

# Gender mainstreaming in trade agreements: “A potemkin facade”?

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# COVID-19 Magnifying the Impact of Barriers

## The Problem

### *Key Barriers*

Access to education (STEM and digital learning)

Access to markets, technology, finance and other productive resources

Time poverty, domestic violence and culturally-prescribed stereotypes

Business and employment restrictions; bans and prohibitions

Unfair working conditions and employment discrimination

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

**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

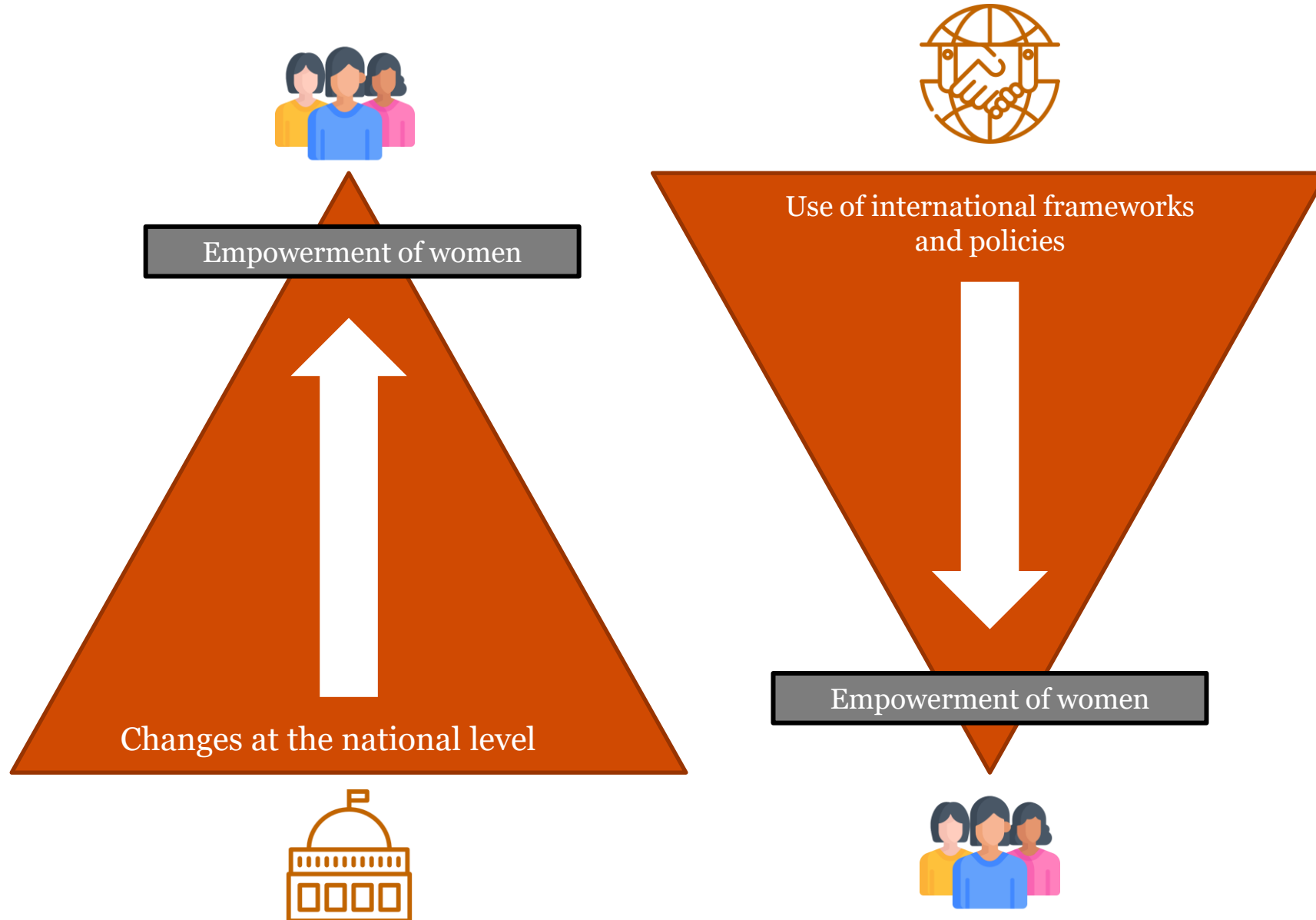
Reduced access to education, owing to lack of digital affordability and know-how

6

Restricted access to health facilities, including maternity care and abortive services

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

# Two Approaches: Bottom up or Top down



# Why negotiating instruments work?

## 1 Diplomatic reasons

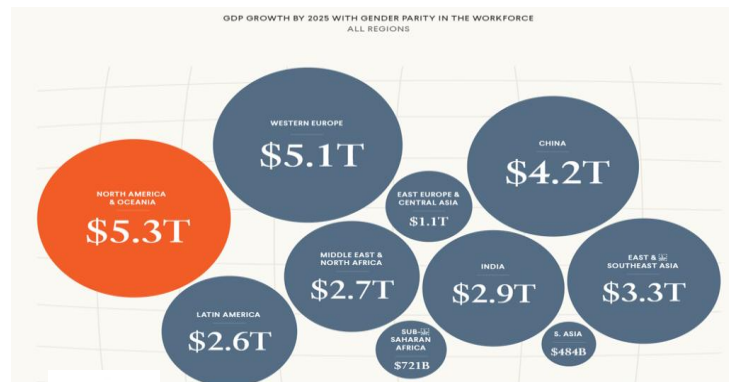


Ease of negotiating with certain countries (i.e., Canada)



The inclusion of gender provisions is a precondition to negotiate with others (i.e., EU)

## 2 Substantive reasons



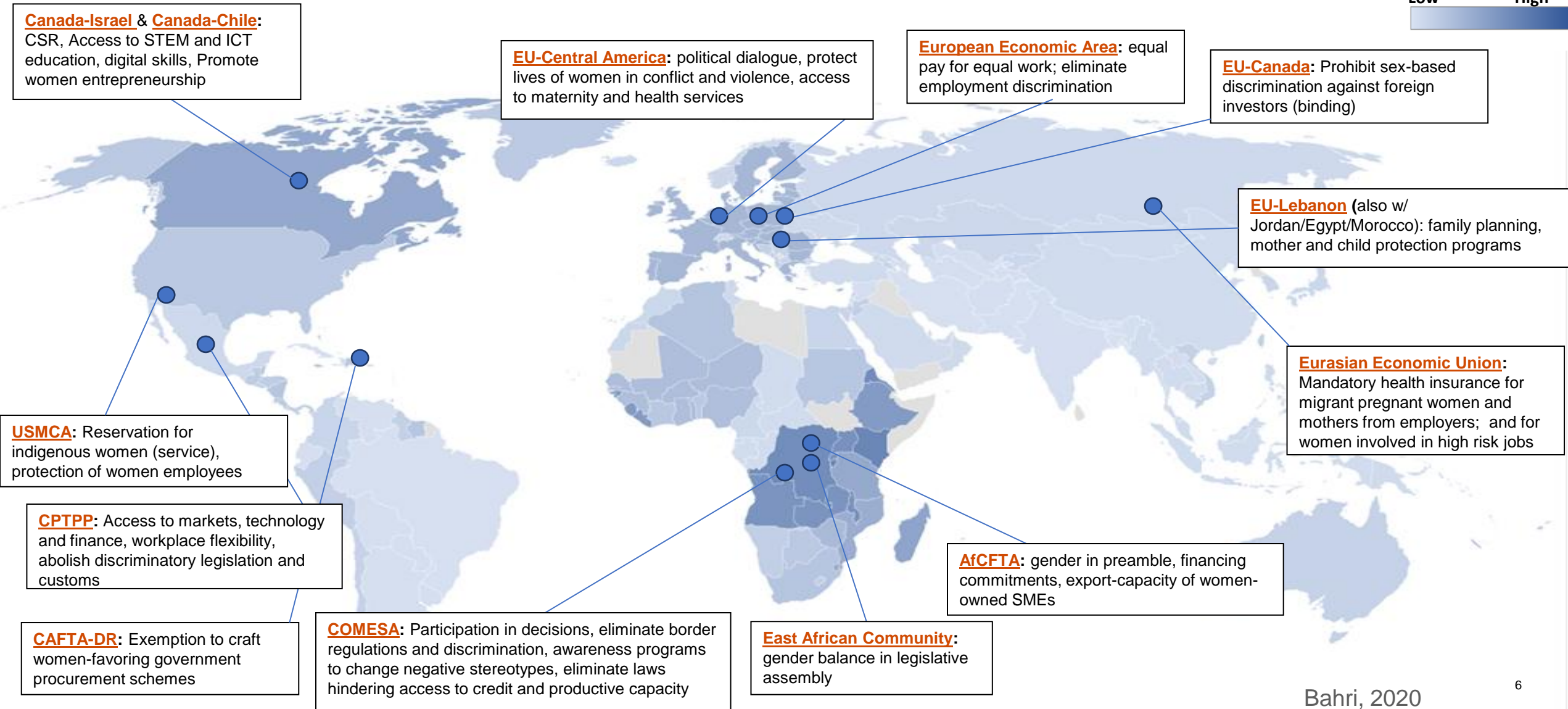
The Business Case: Gender Equality benefits the economy

### Gender and trade: A bi-directional relationship

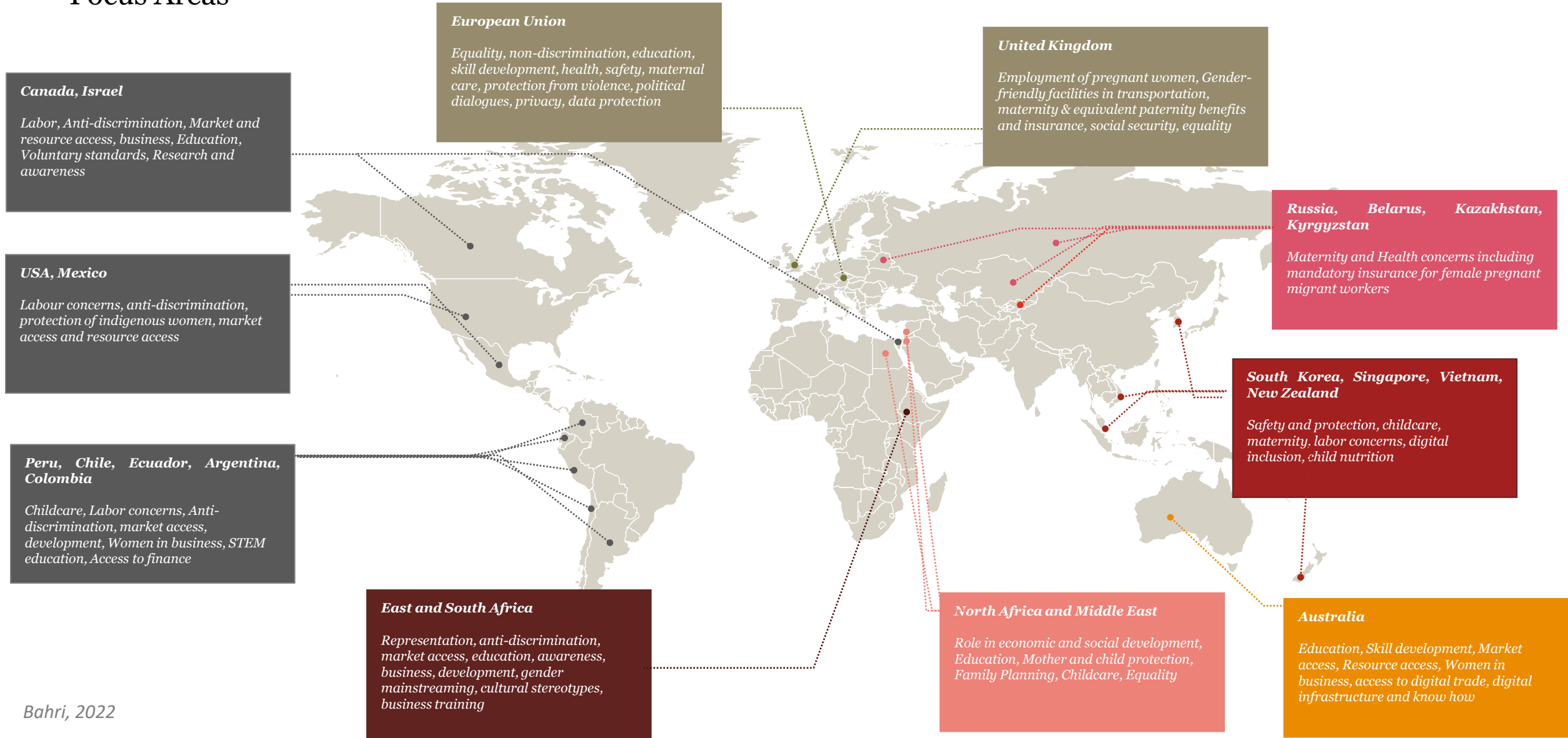


# Trade Agreements can Help: Good Practice Examples

## The Solution



# Focus Areas



# 6 Roles of Women

## Representatives & decision-makers



- foster women's representation in decision-making & positions of authority in public & private sectors;
- gender balance in appointment of staff and composition of government divisions and organs;
- participation in business at policy formulation & implementation levels

## Mothers & consumers



- reservations relating to social services for childcare, maternity, services by midwives;
- better workplace practices for childcare, pregnant workers & recent mothers;
- family planning & mother & child protection programs;
- no workplace re pregnancy & care-giving in respect of employment;
- strengthen development of labor-saving devices to enhance productive capacity

## Employees



- eliminate gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence;
- provide equal wages for women and men in the same establishment;
- build the productive capacity and stability of women workers, for workplace challenges, collective bargaining, evolving technologies, sustainability standards
- skills & education enhancement to improve women's technical employment levels

## Entrepreneurs



- promote female entrepreneurship & participation of women-owned SMEs in industries;
- encourage education, training & business capacity-building;
- develop business networks & improve women's access to resources (finance, information, science, technology & innovation);
- eliminate potentially discriminatory tariff & non-tariff barriers

## Social & cultural actors



- strengthen dialogue and awareness in communities in political, economic, social and cultural spheres, and to change negative attitudes and stereotypes;
- construct policies to combat violence against women and enhance safety;
- concessions for indigenous social to promote and preserve language, culture, knowledge, tradition and identity

## Contributors to economic development



- recognizing women's role in socio-economic transformation & sustainable growth, and in reduced poverty, prosperity, competitiveness & well-being of society;
- incorporating gender perspective in inclusive and sustainable economic growth;
- promote role of women in economic and social development process through education and the media



# Different approaches, but 3 commonalities...

1

Promises and More Promises



2

Implementation and Enforcement



3

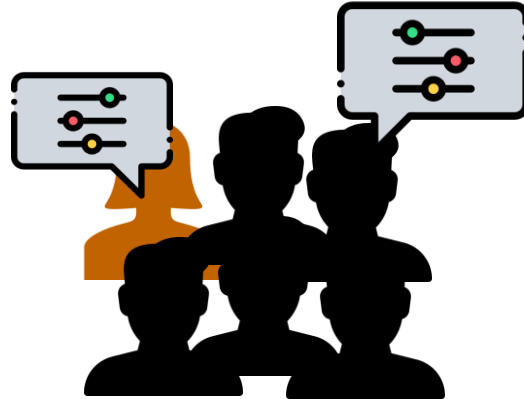
Lack of Definition



# There are Good Reasons! The Hesitations and Impediments



1. Fears of Protectionism and cultural imperialism



2. Underrepresentation of women in policy-making roles



3. Lack of political will



4. Cost of compliance, and probability of compliance



5. Absence of expertise and paucity of gender disaggregated data



6. Lack of understanding and awareness

# Thank you

