

FLO mounts 50-member women business delegation to Bhutan



FLO women business delegation with Tshering Tobgay, Prime Minister of Bhutan.

The Kingdom of Bhutan has captured the world's imagination as a nation following a unique development trajectory. It is the only country to have officially adopted Gross National Happiness (GNH) instead of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the main development indicator.

The pursuit of happiness through the GNH philosophy was propounded by His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Fourth King of Bhutan in the early 1970s. It is based on the premise that true development occurs when material and spiritual development complement each other and highlights both the physical and mental well-being of the individual. It is believed that GNH is more important than GNP, as wealth does not necessarily bring happiness to people.

In order to enhance business relations between the entrepreneurs, particularly women entrepreneurs from India and to deepen the synergies between the two countries, FICCI

Ladies Organisation (FLO) mounted a 50-member women business delegation to Bhutan from September 10-14, 2014. This was the first delegation in such a large number from India to Bhutan of women entrepreneurs. The business delegation was led by Neeta Boochra, President of FLO. The business interest of the visiting delegation varied from education, hydro-power textile, gems & jewellery, chemical, garments, agriculture, waste management, real estate and infrastructure.

During the visit the delegation had meetings with the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Tshering Tobgay; Economic Affairs Minister of Bhutan, Norbu Wangchuk; Indian Ambassador to Bhutan, Gautam Bambewala; Her Majesty the Queen Mother, Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk; Bhutan Chamber of Commerce & Industry along with businesses and Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurship (BROWE).

These meetings highlighted and helped in deepening as well as

expanding the synergies between the businesses of both countries, apart from leading to an understanding and appreciation of the land of the thunder Dragon and interaction with the local Bhutanese, particularly regarding the 'Happiness Index'.

Key Takeaways

- 2 Members from FLO offered scholarship for courses of M.B.A and Architecture to 2 women/youth student from Bhutan
- A member offered to host new artists for a month and give them training along with Indian and international artist and painters
- A member offered to give training to 6 -10 teachers for two months in the areas mutually agreed
- Another member was happy to collaborate in the area of agriculture, for which she had a separate meeting with the Bhutanese Minister of Agriculture
- A member looked forward to collaborate in setting up of a Restaurant Chains of Bhutanese Cuisine in India
- Besides these there were many B2B meetings, of which some may convert into fruitful business

The meeting with BAOWE, which also represents SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council (SCWEC) just like FLO, discussed issues pertaining to SAARC-SCWEC and further collaborations that could be possible.

The audience with the Queen Mother helped to bring forward FLO's activities on skill upgradation, capacity development and empowerment of women, girl child and youth as also how FLO could work in this sphere. ■