

MINUTES

Steering Committee Meeting, no. 2

May 14, 2019

Virtual connections included WBG offices in Baghdad, Iraq;
Amman, Jordan; Beirut, Lebanon; Washington DC, US

Chair: Saroj Kumar Jha, Regional Director World Bank



After welcoming remarks and a tour de table with participants presenting themselves and welcoming UN Women and Norway as Steering Committee members, the discussion focused on the Country Work Plans.

Discussion Points & Agreements:

- The Steering Committee members congratulated the National Coordinators and country teams on the high quality of the country work plans and recognized that the activities cover the diversity of challenges facing women in the region. When preparing the detailed, costed work plans, the SC recommends that the teams narrow the scope and take into account the main comments received and the discussion:
 - Narrow down the scope, making sure that activities focus on measurable results on women's economic empowerment, with a clear line of sight to the overarching objective of increasing women's labor force participation.
 - Private sector collaboration, as well as Public-Private Partnerships should come through stronger.
 - Ensure collaboration with relevant, existing initiatives and organizations.
- The SC emphasized that the regional work plan should be aligned with and driven by country level priorities.
- The Chair reiterated that the MGF is an open partnership among the three countries and donors, based on a flexible structure that allows responding to priorities at the country level. The Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality (UFGE) is the internal, administrative vehicle for channeling the funds, simplifying the administrative processes without representing a burden on the implementation. In addition, the UFGE provides an opportunity to connect to and make the work visible at the global level. The administrative arrangements will be continuously assessed during implementation to ensure MGF efficiency.
- National Coordinators will take the lead on bringing together steering committee member representatives at the country level for more detailed discussion on the work plans. IFC and the private sector will be included in these conversations. Canada offered to support the convening of these country-level meetings.
- Next SC meeting will be held in person, coordination of agendas permitting, and will include the following agenda items: (i) Endorsement of country work plans; (ii) Presentation & discussion of regional work plan, including an update on the World Bank Gender Tag; (iii) Mashreq Conference on Women's Economic Empowerment II, Amman March 2020: initial ideas & guidance; (iv) Fund-raising strategy; and (v) Steering Committee membership. Tentative date: June 13, 2019 in Beirut, Lebanon.

Next steps:

1. Steering Committee members and National Coordinators will confirm their availability for a full day event on Thursday June 13, 2019 (in Beirut, Lebanon).
2. Each country team will submit revised, costed work plans to the Secretariat prior to the next SC meeting, for circulation and endorsement on AOB basis. Country-level working groups will be convened -time permitting- prior to the next SC meeting; these will engage key stakeholders to inform revised and costed work plans.
3. Secretariat is circulating the Terms of Reference with the minutes, for Norway's review.
4. World Bank will respond to Norway's concerns related to MGF governance by email.
5. The World Bank Group will support governments to further detail and cost out the country work plans.

ANNEX 1. List of Participants and Observers

Participants:

- Government of Lebanon: Dia Captan, Advisor to Minister of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth, Abir Chebaro, Gender Advisor to President of the Council of Ministers (National Coordinator)
- Government of Jordan: Salma Nims, Secretary General, Jordanian National Commission for Women
Boshra Mashour Ben Tareef, Head of Gender Division, MoPIC
Huda Ayesh, Project Manager at JNCW (National Coordinator)
- Government of Iraq: Oqoud Hussain Salman, Director General, Human Development Directorate, Ministry of Planning
Ibtisam Aziz, Director General, Women Empowerment Directorate, General Secretariat of Council of Ministers (National Coordinator)
- Government of Canada: Gavin Buchan, Executive Director, Middle East Development Programming, Global Affairs Canada
- Government of Norway: Lene Natasha Lind, Ambassador, Embassy of Norway to Lebanon
- UN Women: Rachel Dore-Weeks, Special Representative of UN Women's Regional Director in Lebanon
- World Bank: Saroj Kumar Jha, Regional Director, Middle East Department
- IFC: Sammar Essmat, Gender Lead for MENA (by audio)
- MGF Secretariat: Benu Bidani, Practice Manager, Poverty and Equity MENA, World Bank
Haneen Sayed, Lead Social Protection, Jobs and Gender Specialist, World Bank
Jonna Lundwall, Social Scientist, World Bank

Observers:

- Government of Canada: Aly-Khan Rajani, Counsellor, Head of Co-operation, Embassy of Canada to Lebanon
Aicha Mouchref, Senior Development Officer, Embassy of Canada
Elizabeth Geagea, First Secretary and Operations Officer, Embassy of Canada
- Government of Norway: Raghda Allouche, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beirut
- Iraq: Florin Gorgis, Director General at the KRG High Council for Women's Affairs
Salam Shahab, Technical & Operational Officer (Consultant)
- Jordan: Nour Moghrabi, Technical & Operational Officer (Consultant)
- Lebanon: Samar Boulos, Ministry of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth
Maha Quol, Technical & Operational Officer (Consultant)
- World Bank Group: Angela Elzir Assy, Labor Market Specialist (Lebanon)
Gharam Alkastalani Dexter, Regulatory Specialist (Iraq)
Khalid Moheydeen, Social Protection Specialist (Jordan)
Shereen Abbady, Consultant
Yasmin Mohamed, Gender Officer MENA, Focal Point for Mashreq countries, IFC
Samantha Constant, Consultant
Mirvat Haddad, Program Assistant (Lebanon)
Reem Kamil, Senior Executive Assistant (Iraq)