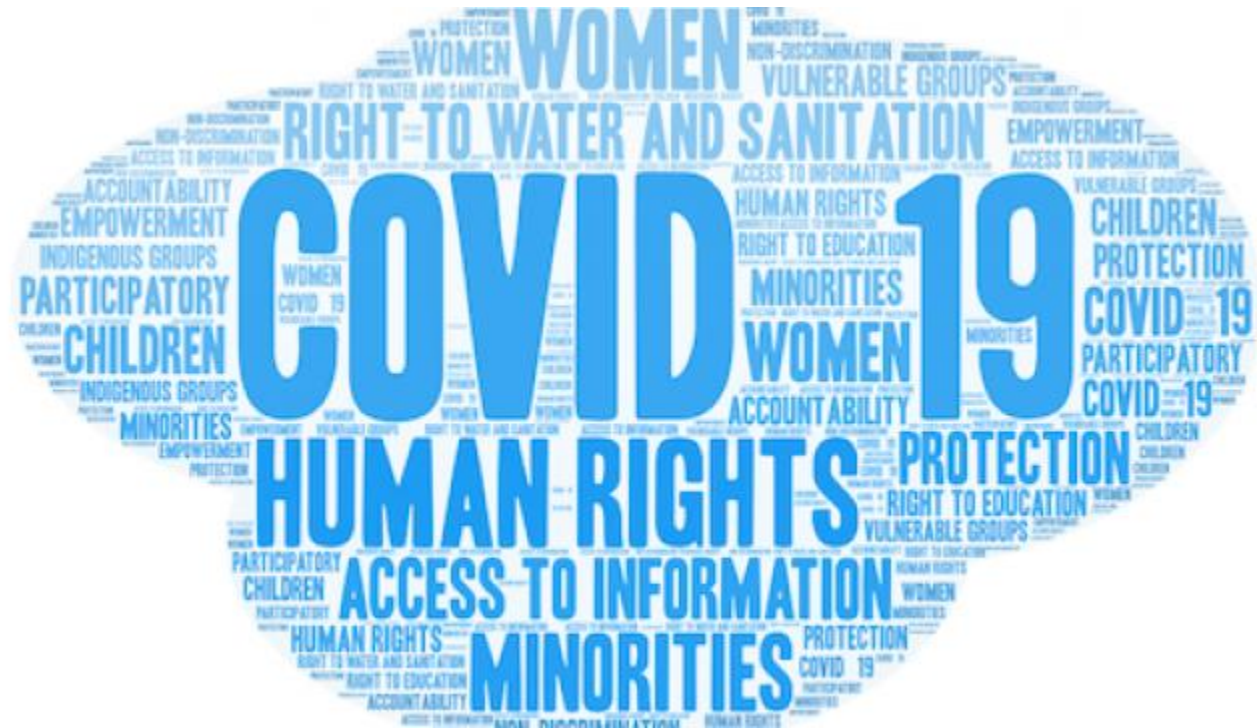


COVID-19 and Its Impact on Women in International Trade: Can Free Trade Agreements Help Reboot the Economy?



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It is worsening the gender divide!



Barriers to Trade for Women Pre-Covid?



□ Financial Barriers

→ Employment restrictions

More than 2.7 billion women in 104 economies can not, by law, perform specific jobs, while 59 economies do not have laws on sexual harassment in the workplace and, in 18 economies, the husband can legally prevent the wife from work. (World Bank Report)

Women face restrictions on employment in 100 of the 173 economies analyzed. In 41 economies, women prohibited from working in industrial premises; in 29 economies, they are prohibited from working at night. In 18 economies, they can not get a job without the permission of their husbands.

→ Land ownership, Bank account & Credit worthiness

The credit gap suffered by formal small and medium enterprises that belong to women is estimated at USD 300 billion. The gender gap in terms of bank account in developing economies has not changed since 2011 and remains at 9%.

(Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal)



❑ Legal and Regulatory Barriers

- Employment restrictions (Middle East has 15 most restrictive economies in terms of possibilities for women to work or start a business, as measured in the report.)
- Wage rates and working conditions
- Efforts: In China, IFC works closely with Bank of Deyang to help extend its services to SMEs and support women-owned businesses in areas affected by the 2008 earthquake. In 2009, IFC approved a US\$31 million equity investment to the bank.
- Mobility (Applying for their passports or obtaining employment with their husbands' permission have the effect of impeding business activity and formal employment. North Africa and Middle East)
(Afghanistan, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, etc)
- Lack of sexual harassment laws
- Unfavourable inheritance laws



Property inheritance Laws

Country	Inheritance Laws	Religious System	Rights of wives and daughters on succession
Afghanistan	Afghan Civil Code sections 289-342 and 1993-2267	Islamic Law	Women sharers (as wives, sisters, grandmothers or daughters) inherit but not equally to their male counterpart
Bangladesh	Hindu Inheritance (removal of disabilities) Act of 1928; Hindu law of inheritance (amendment) Act of 1929	Hindu dayabhaga system	Widow receives life estate; unmarried daughters and married daughters with sons inherit; married daughters with daughters and childless daughters do not.
India	Indian Succession Act of 1925 (portions)	Parsi custom	Widows and children (sons and daughters) inherit equal shares among them
Nepal	Country Code of Nepal (Muluki Ain)	Hinduism	If daughter inherits and then marries she

❑ Legal and Regulatory Barriers

→ Husband Consent for opening bank account, accepting employment, or signing contract

“In 2014, Madame Ngetsi wanted to formalize a small business that she was running in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo. To do so, she would need to register her company and open a bank account. Along the way, she might need a loan to grow her business. But legally, Madame Ngetsi needed her husband’s permission to do any of these activities under the family code that existed at the time.”



Access to Education



Exploitation and Poor Working Conditions



→ Cultural Barriers

- Education and training (In the field of education, only 23% of low-income countries have achieved gender parity in primary school and 15% in secondary school.)
- Household responsibilities are prime (Laws prohibit married women from becoming heads of their households in Middle East)
- Patriarchal set up and Maternity needs (New Zealand PM makes history with 'first baby' at UN General Assembly)



Barriers to Trade for Women Post-Covid?



Women in Service Sector

WOMEN IN THE GLOBAL WORKFORCE

SHARE BY SECTOR



SERVICES
61.5%



INDUSTRY
13.5%



AGRICULTURE
25%



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

SEATS IN PARLIAMENT
23% WOMEN



CEOS, FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES
4% WOMEN

Women in Informal Sector



Reviving the Small Businesses



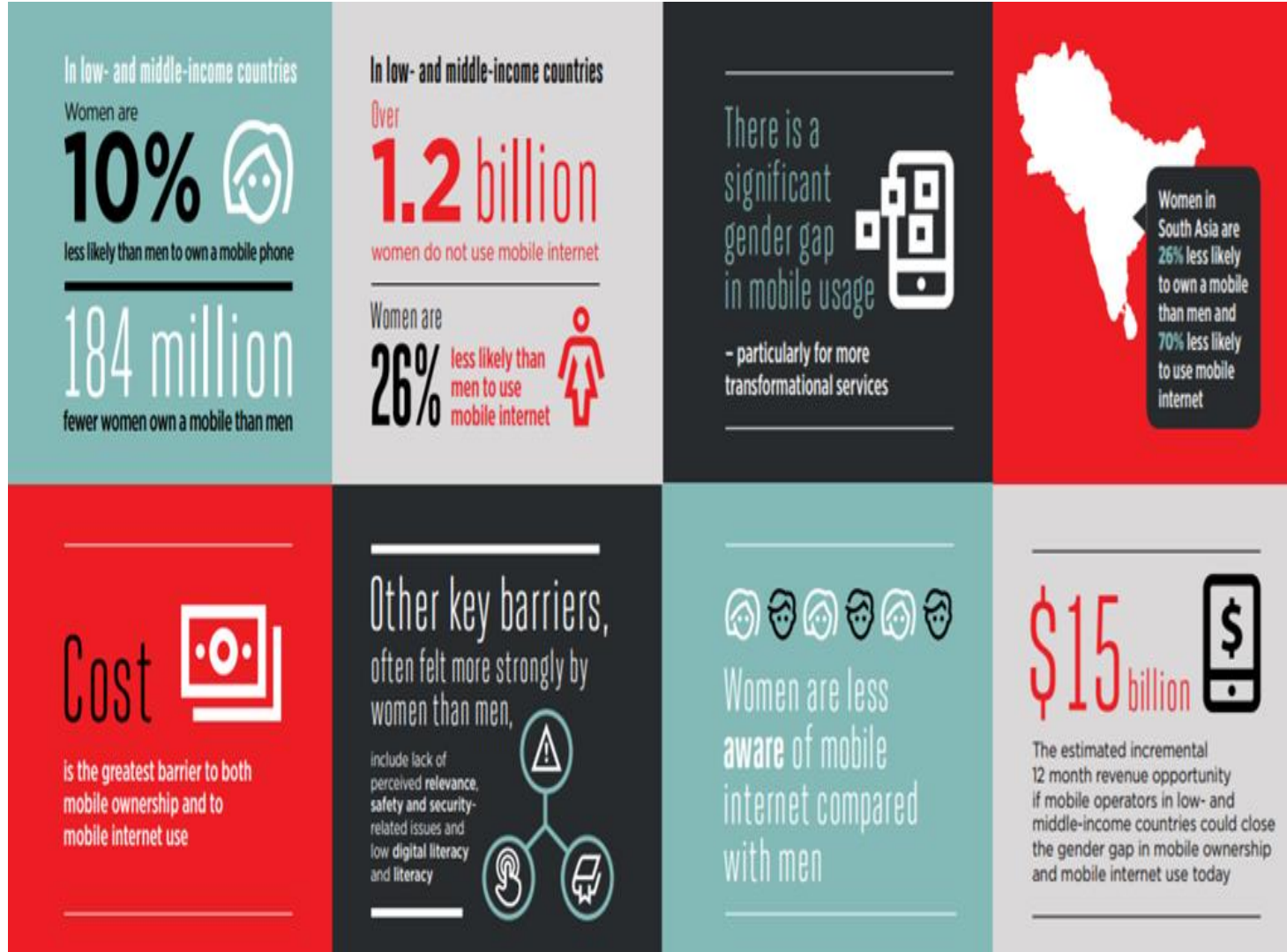
Access to Finance



Reduced Access to Education



Digital Divide



Reduced Access to Health



Increased Household Responsibilities



Women in Agriculture (with trade restrictions)



The proportion of migrant workers to total workers in the region has increased from 15.7% in 1998-99 to **25.5%** in 2009-10. (Bihar)

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that **if women had the same access to productive resources as men**, they could increase yields on their farms by **20-30%**. This could raise total the agricultural output in developing countries by up to 4%, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17% - that's **100-150 million** people.



India's Covid gender gap: women left behind in vaccination drive

Misinformation and access issues combined with patriarchal social norms fuelling disparity in distribution across most states

- **Coronavirus - latest updates**
- **See all our coronavirus coverage**



▲ A woman is vaccinated with Covishield at a health centre in Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh. Of the 29m vaccines administered in the region, nearly 60% have been given to men. Photograph: Prakash Singh/AFP/Getty

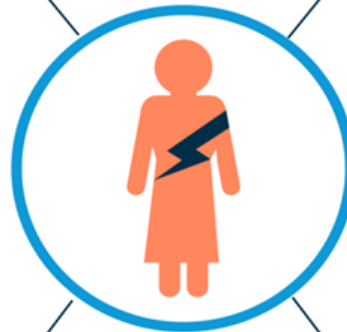
Deep-rooted structural inequalities and patriarchal values are to blame for India's worrying Covid vaccine gender gap, campaigners and academics have warned.

Rising Domestic Violence

Emerging data shows that since the outbreak of COVID-19, violence against women and girls (VAWG), and particularly domestic violence, has INTENSIFIED.

In **France**, reports of domestic violence have increased by **30%** since the lockdown on March 17.

In **Argentina** emergency calls for domestic violence cases have increased by **25%** since the lockdown on March 20.



In **Cyprus** and **Singapore** helplines have registered an increase in calls of **30%** and **33%**, respectively.

Increased cases of domestic violence and demand for emergency shelter have also been reported in **Canada, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom** and **the United States**.

If you are experiencing violence during COVID-19:



Reach out to supportive family, friends or neighbours



Call a hotline or access information online if possible



Seek out local services for survivors

The Business Case: Gender Equality Benefits Economy

GDP GROWTH BY 2025 WITH GENDER PARITY IN THE WORKFORCE
ALL REGIONS



International Instruments Acknowledge this Relation....






WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION



Beijing
+25

Measuring Gender-Responsiveness of FTAs: ITC's Maturity Framework

Category	Definition	Dimensions	
 <p><i>Awareness</i></p>	This category reflects parties' awareness and the importance they assign to the incorporation of gender concerns in the given free trade agreement (FTA).	1. Frequency of Relevant Provisions	2. Location of Relevant Provisions
		3. Affirmations and Reaffirmations	
 <p><i>Affirmative Action</i></p>	This category reflects whether parties to the given FTA consider or commit to any affirmative action to incorporate gender concerns.	4. Cooperation Activities	5. Institutional Arrangement
		6. Procedural Arrangements	7. Review and Funding
 <p><i>Enforcement</i></p>	This category reflects whether parties to the given FTA consider or commit to the robust enforcement of gender-components included in the FTA.	8. Settlement of Disputes	9. Minimum Legal Standards
		10. Waivers, Reservations & Exceptions	

Limited

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.

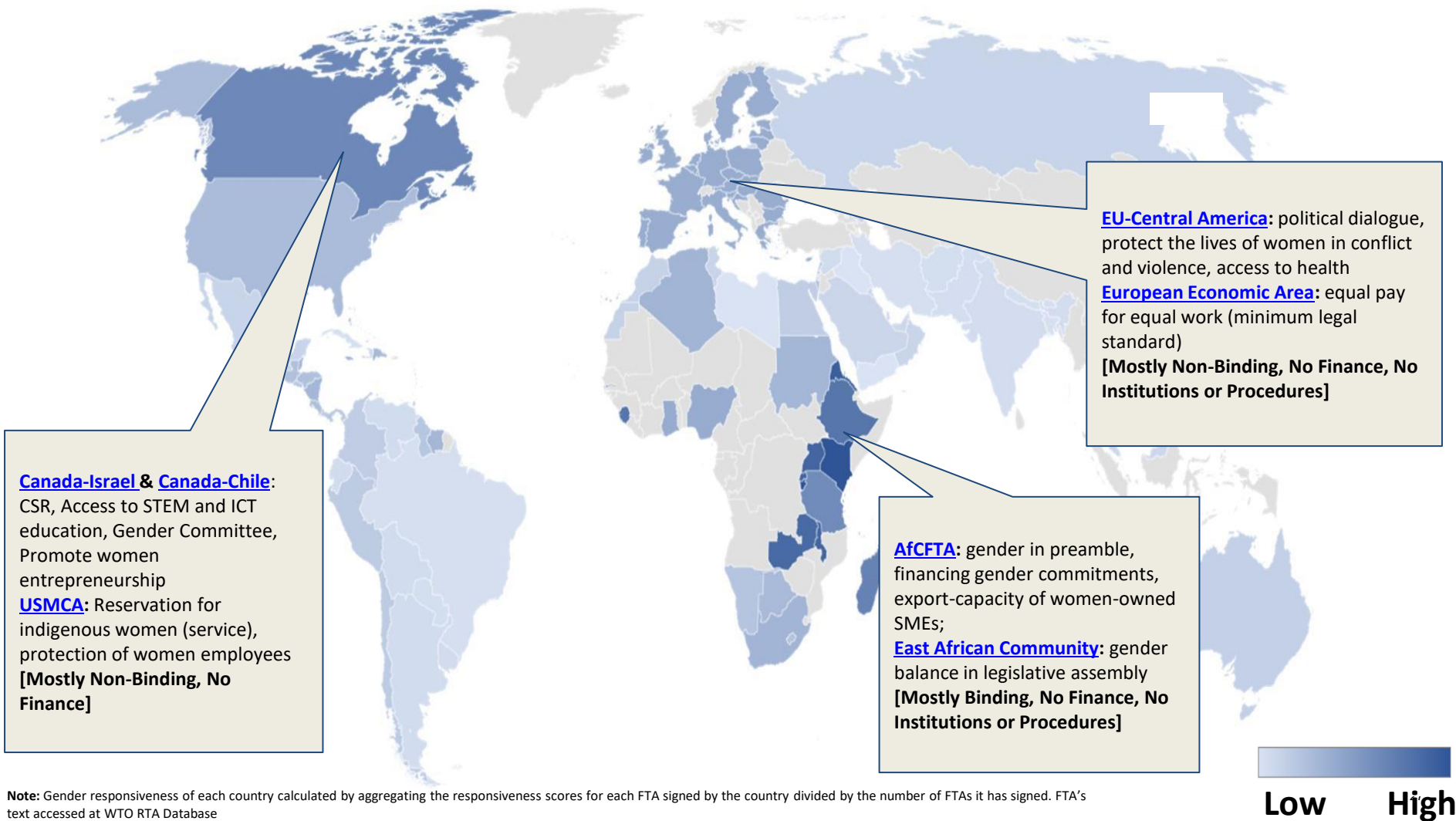
Evolving

FTA at this level employs some best practices for mainstreaming gender concerns, but it has a significant scope for further improvement.

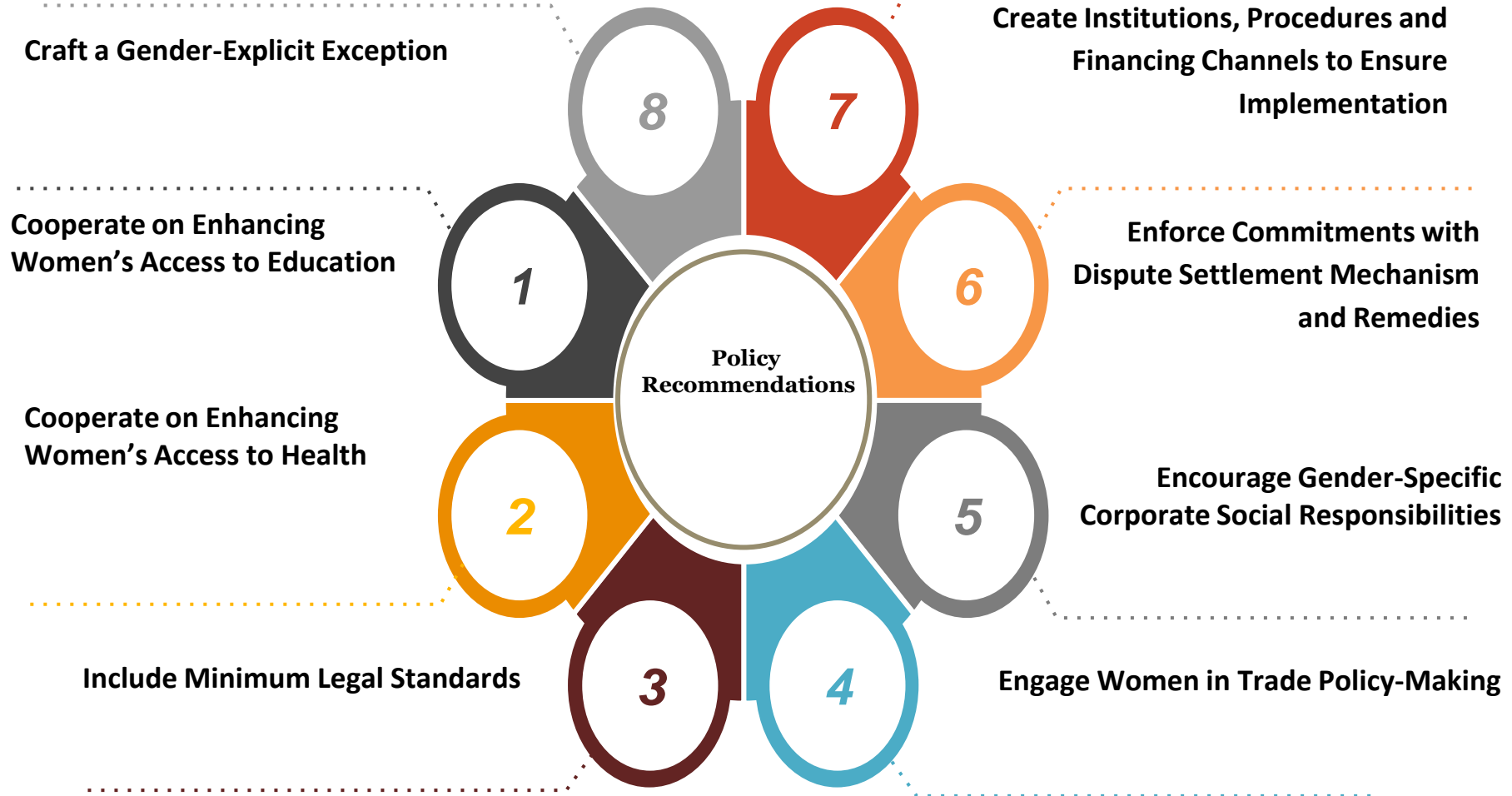
Advanced

FTA at this level achieves the highest level of maturity in the way it mainstreams gender concerns with the use of best practices for incorporating gender concerns, and there is no or only a negligible scope for further improvement.

Results: Canada and East Africa are Pioneers, EU Follows...



Preparing FTAs for Rebooting Inclusive Economy: Taking the Next Steps...



Three big questions:

- 1 | USMCA includes highly enforceable labor commitments. If this can be negotiated, why countries are still reluctant to include enforceable gender-related commitments such as equal pay for equal work?
- 2 | If we can have exceptions to protect public morals, or animal health or life, or even plant health or life in almost 100% of existing FTAs, why can't we negotiate an exception to reduce gender inequality?
- 3 | Even if gender provisions are not made enforceable, wouldn't they remain a distant reality if parties do not craft procedures and institutions or mobilize funds to put these commitments to action?