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APEC forum for women in Aug

Women can take part more actively in business and trade and still balance family commitments, says Minister of State for Community Development, Youth and Sports, Yu-Foo Yee Shoon.

She adds that this balance can be aided by the use of Information and Communications Technology.

Such gender issues will be among the 5 topics that top women leaders from 21 nations will discuss at this year's APEC Meeting of the Women Leaders Network .

The 14th meeting of the network will be hosted by Singapore from the 4th to 5th of August.

Speaking to reporters at a media conference this morning, Mrs Yu-Foo said the network is a premier platform to promote the participation of women in economic and trade-related activities.

"Through this platform, we get the women leaders, especially business leaders, to network, to exchange experiences and hope that from here they can develop more trade, more business, more ICT programme and so on for women."

As an example of how technology can enable greater female participation, the network committee has arranged for video conferencing for participants in South Korea.

Mrs Yu-Foo said this pilot initiative was based on feedback gathered from some participants last year.

"When we were in Peru (last year for the 13th APEC WLN meeting), sisters from other countries told us that some of them cannot come because they are the owner of small and medium sized businesses or they own the family business, they cannot put their children aside to fly to Peru. So I suggested that why don't we start this teleconferencing."

More than 400 people will be attending the two day forum.

After the meeting the group will present a set of policy recommendations to APEC ministers and leaders to add to the APEC agenda.

Singapore will also host an APEC digital economy forum for women on the 3rd of August.