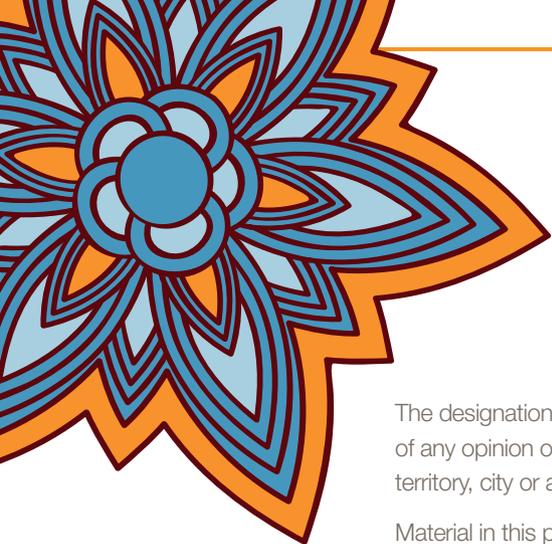


2018 Empretec

Women in Business Awards



UNITED NATIONS



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Contents

About Empretec and the Women in Business Awards	1
The Empretec Women in Business Awards Ceremony 2018	3
The 2018 Finalists	6
Rosana Marques (Brazil)	7
Rocío Castro Fernández (Ecuador)	9
Ndeye Fatou Njie (Gambia)	11
Chandra Vadhana (India)	13
Lama Sha'sha'a Abu Dahab (Jordan)	15
Uneiza Ali Issufo (Mozambique)	17
Barbara Ofwono Buyondo (Uganda)	19
Ana De León (Uruguay)	21
Rina Arraez Mogollon (Venezuela)	23
Leah Diana Mitaba (Zambia)	25
The 2018 WBA Panel	28
Initiatives in the United Nations System working to support women's entrepreneurship	32

Preface

The 2030 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cover a broad spectrum of sustainability areas such as poverty eradication, health, education, climate change and environmental degradation, and can generate opportunities for women entrepreneurs. At the same time, innovations, especially in digital and information and communications technologies (ICTs), are rapidly affecting the quality and quantity of jobs, offering new opportunities and challenges for women entrepreneurs. This includes women-owned businesses leveraging technology to move up the global and regional value chains, entering and progressing in non-traditional areas. Artificial intelligence and machine-learning, robotics, nanotechnology, 3-D printing, and genetics and biotechnology, will cause widespread disruption not only to business models but also to labour markets over the next five years, with enormous changes predicted in the skill sets needed. At the same time, ICTs also opened the door to small businesses, and individuals to participate directly in globalization.

According to a recent research by 99 designs of over 3,000 businesses worldwide, women entrepreneurs still face challenges in raising capital, hiring employees, and in work life balance. Women purchase 80% of the world's goods, provide two-thirds of the world's labour, hold 10% of the world's wealth - and just 1% of the property rights, with women-owned businesses winning less than 1% of procurement contracts from governments and business. To raise awareness of this economic gender gap and to support women's entrepreneurship, in 2008, UNCTAD initiated the Empretec Women in Business Awards. This year, more than 50 nominations from 20 countries were received. The finalists were selected by a panel of distinguished experts in entrepreneurship on the basis of three criteria: innovation, leadership and impact in the community.

All the finalists have put their expertise and passion in the business. They have overcome obstacles and persevered to establish and grow successful companies, creating jobs and giving back to their communities, spearheading cultural changes and serving as role models. They come from countries across Africa, Latin America and Middle East, and work in a variety of sectors ranging from education to garment manufacturing, construction, fashion and cultural industries, and agribusinesses. A common thread of all finalists this year is the inclusive business models that they have adopted, with clear links to the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). They all have a sense of purpose, and to different degrees embraced social entrepreneurship. Balancing motherhood and their careers, they have also accomplished the right work life balance, taking full advantage of the flexibility and independence gained in running their own businesses.

UNCTAD's Empretec Women in Business Awards will be presented at the World Investment Forum, in Geneva, Switzerland, on 25 October 2018.

The Empretec Team



About Empretec and the Women in Business Award

Empretec

Empretec is UNCTAD's flagship capacity-building programme coordinated from Geneva, Switzerland, by the Enterprise Branch of the Division of Investment and Enterprise.

The programme aims to promote entrepreneurship and to enhance the productive capacity and international competitiveness of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries and economies in transition. The Empretec Programme is implemented through its National Centres, established in 40 countries. Since its inception in 1988, Empretec has successfully trained over 440,000 people, helping them to found or expand businesses, creating thousands of jobs in the process. Empretec's core product, the Entrepreneurship Training Workshop (ETW), promotes a methodology of behavioural change that helps entrepreneurs put their ideas into action and aids fledgling businesses to grow.

The Empretec network tops 442,000



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