

# COVID-19 Putting Women at the Frontline: Can Trade Agreements Help?

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# COVID-19 Magnifying the Impact of Barriers

## The Problem

### *Key Barriers*

Access to education (STEM and digital learning)

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Access to markets, technology, finance and other productive resources

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Time poverty, domestic violence and culturally-prescribed stereotypes

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Business and employment restrictions; bans and prohibitions

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Unfair working conditions and employment discrimination

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Disproportionate tariff and non tariff barriers for trade in goods and services

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**COVID-19  
exacerbating these  
barriers**

### *COVID-19-Inflicted Challenges*

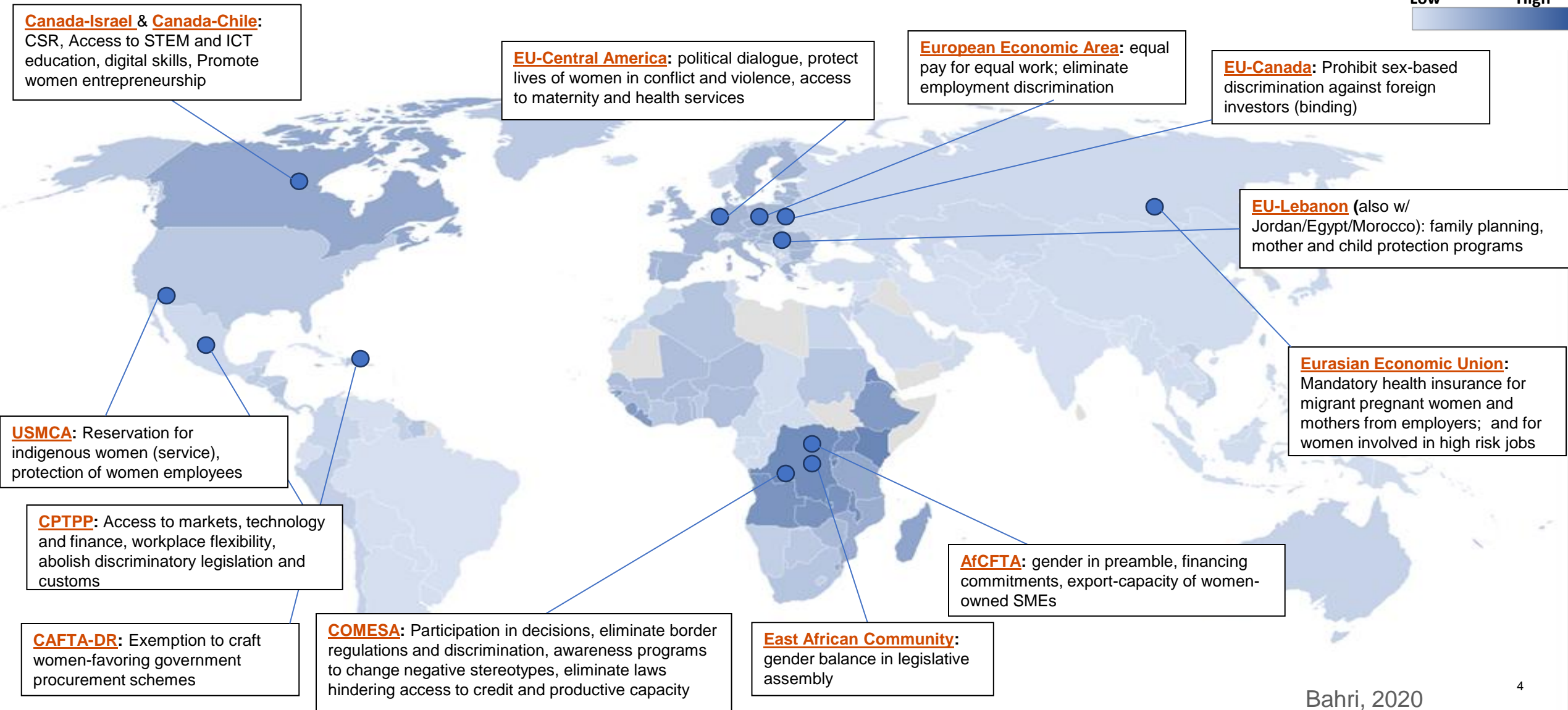
- 1 Loss of jobs for 30% of women in service industries (proximity-demanding, low paid and temporary jobs)
- 2 740 million women in informal economy, either exposed to contagion risk or face imminent loss of jobs
- 3 Women own close to 10 million of the world's SMEs; SMEs scaling down or facing closures
- 4 Spiralling household responsibilities and domestic violence
- 5 Reduced access to education, owing to lack of digital affordability and know-how
- 6 Restricted access to health facilities, including maternity care and abortive services

For more details, see [Bahri, Women at the frontline of COVID-19](#)

# Trade Agreements can Help: Best Practice Examples

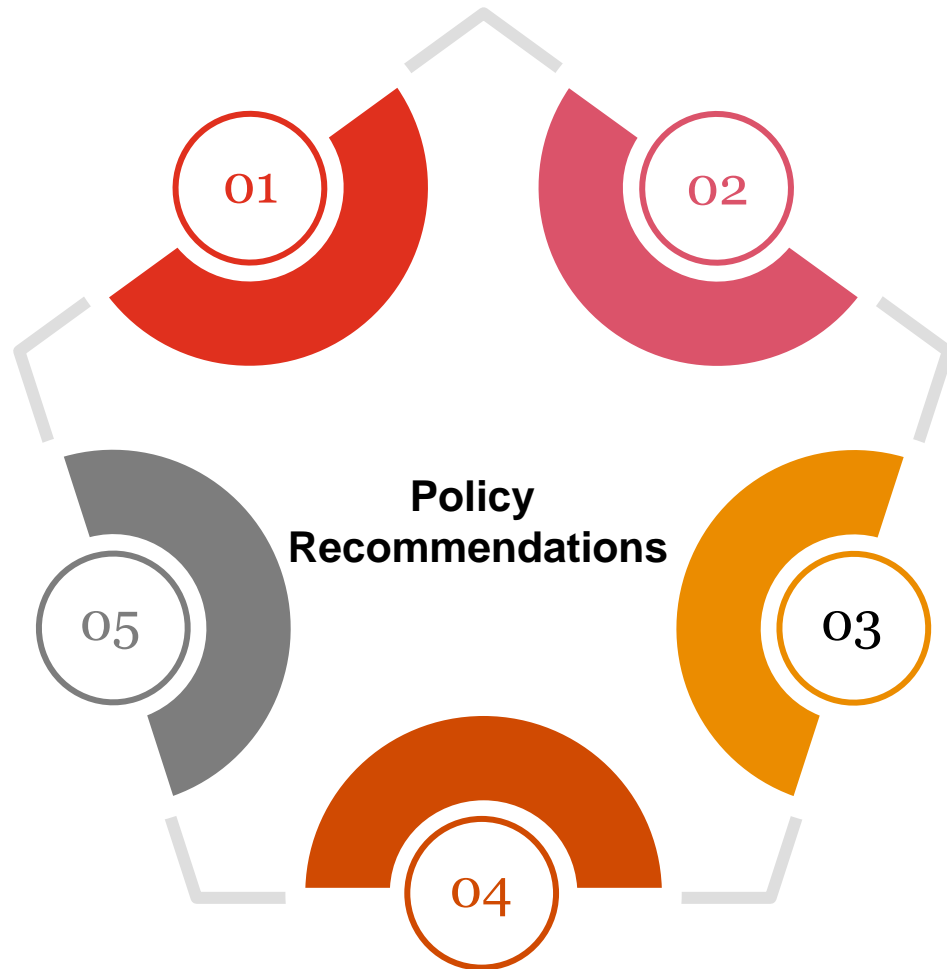
## The Solution

Low High



# Preparing Future Trade Agreements to Reboot Inclusive Economy




## Next Steps



- 01 STEM & ICT Access**  
Cooperate on Enhancing Women's Access to STEM Education, Digital Learning and Skill Development
- 02 Health Protection**  
Cooperate on Enhancing Access to Health Services and Medical Insurance
- 03 Gender Specific Corporate Social Responsibility**  
Encourage Gender-Specific Corporate Social Responsibilities on flexible work conditions, equal pay and medical insurance
- 04 Implementation**  
Create Institutions and Mobilize Funds to Ensure Implementation of Gender Equality Commitments
- 05 Gender Exception**  
Craft a Gender-Explicit Exception to Justify Support Measures OR Employ Existing Public Morality Exception

# Measuring Gender-Responsiveness of FTAs: ITC's Maturity Toolkit

Approach

Category	Definition	Dimensions
 <p><b>Awareness</b></p>	<p>This category reflects parties' awareness and the importance they assign to the incorporation of gender concerns in the given free trade agreement (FTA).</p>	<p>1. Frequency of Relevant Provisions</p> <p>2. Location of Relevant Provisions</p> <p>3. Affirmations and Reaffirmations</p>
 <p><b>Affirmative Action</b></p>	<p>This category reflects whether parties to the given FTA consider or commit to any affirmative action to incorporate gender concerns.</p>	<p>4. Cooperation Activities</p> <p>5. Institutional Arrangement</p> <p>6. Procedural Arrangements</p> <p>7. Review and Funding</p>
 <p><b>Enforcement</b></p>	<p>This category reflects whether parties to the given FTA consider or commit to the robust enforcement of gender-components included in the FTA.</p>	<p>8. Settlement of Disputes</p> <p>9. Waivers, Reservations &amp; Exceptions</p> <p>10. Minimum Legal Standards</p>
<p><b>Limited</b></p> <p>FTA at this level is either completely or close to being gender-blind or gender-neutral in nature as it fails to mainstream gender concerns.</p>	<p><b>Evolving</b></p> <p>FTA at this level employs some best practices for mainstreaming gender concerns, but it has a significant scope for further improvement.</p>	<p><b>Advanced</b></p> <p>FTA at this level achieves the highest level of maturity in the way it mainstreams gender concerns, and there is no or only a negligible scope for further improvement.</p>

Gender Responsiveness

# Thank you

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