
WOMEN AND GENDER IN USMCA

USMCA, more women business friendly

- USMCA is more women business friendly than NAFTA in that it addresses women's under-representation in regional trade and includes measures seeking to promote the equality of women in the workplace.
- Measures in USMCA will allow for a greater inclusion of women and other under-represented groups to regional and international trade, contributing to a more striving and competitive North America.
- There are two specific chapters in the Agreement that stand out:
 - First, SME Chapter 25, which addresses the intentions of the Parties to collaborate on activities to promote SMEs owned by under-represented groups, including women.
 - Secondly, Labor Chapter 23, which mentions the goal of eliminating discrimination in employment and occupation, as well as supporting the goal of promoting equality of women in the workplace.
- It also looks for the Parties to implement policies they consider appropriate to protect workers against employment discrimination on the basis of sex, including:
 - Elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex in respect of employment, occupation, and wages.
 - Developing tools related to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value.
 - Promotion of labor practices that integrate and retain women in the job market, and building the capacity and skills of women workers, including on workplace challenges and in collective bargaining.
 - Consideration of gender issues related to occupational safety and other workplace practices, including advancement of child care, nursing mothers, and related policies and programs, and in the prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses.
 - Prevention of gender-based workplace violence and harassment.

SMEs chapter provisions and the promotion of women owned businesses

- The SMEs chapter enhances competitiveness and job creation in the North American region by recognizing the importance of SMEs in the economic structure of our three countries.
- It provides a common platform for cooperation and information sharing to successfully incorporate women-owned SMEs into the regional supply chains by:
 1. Supporting infrastructure such as incubators, accelerators and export assistance centers.
 2. Enhancing greater and closer collaboration to promote women owned SMEs
 3. Exchanging and implementing best practices between the parties to improve women-owned SMEs access to capital and credit.
 4. Creating digital tools to help SMEs understand the benefits of the agreement with useful information for doing business across the region.
- It creates a committee on SME issues and launches an ongoing Trilateral SME Dialogue with stakeholders to help ensure that SMEs, in this case women-owned, continue to benefit from the agreement.

Competitiveness Chapter and the advancement of a gender equity agenda in North America

- The new Competitiveness Chapter creates a trilateral mechanism, called the Competitiveness Committee, where the three countries will cooperate to develop policies that enhance the competitiveness of North American exports. Among others, the committee will "discuss and develop cooperative activities in support of a strong economic environment that incentivizes production in the region".