

ARTF Gender Working Group Meeting

February 12, 2017

Meeting Minutes

An ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) Meeting was held on February 12, 2017¹. The meeting was co-chaired by Wezi Msisha (Senior Operations Officer, World Bank), and Johan Norqvist (Human Rights and Gender Advisor, Swedish Embassy). Ms. Caren Grown (Senior Director, Gender Cross Cutting Solutions Area [CCSA]), Mr. Shubham Chaudhuri, (Country Director, World Bank), Mr. David Warren (Practice Manager, Social Development Unit, South Asia Region), Mr. Moheb Jabarkhail, Mr. Haroon Amiri (Ministry of Finance), Mr. Shankar Narayanan (Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank), Ms. Hiska Reyes (Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank), (Ms. Najla Sabri (Social Development Specialist, World Bank) also participated in the meeting.

Discussion Highlights

I. New World Bank Group Strategy 2016-2023

- a. The World Bank Group (WBG) Gender Senior Director presented the WBG's new Gender Strategy for 2016-2023 (<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/820851467992505410/pdf/102114-REVISED-PUBLIC-WBG-Gender-Strategy.pdf>). The Strategy represents a change in the traditional approach to gender mainstreaming in development, with a new emphasis on measurable results based on data, and evidence of what gaps exists and how the project can contribute in closing them. The Strategy focuses on achieving results related to the WBG's comparative advantage. Results are identified in 4 areas: (i) Improving Human Endowment Gaps- e.g. reducing maternal mortality; deepening work in closing gaps in primary and secondary completion rates between males and females, quality of education; (ii) Removing Constraints for More and Better Jobs-creation of more and inclusive better jobs, focusing on supply and demand side issues; helping women to be meaningful contributors to economic growth strategies; (iii) Removing Barriers to Women's Ownership and Control of Assets- e.g. creating movable collateral inventories; (iv) Enhancing Women's Voice and Agency, and Engaging Men and Boys- e.g. meaningful representation of women to different governance bodies; examining the economic costs of violence against women, and working to prevent and reduce gender based violence. Part of this will learning from the experiences of various partners working in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS), including the UN Peace keeping forces. Strategy highlights a range of new solutions for the short term as the Bank works with governments to make longer- term changes to policies and laws.
- b. There is no "one-size fits all approach" to implementing the strategy. Addressing gender disparities is critical to the consolidation of peace and security in FCS. Special emphasis will thus be placed on FCS states, and countries with large populations of internally/forced displaced.
- c. Strategy implementation starts with individual country partnership frameworks (CPFs), followed by focusing on smart design of investment operations, evaluation of approaches that have been tried and proven to be successful around the globe; and

¹ Attendees: Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, Italy, Ministry of Finance, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USAID, US Embassy, World Bank.

dissemination of results from successful pilots. The Strategy also recognizes that not every investment operation is amenable to integrating gender aspects, and to achievement of impactful results related to gender.

- d. Leveraging Partnerships- ARTF- new strategy provides an opportunity to effectively partner to ensure investments yield results- health and education sectors are key starting points.
- e. The discussion covered a range of issues, including how the WBG works in other countries with Civil Society Organizations (CSO's), and whether there was a possibility to establish a separate program under the ARTF to provide financing to the CSO's, and to combine this with the WEE NPP. Clarification on the WBGs approach to mainstreaming gender; and a recent CSO report that highlights gender responsive budgeting (GRB) in Afghanistan is inadequate, and questions on what the WBG do in response to this. The Gender Sr. Director clarified that the WBG engages with CSOs in a different way than with some of the partners, and that CSOs are seen as an important mechanism for accountability. One of the WBG's comparative advantage is working through government and its systems, which ensures the ability to work at scale than smaller interventions through CSOs. Additionally, rather than creating a parallel system for the WEE NPP, it would be better to work with and through the government. Also informed the GWG that the Bank is taking a more strategic approach to mainstreaming, by focusing on specific activities that will yield results. The WBG had worked with IMF in the past year to evaluate GRB around the world, the results are not convincing. GRB has been effective at processes (training etc.), but not been successful in yielding changes to the way budgets are made. What seems more effective is taking a performance based/results approach than training government agencies to understand gender issues. Using the budget to effectively tackle large gaps in key sectors- e.g.- increasing enrollment of girls in schools, and addressing shortage of female midwives could be a more effective approach for Afghanistan.
- f. The GWG highlighted the importance of the Bank to use its convening power to effectively address gender gaps, and to ensure partnership and coordination with the UN, and other agencies, to support the government in systematically addressing identified issues which the Bank may not necessarily be able to address on its own. A question was raised on how the gender strategy would be implemented here in Afghanistan. The GWG was informed that the WBG's identification of priority areas to focus on would be guided by the recently approved CPF, and country policy dialogue.

II. **Afghanistan Gender and Social Inclusion Platform**

- a) the Platform aims to provide strategic support on gender and social inclusion issues to help define key operations, technical, and analytical work. Platform will be used for engaging key partners in Afghanistan, as well as the Bank's technical teams on gender issues. Following a consultative process in 2016 an Afghanistan Country Gender Action Brief (CGAB) has been drafted which identifies four main gender gaps: (i) education, (ii) health; (iii) women's economic empowerment; (iv) voice and agency. Under each area, the primary causes of the gender gap are identified, as well as the mechanisms, and activities through which the gaps will be addressed. The CGAP is yet to be finalized. **Other Gender Activities:** The WB's Social Development team will share with the GWG the ToR for a proposed study related to Women's Mobility focusing on transportation. Dissemination of the Gender and Justice Report is planned for the next few months.
- b) Discussion on Pillar III on how to best highlight activities already being done on the ground- WEE-NPP; rural enterprise development etc. How to coordinate the DPs approach in supporting the government to implement different parts of the WEE NPP.

- WB did an internal mapping of which of its current and pipeline projects/programs support the 6 WEE NPP components. This will be shared with the GWG.
- c) The Ministry of Finance informed the GWG that gender activities should be framed around the ANPDF, NPP's, and the budget. Key ways in which the government wants to approach gender: (i) build capacity; (ii) women's access and inclusion; and (iii) awareness and sensitization of men on gender issues. Government actions: ARTF integral part of mainstreaming gender given its largest mechanism for channeling on budget development assistance; Citizens Charter focusing on both men and women; education and health projects are key. GRB is an integral part of the government's response; active push to recruit women into the civil service including at the leadership levels; job creation. Government needs private sector and development partners to achieve results related to gender. Challenges that impact on gender: security constraints; male dominated culture; fragile context; and limited resources. The GWG requested the MoF to think about innovative ways to use the budget not only as an incentive, but also as a stick to ensure line ministries implement and enforce policies and laws that are already in place to address gender issues; e.g. preventing violence against women.
- d) Other Issues highlighted during the meeting included: the importance of working with religious leaders to address/change the prevailing harmful practices; MoF to work with CSO in validating the GRB report findings; motivating WB technical teams to have a greater focus on gender; sharing the ongoing portfolio review of gender in WB projects with the GWG Review once draft findings are ready within the next 4 to 6 weeks. WB trying to promote an approach where technical teams themselves identify what the gender gaps and underlying issues are in their sectors and projects. WB trying to incentivize best practice among Bank technical staff. A request for joint discussions between sectoral teams and GWG/gender experts; MoF will follow up to ensure that there is better coordination between DP's and government on gender activities.