The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges for all countries. Governments saw their priorities shift overnight towards upscaling public health preparedness and emergency support measures to cater to the vulnerable segments of their populations. The challenges facing governments were further complicated by supply chain disruptions, which left enterprises struggling to survive. This had a particular effect on female-owned micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

In 2021-2022, upon requests of the Governments of Armenia and the Republic of Moldova and as part of the UNDA project "Global Initiative towards the post-COVID 19 resurgence of the MSMEs sector", UNECE has assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade activities of female-owned MSMEs.

These studies look at the impact of non-tariff measures governing trade on end-to-end supply chains and specific challenges that emerged for female-owned MSMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also highlight the lingering effects for trade and economic development that should be considered for building stronger and more resilient economies post-pandemic, and the achievement of the UN SDGs. The studies provide action-oriented recommendations to bolster women’s participation in economic activities.

About the Event

This event will discuss findings emerging from these studies and provide action-oriented recommendations on the way forward, including on the assistance that UNECE and other international stakeholders could provide. The Executive Summary of both studies is available here.

Target audience:
- Delegates to the June 2022 Session of the UNECE Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards
- Global trade community
- Government representatives, academia, development partners, private sector

The event will also benefit from earlier discussions taken place in UNECE’s Webinar Series “Empowering MSMEs to harness opportunities in the transition to sustainable trade and a circular economy in the context of the post-COVID recovery”. The six webinars focused on issues of MSME green resurgence through entrepreneurship skills facilitation, circular economy, innovation, and sustainable trade.

Materials from the events will be available here. See also UNECE paper on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Economies in Transition: Challenges, Opportunities, and UNECE Tools.
Moderation
- Ms. Damegul Kabiyeva, Chair, Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Key takeaways from the UNECE studies
- Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade, UNECE
- Ms. Viorica Antonov, Gender Expert, Economic Council to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova

Discussion and reflections on the way forward
- Ms. Lila Pieters Yahia, Resident Coordinator a.i. in Armenia
- Mr. Simon Springett, UN Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Moldova
- Ms. Kathryn Lundquist, Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO
- Ms. Yulia Levashova, Assistant Professor, Center for Entrepreneurship, Governance and Stewardship, Nyenrode Business University