**Event Title:**

Accelerating Women’s Entrepreneurship Development in Africa: A Catalyst for Inclusive Development
De-risking the Renewable Energy Viability Gap in Africa

**Date and Time:**

September 23rd, 2024, 3:00 - 6:00 PM

**Venue:**

United Nations Secretariat Conference Room 12, New York

**Hosting Institutions:**

* UNDP Zimbabwe
* Government of Zimbabwe

**Introduction:**

This high-level side event at the 79th United Nations General Assembly will address two critical themes for Africa’s development:

1. **Accelerating Women’s Entrepreneurship Development in Africa**: This theme focuses on empowering women as key drivers of economic growth and social transformation across the continent.
2. **De-risking the Renewable Energy Viability Gap in Africa**: This theme examines solutions to bridge the gap between renewable energy aspirations and the financial, infrastructural, and institutional challenges hindering investments.

These discussions aim to provide concrete pathways for gender-responsive entrepreneurship ecosystems and bankable renewable energy models, which are crucial to achieving Africa’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Objective:**

The overall objective of this side event is to catalyze dialogue, foster partnerships, and generate actionable commitments for Africa’s development in the areas of women’s entrepreneurship and renewable energy.

**Format of the Events:**

The session will be divided into two main segments, each addressing one of the themes.

**Roles and Activities:**

| **Activity** | **Themes** |
| --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Energy** |
| **Moderator Introductions and Briefing** | 3:00 -3:05 PM |  |
| **Opening Remarks** | 3:05 – 3:20PM |  |
| **Keynote speakers** | 3:20 – 3:45PM | 4:30 – 4:55PM |
| **Panel Discussion** (4 speakers per theme) | 3:45 – 4:30PM | 4:55 – 5:35PM |
| **Q&A and Floor Discussions** |  | 5:35 – 5:55PM |
| **Closing Remarks** |  | 5:55 – 6:00PM |

**Theme 1: Accelerating Women’s Entrepreneurship Development in Africa**

**Background and Context:**

Women’s entrepreneurship has immense potential to drive economic growth in Africa. However, systemic barriers such as limited access to finance, markets, and technology continue to hamper progress. The session will explore solutions to foster an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs, focusing on the role of digital technologies, policy frameworks, and partnerships.

**Key Questions:**

* How can women’s entrepreneurial development serve as a catalyst for poverty reduction and sustainable human development?
* What innovative financing mechanisms support gender-responsive women’s economic empowerment?
* What are the opportunities in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) for women entrepreneurs?

**Expected Outcomes:**

* Increased international investment in women’s entrepreneurial development.
* Commitments to developing gender-responsive policies and partnerships.
* Showcasing of good practices and successful case studies.

**Theme 2: De-risking the Renewable Energy Viability Gap in Africa**

**Background and Context:**

The renewable energy sector in Africa holds immense potential but remains underfunded and underdeveloped due to various risks, including financial and infrastructural barriers. This session will delve into strategies to de-risk energy investments and make them attractive to private sector stakeholders.

**Key Questions:**

* What factors contribute to the energy viability gap, and how can they be mitigated?
* What are some of the innovative financial instruments and risk mitigation strategies in the renewable energy sector?
* Which renewable energy business models have proven bankable in Africa?

**Expected Outcomes:**

* Practical recommendations for de-risking energy investments.
* New and renewed commitments to scale up renewable energy investments.
* Strengthened institutional frameworks for supporting renewable energy projects.

**Conclusion:**

The outcomes of this event will provide valuable insights and foster partnerships that are critical for advancing Africa's development agenda. By addressing these two pivotal areas—women’s entrepreneurship and renewable energy—this event will serve as a platform for transformative actions that ensure inclusive and sustainable development across the continent.

**Next Steps:** A summary report of the discussions and commitments made during the event will be shared with participants and stakeholders to guide future actions.