Global Women ’97 International Trade Fair/Exhibition and Seminar

Global Woman ’97, the first trade fair, exhibition and seminar of its kind dedicated to showcasing the products and talents of women entrepreneurs from around the world, will be held from the 9th to 11th November 1997 at the Hotel Lanka Oberoi. The theme of this first of a kind event for women is ‘Development of Entrepreneurship and Empowerment of Women’

Organized by the Association of Business and Professional Women of Sri Lanka (ABPW), which is affiliated to the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW) headquartered in London, Global Woman ’97 is expected to attract participants from among the Federation’s 125 member countries worldwide. Already confirmation of participation in the trade fair and seminar has been received from countries such as New Zealand, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia, UK. and Singapore.

The trade fair and exhibition will permit women from around the world to gain exposure for their products and services, explore new venues of trade and business, form joint ventures and most importantly to network with each other. It will give Sri Lankan women entrepreneurs a rare opportunity to achieve recognition for themselves and to interact with other international business women on home soil.

Global Women ’97 which was the brain-child of ABPW president Janaki Gunewardene, has gained the support of the Ministry of Internal and External Trade, Commerce and Food and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. Says Janaki of the event, it will be a platform of action for women entrepreneurs to network economically through sharing experiences amongst each other.’ She believes that the development of a nation will be completed only when women become equal participants in the social and economic life of the country.

A three-day seminar which will be held concurrently with the trade fair will feature leading experts and business personalities speaking on the following topics:

- How to improve Women’s contribution to the GNP
- Access to Capital

- Prospects and opportunities in the Asian Region
- How to obtain ISO 9000 Total quality management in Marketing, Finance, Production and Administration
- New technologies (food preservation, biodegradable products etc.)

The seminar is being funded by the Colombo Plan Secretariat, who according to its secretary general Dr. Hak Su Kim feels that ‘entrepreneurship development for women can be widened to encompass and broadbase national development as well as promote the upward mobility of women.”

A special guest at the seminar will be Sylvia G Perry, president of the International Federation of Business & Professional Women, based in London who will deliver a presentation on ‘Cross Cultural Business Negotiation.’ There will also be a special session on ‘Women and Technology: Strategic use of the INTERNET’ by Vivien Chiam, president of the Singapore Business and Professional Women’s Association.

The Association of Business and Professional Women (ABPW) was formed in Sri Lanka four years ago to assist and promote women entrepreneurs in the country. Its mission is to raise the status of women and to bring about greater opportunities for women, particularly those who are self-employed. While women may lack capital and experience, they are often able to establish small and medium size enterprises due to their perseverance, risk taking and enterprising outlook.

As a member of the International Federation, which has Category One Consultative Status with several United Nations organizations, the association benefits from a vast network of worldwide activity and resources.

ABPW has held several successful seminars and workshops over the past few years. It has recently published booklets based on two of these successful seminars, titled How to Write a Project Report and How to Find a market’ and ‘Women’s Legal Rights and Women’s Charter.’

In the past year ABPW members have attended symposiums, seminars and workshops in India, Bangladesh and Thailand.

Today ABPW’s membership covers a wide spectrum to include women from the following professions: Lawyers, Doctors, Bankers, Food and Cookery experts, Handicrafts, Insurance, Company Directors, Designers, Journalists, Horticulture, Gems and Jewelry, Accountants, Interior Decorators and many more as well as a

handful of housewives and students.