

## UNFPA Preliminary Feedback on

### *Accelerate Gender Equality for a Sustainable, Resilience & Inclusive Future*

#### *World Bank Group Gender Strategy (2024-2030)*

#### *Consultation Draft*

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### Overview

- Welcome the opportunity to provide preliminary feedback on the Consultation Draft, which will also draw on inputs that UNFPA has been providing over the course of the consultation process.
- Appreciate the WBG's commitment to elevate and center gender equality across all areas of its work, building from the current strategy, drawing on the lessons learned, successes realized and responding to the persistent challenges in advancing gender equality, including in the context of rising fragility, conflict, and violence.
- Acknowledge that the draft Strategy identifies three aspirational strategic objectives to be realized to accelerate gender equality: *(i) end gender-based violence and elevate human capital; (ii) expand and enable economic opportunities; and (iii) engage women as leaders*. UNFPA welcomes the new emphasis on ending gender-based violence as a specific objective
- The Strategy's development [and the WBG's important role in contributing to the realization of Gender Equality] comes at a critical juncture for the world, with the ongoing socioeconomic shocks of the COVID-19 Pandemic, deepening geopolitical tensions, pushback against gender equality and human rights, increases in poverty and inequality, rising humanitarian needs, and the climate emergency. And with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) significantly off track, including SDG 5 'Achieve *gender equality and empower all women and girls*'. For example:
  - Target 5.3: One in five young women worldwide (19 per cent) were married in childhood in 2022. Globally, the prevalence of child marriage has declined from 21 per cent in 2016. However, the profound effects of COVID-19 are threatening that progress, with up to 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage over the course of a decade from the onset of the pandemic.
  - Target 5.6: On the basis of data from 68 countries for the period 2007–2022, only 56 per cent of married or in-union women aged 15 to 49 years make their own decisions regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, ranging from an average of 37 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa to over 80 per cent in some countries in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. Among the 115 countries with data in 2022, countries have in place, on average, 76 per cent of the laws and regulations needed to guarantee full and equal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- There are many strong elements in the draft Strategy; and therefore, this preliminary feedback focuses rather on those areas that may need to be further strengthened; or are missing and/or not explicitly clear in the Strategy

## General

### Partnership

- Expand more explicitly on how the WBG (all parts (IDA, IBRD, MIGA, IFC) and levels (global, regional, country)) will step up its role in supporting the realization of Gender Equality. There are a number of entry points/ongoing processes identified, however, it is not clear how they are joined-up or will come together to avoid duplication of efforts or additional transaction costs, particularly at the country level; and **how the WBG will work across and collaborate as One Bank and with other partners - country governments, CSOs, communities, development partners, private sector, UN Agencies etc.**

- **Strengthen the role of partnership** [emphasis appears to focus largely on partnership ‘filling gaps’] and **collaboration** in contributing to the implementation of the Strategy [and more broadly gender equality] while addressing the complementarities and in some areas the comparative advantages/key role of other entities, including country governments. There is emphasis on the WBG Country Partnership Framework, Country Gender Assessments and Regional Gender Action Plans, however, it is unclear how this is linking with existing country processes, including UN Country Teams and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework as well as UN Humanitarian Country Teams (in countries affected by Crisis).

- Welcome section on **Drivers of Change for gender equality: Innovating, Financing, and Acting Collectively**, in particular the recognition that advancing gender equality requires financing, including mobilizing and allocating resources effectively in the public and private sectors.

- Suggest to have the strategy note underscore *accountability to women* and feminist movements in the way men and boys are engaged around gender equality (page ii). There is also a necessity to ensure that CSOs are separately supported to ensure sustained systems of accountability to Acting Collectively. Without these systems, collective action does not have depth.

### Sustainable Development Goals

- More **clearly position the Sustainable Development Agenda/SDGs**, particularly SDG5 [Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls] in the Strategy.

### Humanitarian settings

- Important to emphasize that **information on GBV exists in humanitarian settings** and the WB may want to also engage with GBV AoR that regroups all GBV actors in humanitarian settings.

- - Is there evidence to support working with “private sector actors” on GBV in FCV contexts?

### Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

- Strengthen the positioning of the **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Agenda** given its importance as a ‘catalyst’ in the context of the 3 priority objectives identified by the WBG in the Strategy. Welcome the reference in the context of human capital development and Universal Health Coverage where the emphasis is on service provision. At the same time, it would be important to provide that comprehensive approach/emphasis in the context of ‘rights and choices.’ UNFPA’s Gender Strategy explores the synergies between reproductive and economic agency. It would be relevant to consider

reproductive labor or care work as a key determinant for building and sustaining human capital, in general adolescent girls can be excluded from all the opportunities for development based on unpaid care work, childbearing and marriage.

### **Adolescents and Youth**

- **Adolescents and youth** - more attention to Adolescents and Young People in the Strategy, especially adolescent girls; there are data points showing in the strategy that the human capital of girls currently has reached parity with boys, however, sustaining the human capital of girls requires a continuum support especially to overcome negative outcomes related to demographic factors including school dropout, marriage, childbearing, etc. It would be critical to give an emphasis to promoting and protecting adolescent girls' rights -including through preventing and responding to GBV and harmful practices such as child marriage, FGM, Gender-biased Sex Selection and adolescent pregnancy, as well as keeping girls in schools and equipping them with gender-transformative knowledge and skills through comprehensive sexuality education and life skills education.

- In intro, instead of "It calls for changes spanning country laws and policies, public and private sector activities, and personal lives" - change to "interpersonal relationships"

### **Engaging Men & Boys**

-Study referenced on page 4 was co-published by UNFPA (and Equimundo). This rightly refers to **stereotypes and biases about gender roles** persisting, limiting progress towards gender equality.

-- The transformative role of **engaging men and boys** in positive masculinities programme could be strengthened, placing particular attention to adolescent boys by promoting gender equality from early ages. This [document produced by Equimundo and UNFPA](#) provides recommendations for programming.

- The issue of **engagement with men and boys** also speaks to Para 28 on *Acting Collectively*. While collective movement building is critical, it must be accountable to the feminist movements and women and girls more broadly.

- Suggest to say, "**substantive equality**" instead of "**equality of opportunity**" -- this would be more consistent with the reference to "accountability for gender outcomes."

### **Gender Norms**

-- *para 34 speaks to mobilizing communities around social norm change. I think this needs to be specific about extending to institutional and systemic norm change.*

- *as above, para 35, while addressing gender norms seems to limit interventions to education systems. Also, while there is mention here of frontier issues - it is not clear how that intersects with the overall plan.*

### **Gender-based Violence (GBV)**

- Suggest to be consistent with **standard UN definition of GBV: "Gender-based violence"** is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private.<sup>3</sup> The term "GBV" is most commonly used to underscore how systemic

inequality between males and females, which exists in every society in the world, acts as a unifying and foundational characteristic of most forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls.

- para 26 on behavioral approaches would be interesting to unpack in a way that ensures that it remains rights based regardless of framing.
- page 35 suggests changing “Comprehensive programs address GBV as a social problem” to “Comprehensive programs address GBV as a structural and systemic issue which results in abuses of power that women experience in the form of violence perpetrated by individuals, families, communities and the State.”.
- include psychosocial support (or MHPSS) as part of health in para 37
- Highlighting what comprises GBV - including HPs and denial of access to SRHR here would be good
- para 38 - would be good to see the inclusion of comprehensive sexuality education as a key strategy towards prevention of GBV which is not explicit here. Further, prevention programming does need a consistent investment in evaluations to build the evidence base, particularly in relation to adolescent populations.
- para 40 - inclusion of humanitarian settings as well as ensuring deployment of safe and ethical technologies to support social protection and cash transfer systems (including ensuring systems of data ownership to users).
- note the focus on closing the gender-digital divide and ensure that this is a process which is participatory and inclusive. Closing this divide requires complementary digital literacy programming as well as tailoring the tech provided to meet the demand and the needs.

### **Climate Emergency**

- If **climate** is cross-cutting, understanding how it will be addressed across each of the outcome areas would be helpful. Currently the focus is very much around participation of women in climate policy and dialogue but without the support for systems that need to be in place to enable true participation. This is reflected in para 56 and para 12 alike. There does need to be investment under the GBV pillar on building the evidence base around the impact of climate to be able to tailor programming, finance and investment systems across adaptation and mitigation streams of action.

### **Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) project (page 12)**

It would be important that the SWEDD strategy explicitly targets women-led organizations for expanding the civic space, leadership and to protect the gains on gender equality in times of deliberate pushback.

**Another important aspect of the SWEDD work is the National Transfer Accounts (NTA). The Gender Strategy should refer to those important approaches to measure the demographic dividend. A modification to NTA, called NNTA (National Time Transfer Accounts Analysis) has been an innovation.** The NTA data, even if disaggregated by sex, is inadequate to accurately estimate gender differences in contribution to the economy because it does not take into account unpaid work, in which women dominate. The NNTA adapts NTA methodology to include collection and analysis of time use data by gender and age, which enables calculation of the amount and type of unpaid work by gender, and an

estimate of the monetary value of this unpaid work to the economy. This modification allows for a fuller understanding of young women's contribution to the economy compared to young men.

**The second is a companion analysis to the Budget sensible to the Demographic Dividend, a gendered analysis of public expenditure.** The national budget does not lend itself to a gender analysis. However, CREG uses an accounting methodology, using a similar series of data from 20 or so years, to analyze public expenditure or disbursement of the national budget by the sex of the intended recipient, based on the type of project or area to which a budget was allocated. This allows an analysis of the gender distribution of intended benefits of public expenditure. Analysis already conducted in Senegal by CREG and the Senegalese government illustrates the female disadvantage in receipt of public spending.