



**Women in Business and Leadership Forum
5th March 2020, 9:00a.m. to 1:00p.m.
Venue: World Trade Centre, Toronto**

Event Details

In honor and celebration of this year's International Women's Day, [Casa Foundation for International Development](#) is partnering with the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) – Toronto to host the Women in Business and Leadership Forum. The Forum will focus on women that have advanced Canada's trade and economic development landscape and will also celebrate inspiring women in Canada that have distinguished themselves in the business, entrepreneurship, and trade sphere.

Aligned with the 2020 International Women's Day thematic focus on "Each for Equal: An equal world is an enabled world", the Forum's sole purpose is to support women-owned businesses, while empowering women to run businesses through connecting resources (social, capital, human) to ideas. The Forum will provide a platform to showcase lessons from Canada's businesswomen who inspire and empower other women. The Forum will also serve as a knowledge-based learning platform to share successes, best practices, lessons learned, networking and hold robust debates on how to cultivate new partners, new relationships and new markets for business growth.

The forum includes a business roundtable, case study of leading women pioneers in their respective trades, keynote opening statements from Senior Government officials, as well as speakers from various industry sectors that have impacted lives or who have helped in fast tracking innovation and growth in the trade, education, and entrepreneurship sectors.

The event enables, empowers, and promotes women in business, enterprises, careers and leadership providing a unique platform that gives established start-ups, professionals, innovators, emerging businesses, inventors, and creators across various sectors the opportunity to discuss their ideas with expert panels and founders from business, corporate, and academic fields.

The Forum welcomes about 300 women owned businesses and startups. The event targets women in technology, entrepreneurs, practitioners, women leaders, influencers and start-ups. Additional expected participants include creative collaborators, partners, youths in established businesses, and those looking to start a product or service; or pioneers with women businesses.

Refreshments will be served at the event.



Background

Statistics Canada's recent evidence and research has established the fact that important differences remain between women-owned and men-owned businesses. Women-owned businesses remain underrepresented in the economy, their start-ups have lower growth rates of income and employment and lower survival rate than their men-owned counterparts. As a result, women are less likely to become entrepreneurs, and women-owned businesses are smaller than their men-owned counterparts.

To achieve gender equality in business leadership and inclusive economic growth, the Government of Canada adopted the [Women Entrepreneurship Strategy](#) to promote entrepreneurship among women and to help grow women-owned businesses. Through the Government, a [Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub](#) was set up to engage women business support organizations across the country (with organizations including OWIT - Toronto); to challenge stereotypes and build awareness of women's entrepreneurial success; to improve access to financing, talent, networks and expertise; and to promote internationalization and engagement of women in international trade.

A lot of work and ground has been covered including in policy making, but gaps still remain in ensuring that women are elevated in business and leadership and this Forum seeks to answer some of the questions raised.

Target Participants: CEOs of startups, established, and emerging organizations, women founders, entrepreneurs and business and services organizations, interns and senior academia looking to do the following:

- spearhead change in the women development trajectory,
- discuss principles, practices, palliative measures that advance women to leadership positions
- increase access to business opportunities and resources that might empower and fastrack women in their business and career journey