

**Trade, Gender and Women's Entrepreneurship – Opening Scene Setting Remarks –  
Ambassador Robin Renee Sanders, D.Sc. – Moderator AGOA-CSO Panel as part of the  
AGOA Ministerial, Washington D.C., 2:00 – 3:30, June 13, 2012**

**Welcome to this important panel on Trade, Gender, and Women's Entrepreneurship**

**The word itself and the energy associated with the term “entrepreneurship” can be summed, in my view, in a number of ways -- linked to drivers such as innovation, inspiration, and insightfulness (the 3 I's) in responding to a need in the economic, business or social sectors for either goods and services or to address an element of the global human condition today. There are no better examples of how entrepreneurship can be transformative in one's life or one's community than what women in general, and African women in particular are doing across the Continent – especially today as they help enhance trade, push for more entrepreneur- friendly policies, and help advance the economic well-being of their respective nations.**

**With more than half the world's population women at 50.9%, translating into 143, 368, 343, and with half of Sub-Saharan Africa's population of 1 billion also women, we see more and more women enlivening the entrepreneurship space with the 3 I's I noted above – innovation, inspiration, and insightfulness – and our 3 panelists today are both illustrative and emblematic of this. Each panelist will have about 5 minutes for their formal remarks, then we will move to an interactive session.**

**We have with us today (their bio sketches are in your packets):**

**Ms. Comfort Aku Adjahoe – Owner of Ele Agbe (I actually met her when I was US rep to ECOWAS and have tried her great products) – Ele Agbe is a shea butter company in Ghana. Ms. Au Adjahoe transformed her sea butter shop into a major trading company.**

**Ms. Nigist Haile – an entrepreneurial activist and Founder and Executive Director of the Center for African Women Economic Empowerment (CAWEE) that helps and provides capacity building for women entrepreneurs.**

**Ms. Winnie Mandosela-Kamalandu – a senior lecturer in the Department of Economic at the University of Swaziland, and an expert on social-economic issues and international trade.**

**Enola Mafie – Program Manager on West Africa of Vital Voices Partnership where she provides program and development support for Vital Voices' economic and SME development in the US and Sub-Saharan Africa.**

## Other Definitions of Entrepreneurship, which you might find useful:

Entrepreneurship is the act of being an [entrepreneur](#) or "*one who undertakes [innovations](#), finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods*".

This may result in new [organizations](#) or may be part of revitalizing mature [organizations](#) in response to a perceived opportunity. The most obvious form of entrepreneurship is that of starting new [businesses](#) (referred as [Startup Company](#)); however, in recent years, the term has been extended to include social and political forms of entrepreneurial activity. When entrepreneurship is describing activities within a firm or large organization it is referred to as intra-preneurship and may include corporate venturing, when large entities spin-off organizations.<sup>[1]</sup>

According to Paul Reynolds, entrepreneurship scholar and creator of the [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor](#), "by the time they reach their retirement years, half of all working men in the United States probably have a period of self-employment of one or more years; one in four may have engaged in self-employment for six or more years. Participating in a new business creation is a common activity among U.S. workers over the course of their careers." <sup>[2]</sup> And in recent years has been documented by scholars such as [David Audretsch](#) to be a major driver of economic growth in both the United States and Western Europe. "As well, entrepreneurship may be defined as the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled (Stevenson,1983)." <sup>[3]</sup> There are a number of other definitions of entrepreneurship which reflect today's reality. The Kaufmen Foundation notes the phenomenon of entrepreneurship as being efforts to advance education and training efforts, to promote entrepreneurship-friendly policies, [or] to better facilitate the commercialization of new technologies by entrepreneurs and others, which have great promise for improving the economic welfare of our nation[s].

(sources: wikipedi, pulled June 12, 2012; source Kaufmen Foundation pulled, June 12, 2012)