

## ARTF Gender Working Group Meeting

November 9, 2016

### Meeting Minutes

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An ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) Meeting was held on November 9, 2016<sup>1</sup>. The meeting was co-chaired by Wezi Msisha (Senior Operations Officer, World Bank), Najla Sabri (Social Development Specialist, World Bank), and Susan DeCamp (USAID). Dr. Farzana Akbari (Head of Gender Department, Ministry of Public Health), and Dr. Mursal Musawi (Gender Department, Ministry of Public Health) also participated in the meeting.

#### Discussion Highlights

- A) **Health Sector Gender Activities:** Dr. Akbari, and Dr. Musawi presented on gender initiatives at the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). The main points from the presentation included:
- (i) *Gender based violence (GBV) Project-* implemented by the MoPH with the support of UNFPA, and WHO in 12 provinces. The project plans to expand to 6 additional provinces in 2017. The project provides health, social, and legal services through its family protection centers, and regular dialogue is held with communities on gender based violence. The Gender Unit also oversees GBV training for health staff in 7 provinces. The activities are implemented by WHO with USAID funding.
  - (ii) *Gender Unit Staffing-* The Unit currently has 4 full time staff (the Director, two gender specialists, and one administrative support staff). The SEHAT Project has allocated funds to support three staff positions, but these are yet to be filled. Reproductive health officers serve as gender focal points at the provincial level.
  - (iii) *Health Sector Gender Strategy-* the MoPH is currently working to revise the Health Sector Gender Strategy (2012-2016) to align it with the National Health Strategy (2016-2020). The Department has also developed a Gender Proposal which was reviewed, and commented on earlier this year by the ARTF GWG. Based on its mandate, the SEHAT Project will finance four activities/deliverables from the proposal. However, the Gender Department lacks adequate technical expertise to deliver these four activities, and would benefit from support from the donor partners.
  - (iv) *Actions:* The following was agreed: (a) the MoPH Gender Unit would share with the GWG their current Gender Strategy, National Health Strategy, and National Health Policy, Gender Proposal, including the 4 agreed deliverables; (b) USAID would share the GBV training protocols with the GWG for their information; (c) USAID gender advisors would discuss the MoPH request with their health team to see what support could be provided; and (d) a more in-depth discussion between the GWG, MoPH leadership, and other stakeholders on the health sector gender needs would be arranged for early 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> Attendees: Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, Ministry of Public Health Gender Unit, Norway, Switzerland, USAID, US Embassy, World Bank.

- B) **Brussels Conference Gender Side Event:** the EU briefed the GWG on the main discussions at the Brussels Conference Gender event that was held in early October.
- (i) The event was attended by the President, Chief Executive Officer, and First Lady of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. There was also a high level of participation by civil society organizations.
  - (ii) Two main issues highlighted during the panel discussions were women's economic empowerment (WEE), and women's rights. The need for better monitoring and evaluation with respect to gender, in order for gender activities to be evidence based was emphasized. Similarly the importance of passing laws that support women to exercise their rights was highlighted.
  - (iii) The EU also informed the GWG that an exercise to outline lessons learnt from the event is being planned. There was general consensus that the GWG would need to follow up on several areas in the coming months including WEE national priority program (NPP), the UN Women's gender mapping exercise, and the economic empowerment mapping exercise being done by the World Bank
- C) **World Bank Women's Economic Empowerment NPP Mission:** Ms. Sabri briefed the GWG on a mission planned by the World Bank for November 14-17, 2016.
- (i) The mission objective would be to work with the government to outline the areas where the World Bank could support implementation of the WEE NPP.
  - (ii) The GWG were invited to participate in a discussion with the government and Bank team on November 16<sup>th</sup> to seek their inputs on the proposed WEE NPP activities. The GWG members stressed it would be important for the Bank to review WEE activities already being supported by other donors, and to see the gaps the new program could fill.
- D) **Nomination of new GWG Co-Chair:** the EU proposed Sweden to succeed the US as co-chair of the GWG from January-June 2017. There were no objections raised to this proposal by the GWG.

### **September-December 2016 Work-Plan (Updated)**

September 07: Gender Responsive Budgeting, with MoF/ Citizens' Charter

September: NAP-Women's Economic Empowerment/MoWA and MoLSAMD

October: Read-out of Women's Economic Empowerment Mapping Study-WB /Read out and discussion from Brussels/ Health & Gender Update- MoPH

November: SEHAT mid-term/ Nutrition/ MoPH

December: Economic Empowerment Mapping Exercise/ Lessons and Achievements/ GWG 2017 Work-Plan Updated