



**Towards a World Bank Gender Strategy
Consultation Meeting: May 6, 2015
Summary of Discussion
Paris, France**

The consultation meeting with representatives of the private sector and civil society took place on May 6, 2015 in Paris, France. Following a presentation by the World Bank Group Gender Team on the content and scope of the strategy and its processes, the discussion was opened up to the participants. The following summary reflects the main points and recommendations made during the meeting.

Number of Participants: 6. A list of the participants is available [here](#).

Stakeholder Comments

1. TYPES OF CONSTRAINTS/ BARRIERS THAT WOMEN AND MEN FACE WHEN IT COMES TO OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR
The World Bank Group (WBG) should consider the following constraints: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The government is not necessarily supportive; it adopts a neutral stance.• Women’s levels of property ownership are low, which leads to challenges in access to collateral for loans.• Gender stereotyping is preventing women from breaking into less traditional types of work.
2. BEST EXAMPLES OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT COMPANIES HAVE PUT IN PLACE TO ADDRESS QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT FOR MEN AND WOMEN
Some examples of practices that could benefit the WBG include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introducing business solutions, which involve making the man a stakeholder in his wife’s business, by highlighting the benefits of her economic participation, such as improved economic well-being, for example.

- Developing an understanding of the **entrepreneurial ecosystem** in order to identify obstacles to, and mechanisms for, women's entrepreneurship.
- **Developing educational content** specifically for women on tablets that do not require extensive internet connections.
- Creating "**digital villages**" to teach digital occupations to women, such as coding. Currently being established by Orange.
- **Assessing the specific technology needs of women** with respect to cellular phones.
- Providing **life skills** training to improve women's employability.

3. COMPANIES' WORK ON DISAGGREGATING DATA ON GENDER AND WHY THIS TYPE OF WORK IS IMPORTANT AND IF IT IS USED FOR INTERNAL POLICIES.

- The Bank Group could learn from **MEDEF's work on equality in the world of work, as well as equitable representation in corporate mandates**. MEDEF works on representation among its member organization, as well as internally. Analyses and actions are prioritized according to rates of representation, ranging from the spaces where women are completely absent to low levels of representation.

5. COMPANIES INITIATIVES ABOUT CARE RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES

- Suggestions for the WBG include, the use of **differentiated approaches**, such as a foci on transportation, flexible working hours, and mobile training centers.

6. WHETHER SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE OF MEN/WOMEN HAS BEEN AN IMPEDIMENT TO SMOOTH BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The following recommendations on this topic should be considered for the strategy:

- The need for **behavior change** and prevention initiatives to tackle conflict that may arise in the case of wage inequalities (if the wife starts earning more than her husband).
- **Training on this topic for young men.**
- **Prevention mechanisms** with respect to violence against women.
- **Guidance on sexual harassment policies and actions** for businesses.
- The provision of **hotlines** for women.

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

The WBG could support companies to yield more sustainable results with respect to gender equality in the following ways:

- **Use the WBG as a model:** if the topic of gender equality is a priority for the Bank (or any other business), it should be promoted by its top leadership.
- **Use widespread methods of communication to disseminate the benefits of gender-smart solutions**, including non-traditional means, such as film and television.

8. ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS.

Other areas for the Bank Group's consideration include:

- Work with its partners to establish **investment and lending banks for women**, not just in developing countries, but in industrial countries as well.
- Encourage and help banks to create **financial products that target women**, since they invest differently.
- Provide **education on savings**, with specific training on the difference between productive savings and consumption savings.
- **Address issues of gender stereotyping** early on, including specific training for boys.