

Date: 9 March 2026

Womens Day 2026 Celebrations

O 2026, the World Trade Centre Goa, in association with Laghu Udyog Bharati, Global Chamber Goa, and Goa Dimensions, organised a special program on 9th March 2026 to celebrate the achievements and contributions of women in business and society. The event brought together women entrepreneurs, professionals, dignitaries and guests for an evening of discussions, recognition and networking. The Chief Guest for the event was Deepali Naik, Project Director of the District Rural Development Agency. The Guests of Honour were Aarti Neemkar, Founder and CEO of the India Economic Development Association and Executive Director of Global Chamber Goa, and Pallavi Salgaocar, Chartered Accountant, Finance Director at Geno Pharma, Founder of Desserts and More Bakery, and Goa State President of Laghu Udyog Bharati. The program began with a Welcome Address by Cyril Desouza, Regional Director – Trade Promotion at World Trade Centre Goa. In his address, he welcomed all the guests and highlighted the importance of supporting women entrepreneurs and creating more opportunities for women to grow in business and leadership. This was followed by a talk by Aarti Neemkar on the topic “Powerful Impact of Women in Business.” She spoke about the growing role of women across different industries and how their leadership is helping shape businesses and communities. She encouraged women to believe in their abilities, take bold steps in their careers, and support one another. She also shared several real-life case studies of successful women entrepreneurs, which inspired many in the audience. Next, Pallavi Salgaocar addressed the audience on “Gender Equality at the Workplace.” She spoke about the need to reduce gender bias and ensure equal opportunities for women in professional spaces. She also discussed how organisations and society can work together to create more inclusive workplaces and support women in leadership roles. She also said that we need to support each other as women. The Chief Guest, Deepali Naik, then shared her thoughts with the audience. She spoke about the various initiatives being carried out for the economic upliftment of women in Goa, especially in rural areas. She highlighted the work being done with women’s self-help groups and how these initiatives help women become financially independent. She also shared her vision for the future and the importance of skill development and entrepreneurship for women. In addition, she gave a simple but meaningful message — that women should take at least ten minutes every day for themselves, doing something they enjoy, even something as simple as dancing to music.

The program then moved on to an engaging panel discussion, moderated by Cyril Desouza. The panel included Connie Quadros, an ex-banker with overseas experience; Vanessa Almeida, Founder and Owner of The Gift House; Edith Da Silva Pereira, Senior Manager at Union Bank of India; and Karen Fernandes, Founder and Creative Director of Meraki Social. During the discussion, the panellists shared their personal journeys, including the challenges they faced and the successes they achieved in their careers. They spoke about entrepreneurship, financial awareness, creativity in business, and the importance of confidence and resilience for women in today’s competitive environment. Their insights provided useful guidance and motivation for aspiring entrepreneurs and professionals. The panel discussion was followed by an interactive question and answer session, where members of the audience had the opportunity to ask questions and interact with the panellists. The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Cyril Desouza, who expressed gratitude to the Chief Guest, Guests of Honour, panellist’s, partner organisations, exhibitors and all participants for making the event a success. The

program ended with Hi-Tea and a networking session, where attendees interacted with each other and visited the stalls of women entrepreneurs who were showcasing their products. The event served as a meaningful platform to celebrate women achievements, encourage entrepreneurship and promote collaboration among women professionals and business leaders in Goa.

The event was held at WTC Goa on March 9, 2026