



Towards a World Bank Group Gender Strategy Consultation Meeting with Government: 25 June 2015 Feedback Summary Beijing, China

The consultation meeting with **government** was held on **June 25, 2015** in **Beijing, China**. After a presentation by the World Bank Group Gender Team on the background, intended scope and process for the strategy, the floor was open for participants' comments and recommendations. The summary below captures the main points and recommendations raised during the meeting.

Total Number of Participants: 10. A participant list is available [here](#).

Feedback from Stakeholders

1. KEY GENDER GAPS THE WORLD BANK GROUP SHOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION AS PRIORITY TO HELP COUNTRIES REDUCE POVERTY AND PROMOTE MORE EQUITABLE SOCIETIES

- The World Bank Group (WBG) should consider the following areas as priority:
 - **Entrepreneurship.** To promote gender equality, one should promote entrepreneurship. This can have a multiplier effect, in terms of boosting economic participation for both men and women, if jobs are created. Additionally, entrepreneurship can enable access to resources, such as credit. Female entrepreneurship should also be integrated in WBG operations.
 - **Vocational training.** This form of training can provide a pathway to more and better jobs.
 - **Social norms.** Paternity leave was shared as an example of regressive social norms. Normally, men receive two weeks and women are entitled to six months in the public sector (four months in the private sector). Additionally, if women deliver by caesarian section, they are entitled to seven months. However, most men do not take advantage of this benefit and often transfer it to their wives, which is a reflection of gender stereotyping around the issue of care. If norms are not prioritized, it will be difficult to achieve gender equality.

- **Women’s leadership and decision-making.** Women should be more involved in public decision making, such as managing community budgets, since they are more likely to invest in social services. They should be financially compensated (at the same level as men) for their participation and employment in development. Decision-making should also be considered at the household level, with concerted attempts to boost women’s control over household assets, so that expenditure can be allocated to the development of women and girls. The share of women in leadership positions in governments at all levels should be increased. Additionally, operations should include monitoring of gender-equality activities.
- Other areas for the WBG’s consideration include:
 - **Violence against women** and girls, including child marriage.
 - Challenges specific to **ethnic minority women.**
 - The **gender wage gap.**
 - **Educational opportunities for women.**
 - **Women’s health.**
- The theme of **more and better jobs** resonated with the group.

2. EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR POLICIES, APPROACHES AND PROGRAMS THAT HAVE HELPED REMOVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN AND GIRLS AND THAT THE WORLD BANK GROUP STRATEGY COULD LEARN FROM

- On the issue of gender mainstreaming, the WBG should consider a **dual approach**. UNICEF and ILO take a dual approach to their strategy, more specifically key priority areas are identified and gender mainstreaming is promoted in their respective outcome areas. This was recommended as an approach for the strategy.

3. EXAMPLES OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT HAVE CREATED ACCESS TO BETTER JOBS FOR BOTH WOMEN AND MEN. ELEMENTS THAT HAVE MADE THESE WORK.

- The WBG should consider the following policies and programs in the area of employment:
 - **Maternity insurance policies.** Maternity insurance policies can help to reduce labor market discrimination. The WBG should focus on this tool.
 - **The “Spring Wind Action” program.** This program provides an employment service platform for women, especially migrant females in urban areas, unemployed women, and female university graduates from poor families.
 - **ILO’s “Start and Improve Your Business” program, implemented through the Ministry of Labor and Social Security.** This initiative has been implemented in 20 provinces and has established 150 incubators for women’s enterprises.
 - **The “Education and Job Training Program for Women.”** This employment training project focuses on areas in extreme poverty.

- **The “Financial Services to Women’s Employment” Project.** Financial services are provided to women living in poverty. Microcredits are provided to help women start businesses. Women also receive education, marketing support and post-project assessments.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW THE WORLD BANK GROUP CAN BETTER SUPPORT COUNTRIES AND COMPANIES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS WITH RESPECT TO GENDER EQUALITY TO YIELD MORE SUSTAINABLE RESULTS

To help countries yield more sustainable results in the area of gender equality, the WBG should work to:

- **Reduce legal barriers to women’s work.** Some occupations are prohibited for women in the name of protection.
- Facilitate the **public provision of care services** to remove barriers for women employment and entrepreneurship and consider the linkage to women’s economic participation. Currently, care services are in short supply and the market rates for care services are unaffordable for many women, therefore public services should be prioritized.
- Explore the extent to which **gender equality as a concept** is understood and recognized in the society.
- Partner with the government on the following issues:
 - **Gender-sensitive entrepreneurship training materials.**
 - **Information dissemination** about **maternity insurance policies.**
 - Public private partnerships in the area of employment statistics. This can help the promotion of **discrimination-free labor market practices.**
 - **Vocational training,** especially for girls.
 - Scaling up operations which are successfully integrating women in natural resource management.
 - Provide specific measures (indicators, good practices, tools) for how to mainstream gender at sector level.
 - Financial services to support women employment and microcredit targeted at poor women.

The WBG should also consider:

- Encouraging **parental leave policies,** especially in the private sector.
- Promoting **public-private partnerships.**
- Assessing and better understanding the needs of women and girls in the area of financial support.
- Supporting the establishment of **women’s cooperatives/associations.**
- Providing more **training** to women.
- Facilitating the establishment of **targets for women leaders** in the private sector.
- Promoting **favourable taxation policies for sectors with a larger share of women workers** through its dialogue with the government.

In terms of operational considerations, the WBG should focus on the following issues:

- The **capacity building of client governments and in the Bank Group**. Use gender-responsive budgeting as a starting point for building capacity at the WBG and within client governments. Moreover, efforts should be made to understand the existing demands regarding education and training. The outcomes and results of capacity-building efforts should also be measured.
- Developing new **instruments and tools on gender equality solutions** that government entities can refer to when implementing the strategy.
- **Including women in the entire project preparation and implementation process**. For example, in the water management and forestry sectors, they are mostly excluded.
- Ways to **mainstream gender equality in all key sectors** and line ministries in China.
- The **practical operational issues** and feasibility of its new gender strategy.

5. IMPORTANT KNOWLEDGE GAPS – AREAS WHERE WE DON'T KNOW ENOUGH AND THE WORLD BANK GROUP SHOULD PRIORITIZE IN ITS WORK TO HELP CLOSE GENDER GAPS

- To close key knowledge gaps, the WBG should prioritize the following areas:
 - Assessing **women's time use** and how this affects their participation in project activities.
 - **Statistics about women in poverty** at the Bank Group and within other international institutions.
 - **Sex disaggregating China's poverty data**. A poverty database currently includes 89 million people with details such as demographic information, levels of poverty, and drivers of poverty. However, while the data exist, a methodology/mechanism to disaggregate them is lacking. Additionally, the national census also includes all people living in poverty and the National Bureau of Statistics of China monitors the number of people living in poverty, but none of these sources are sex-disaggregated, therefore the WBG could give support in this area.
 - Collecting and disseminating **good practices** widely.
 - Conducting empirical analysis regarding the specific obstacles to the achievement of gender equality in China.
 - Conduct an **impact assessment** of the poverty reduction projects that target women.