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ABAC and NCAPEC Release New Report on the Economic Empowerment and Inclusion of Women in APEC Economies

Seattle, WA - The National Center for APEC (NCAPEC) collaborated with the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) to develop a report entitled "Driving Economic Growth and Business Performance through the Economic Empowerment and Inclusion of Women in APEC Economies." The report focuses on women's economic empowerment as a critical element of increasing business performance and key measures to the inclusive growth that APEC strives to promote.

Walmart Asia President and CEO, and NCAPEC Chair, Scott Price, praised the report for making the business case for increasing women's participation in the economy. Price noted, "Supporting women's equal access to education, employment and business opportunities is a cause business leaders and governments alike can rally around. According to the World Bank, women invest 90% of their income back into their communities and families, creating a multiplier effect of economic benefits. As we continue to fight uncertain economic conditions across the world, women's economic empowerment has the real potential to unlock growth, development and innovation. Walmart is proud to be amongst those businesses that have put this important issue at the top of its agenda, and remains committed to its alignment with NCAPEC and the APEC forum at large on supporting women's aspirations in the region."

The report examines the positive impact a more engaged workforce has on the private sector, including in multinational corporations and SMEs. It also details the array of challenges facing women from the lack of access to capital, business networks and training to the leaky pipeline and the lack of women in leadership positions. Melody Meyer, President of Chevron Asia Pacific Exploration and Production Company said, "APEC is to be commended for its support of technical education for girls in recent years and the new report illuminates a path forward, not only in education, but in economic empowerment for women more broadly. Fostering gender equality and empowering women in the workplace is a driver of business value and success. Chevron is committed to reflecting in our workforce and supplier base the rich diversity of the communities where we operate. By respecting the unique talents, experiences and perspectives of our workforce and suppliers, we gain a flexibility and ingenuity that help us excel."

In addition to providing examples of best practices within the private sector, the report highlights broad public policy steps that APEC economies can take to facilitate women's engagement in economic activity. Recommendations include removing legal and financial barriers, increasing education opportunities, addressing work-life balance challenges and promoting the development and utilization of economic indicators that promote a better understanding of the impact of women's engagement in economic activities.

The report will provide a framework for further discussion and action by ABAC as it works to support the implementation and expansion of the 2011 San Francisco Declaration on Women in the Economy which focuses on developing capacity-building activities around improving access to capital, access to markets, capacity and skill building, and women in leadership.

The report can be found on NCAPEC's website, www.ncapec.org.

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About the National Center for APEC

The National Center for APEC is an organization supported by U.S. companies that generates and supports U.S. private and public sector engagement in the APEC process. From its office in Seattle, NCAPEC serves as the Secretariat for the three U.S. ABAC representatives, works with U.S. companies to identify opportunities to advance U.S. priority issues within the APEC process and advocates for U.S. interests with business counterparts in the Asia-Pacific region.

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