



Discussion on Gender Strategy at The Women Political Leaders (WPL) Summit The Belgian Federal Parliament, Brussels, June 8, 2023

On June 8, 2023, the World Bank Group (WBG) held a discussion with women political leaders from many parts of the world at the 10th annual [Women Political Leaders \(WPL\) Summit](#) in Brussels, Belgium. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed WBG Gender Strategy for 2024-2030 and learn from representatives on opportunities and challenges for gender equality and empowerment. Key takeaways are summarised below and will be considered in the development of the Strategy.

Key Takeaways

- Attendees emphasized that **policy and politics are connected but need to be distinguished from each other**. The exclusion of women from politics leads to exclusion from policy. Likewise, if policy is dominated by men, this is only further accentuated by politics. It was suggested that the World Bank Group and other multilateral institutions **promote equal access to opportunities**. Participants added that governance will improve when politics improve.
- The WBG shared data on gaps in female labor force participation, high unemployment rates for women and corresponding constraints in women's economic progress. The **lack of the finance** for women to advance was noted as a key constraint to their equal participation in the economy. The need for **reforms** in formal institutions, **better policies** and **shifting mindsets** to achieve gender equality was emphasized.
- A key topic was the need for more and better **evidence** on the impacts of women's empowerment and leadership and how this could be useful to promote gender equality.
- A participant pointed out that in some parts of the world women do not have the **right or opportunity to vote**.
- Another participant highlighted the importance of **education** and shared their initiatives on providing scholarships.
- It was noted that **partnering** with civil society organizations (CSOs) would be useful for the WBG, **innovative solutions** are required for promoting gender equality, and programs that enable **multisectoral solutions at many levels of government** will aid women in political spaces.
- Participants added that the WBG should support bringing successful programs to **scale** to achieve **larger impacts**.
- The meeting concluded noting that **interdisciplinary, multilevel action** is required, bundled approaches have low effect--a **broader approach** is needed--- and that having **women in power may serve to reduce corruption**.