

Platform appeals for protection of women in cross-border business

By Edward Corro, Arusha

Lack of knowledge on trade regulations and procedures of doing business has been cited as one of the challenges facing women at boarder points.

THE East African Women in Business Platform (EAWiBP) has also observed that women engaging in regional trade are more often subjected to harassments from custom officials due to their lack of understanding of existing regulations and rights.

Speaking during a forum on export promotion strategy 2017-2022 and the EAC framework for the elimination of Non Tariff Barriers, the platform's regional coordinator Nancy Gitonga said the harassments are as a result of the low level of literacy among women traders whom she said face challenges in reading custom forms and understanding the procedures

Mrs. Gitonga expressed concern that women were also very vulnerable during cross border travels saying they are forced

to give in to demands from the custom officials before they are facilitated.

Many women have reported to us cases of sexual harassment and violence such as rape, imprisonment and confiscation of their goods,"Said Mrs. Gitonga.

Another challenge that was noted is the limited access to financial institutions that can facilitate their business expansions. She appealed to banks to soften their terms that demand heavy collateral before loans are advanced.

The forum unanimously agreed that

continuous education and awareness creation was key to helping the women in cross boarder trades.

The forum also suggested trainings

and sensitization workshops for all stakeholders, including police, immigration officers, and revenue authorities, among other border agencies,

on the laws and regulations regarding cross-border trade as well as encouraging them to support the sector instead of harassing practitioners.



NMB Bank western zone manager Leon Ngowi (R) hands over building materials worth 5m/- to Venance Saria, a representative of the district commissioner for Maswa in Simiyu Region at the weekend. The donation will go into supporting the construction of two classrooms at the district's Nyalikungu Primary School. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

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