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IDA21 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND UPDATES ON BETTER BANK

The Europe and Central Asia (ECA) IDA Forum on the IDA21 Strategic Directions and Updates on the Better Bank was hosted in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and connected participants from Armenia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United States.

The aim of the ECA forum was to inform civil societies about the proposed IDA21 strategic directions and obtain feedback and any input from them to feed into IDA’s policy dialogue, as well as update them on the progress the Bank is making in its evolution towards a better bank. To this end, **Mr Akihiko Nishio**, Vice President for Development Finance which oversees IDA made a presentation on the proposed [IDA21 Strategic Directions](#), while IDA Director **Mr. Dirk Reinermann** presented on the [Better Bank](#). These presentations were the basis for the forum conversation.

The ECA Regional Vice President **Ms. Antonella Bassani** gave opening remarks, while the IDA Deputy for BiH Mr. *Muhamed Hasanovic gave closing remarks*. Also speaking at the event was the IDA Borrower Representative from Tajikistan Mr. Majidi Yusuf who is also the country’s Deputy Minister of Finance. Mr Yusuf, represents IDA client countries in the ECA region in the IDA21 Replenishment process.

The event was moderated by **Ms. Vesna Bajšanski-Agić**, Vice President of Strategic Alliances and Global Development at TechSoup in BiH. She also prepared the rapporteur’s report capturing key points raised by the participants. There was also a special intervention by a local CSO in BiH on how IDA helped rebuild the country after the 1990s Balkan Wars. **Mr. Zoran Puljic**, Executive Director of MoZaic Founcation spoke and showed the [IDA and BiH Video](#).

After the two presentations, participants shared their views on the proposed IDA21 focus areas of People, Planet, Prosperity, Infrastructure and Digitalization, and the proposed lenses of More and better jobs; Gender; Fragility; and Private investments, as well as the Better Bank updates. Participants also had a mentimeter exercise where they indicated what they think should be the main priority for IDA. The responses have been incorporated in the inputs below:

FOCUS AREAS

PEOPLE:

- Give serious focus on child well-being, access to education, immunization and protection from violence. Should be a focus in all IDA countries.
- Service provision to young people with a focus on early childhood and adolescent services is relevant to most IDA countries.
- Upskilling and reskilling, and getting youth involved.
- Food security and nutrition, plus global hunger.
- Address inequality.

PROSPERITY:

- The burden of repaying debt is derailing the achievement of SDGs. Are there plans to help such countries increase their capacities?
- Corruption is a problem especially in countries that do not have open systems. Focus on good governance and risk management where civil society is involved. Funds lost to corruption could be invested to benefit all, e.g. climate funding.
- Develop industrial policy space and attract more risk capital to support innovation.

PLANET:

- Anything preserving climate is a priority. How best to preserve what we have climate wise, and the impact climate will have not just in 50 years, but now.
- Enhance climate resilience.
- Biodiversity
- Renewables

INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Improving infrastructure and public spaces is a priority.
- Focus on green energy

DIGITALIZATION:

- Green digi-transition.

LENSES

More and Better Jobs:

- Jobs should be a main priority

Gender:

- Keeping a focus on gender when making policy, especially when it comes to child-well-being.
- Gender equality

Fragility:

- IDA provide risk mechanisms/guarantees to drive more capital in fragile economies emerging from conflict to improve investor confidence.
- Prioritize food security for children who live in fragile conditions and conflict zones.
- Peace and democracy.

Private investments:

- Private capital brings innovation; diaspora combined with risk guarantees can help drive investment and innovation.
- Entrepreneurship

OTHER ISSUES RAISED

- Recommend for WB to engage in consultations with civil society as one way to enable CSO voices to be heard by authorities.
- Enabling environment for CSOs and dedicated funding for CSOs to help deal with corruption.

Bank management provided overall management response to various issues raised.