

## MINUTES

### Steering Committee Meeting, no. 5

October 9, 2019

Virtual connections included WBG offices in  
Amman, Jordan; Beirut, Lebanon and Washington DC

Chair: Dalia Wahba, Country Manager IFC



#### Discussion Points:

- The Chair delivered the apologies from the Iraq MGF team, on behalf of the National Coordinator Dr Ibtissam, for not being able to participate in the meeting due to the current security situation and lack of internet connectivity.
- Brief **updates on the implementation of the country and regional work plans** were presented.
  - In **Lebanon**, a major initiative under the enabling environment pillar has been to identify MGF specific support leading up to the March 2020 parliamentary session on legislative reform related to women's economic opportunities, complementing what others are doing. Technical assistance to amendments and laws including the Labor Law will be provided. The terms of the care economy assessment have been defined based on interviews with different public and private stakeholders. The team, with IFC's support, also progressed in building partnerships with the private sector for the relevant components.
  - In **Jordan**, HE Jumana Ghuneimat, Head of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for women's empowerment, was onboarded on the MGF and agreed to present the workplan in the next IMC meeting. To identify MGF value added to the care economy agenda, a series of meetings with different stakeholders have been held. A consultation roundtable on gender and transport took place in September and informed the development of the Terms of Reference for the implementation of the Code of Conduct in transport, to start shortly. JNCW launched the process of developing the Jordan Women's Strategy 2020-2025 which ties the MGF theory of change to the pillar of Economic Empowerment of Women.
  - In **Iraq** (a few things shared by the WBG consultants Amiral Batada and Zheen Al Mukhtar) the review of legislative gaps and discriminatory provisions restricting women's access to work and other economic opportunities is underway and finalized shortly. Terms of Reference for strengthening vocational training curricula developed, based on meetings with relevant ministries. Progress on identifying platforms that will help connect women entrepreneurs through Chamber of Commerce and others.
  - On the **regional** side, a webpage including feature stories provided by the country MGF teams is close to final, but its launch is delayed due to WBG internal web governance freeze on web products around the WBG Annual Meetings. Expected to be launched by end-October. The MGF Secretariat will organize a training for country teams on M&E and the identification of results stories. Presentation of the MGF to donors in Lebanon. Development and support to teams for the Conference and the Displaced Women concepts. Technical and operational support to MGF country teams provided on an ongoing basis.
- The Concept Brief for the **MGF Regional activity to create employment opportunities for displaced women** was presented by Naila Ahmed, who leads the WBG's work on displacement in the Mashreq. The main objective of the proposed work is to develop an integrated platform across the region, that can generate new or consolidate employment opportunities for displaced women living in the Mashreq. This platform will be developed and piloted in a phased manner, starting with Jordan. It will crowd ongoing initiatives at both the demand side (mainly through the Refugee Investment and Matchmaking Platform, RIMP) and supply

side (mainly through the Skilling Up Mashreq initiative). Main points and recommendations brought up during the discussion include: the importance of engaging host communities; the need to strengthen the business rationale and build a compelling argument (beyond “a good thing to do”) to attract private sector; focus on how pilots will lead to the effective scale-up and expansion of activities, rather than emphasizing the numbers of women benefitting; include a mapping on relevant, similar programs that already exist; explore the link to public employment services given the high levels of NEETs and youth unemployment. Lebanon expressed support to the approach of piloting and identify learning before scaling to other countries and the need to coordinate with other country-specific initiatives in defining the way forward for the regional roll-out. IFC offered to provide inputs on localized private sector and bottom-up engagements.

- The initial concept brief on the **II Mashreq Conference on Women’s Economic Empowerment** to be held in Amman (early April 2020) was presented by Haneen Sayed. It was proposed that the conference focus on some of the key constraints to women’s economic empowerment as identified in the Mashreq Country Action Plans and the forthcoming “State of Mashreq Women Report”. These include: Private sector family-friendly policies and practices to support working parents, entrepreneurship and access to assets, mobility and safe transport, and skills and school-to-work transition. The role of digital technologies as enablers of women’s economic empowerment and potentially also institutional capacity for implementation will be addressed in a cross-cutting manner. It is suggested to be a 1.5 day conference, with the first day dedicated to plenary sessions and an additional half day for in-depth technical sessions on the specific constraints impeding women’s economic empowerment (budget permitting). The Steering Committee was in agreement with the proposed four sub-themes - with technology as cross-cutting - but noted that there still needs to be an overarching theme. Recommendations included: bringing in technology as a clear framework for all sessions; presenting the Report in a dynamic panel discussion format; defining the overarching theme early on; and exploring possibilities of linking it to the WEF Annual Regional Meeting in Amman (which may be in April). IFC stands ready to leverage their client networks to feed into the Conference.

#### **Decisions and next steps:**

1. SC members to submit comments on the Refugee/IDP note to the MGF Secretariat by October 18, 2019. MGF Secretariat will circulate revised version by October 23 for virtual review and endorsement of the Steering Committee on an absence of objection basis.
2. SC members to submit comments on the Conference note to the MGF Secretariat by October 16, 2019 for task force consideration.
3. Jordan/WBG Conference task force to be set up and initial meeting organized by end of October 2019.
4. MGF Secretariat will provide monthly updates on progress to the Steering Committee, based on inputs from country teams and progress on regional work plan.
5. As a general rule for the Steering Committee meeting protocol, all documents to be considered in a SC meeting will be shared one week ahead of the meeting.
6. Next Steering Committee meeting Wednesday January 15, 3pm to 5pm.

## List of Participants and Observers

### Participants:

- Government of Lebanon: **Chantal Bou Akl**, National Commission for Lebanese Women (delegated SC member)  
**Frances Abu Zaid**, Ministry of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth (National Coordinator)
- Government of Jordan: **Boshra Mashour Ben Tareef**, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (delegated SC member)  
**Ghaida Bitar**, Jordan National Commission for Women (representing JNCW)
- Government of Iraq: *Not able to participate due to security situation and internet blockage*
- Government of Canada: **Gavin Buchan**, Executive Director, Middle East Development Programming, Global Affairs Canada
- Government of Norway: **Raghda Allouche**, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beirut (delegated SC member)
- UN Women: **Yllka Gerdovci Cancel**, Regional Programme and Policy Specialist for UN Women Regional Office
- IFC: **Dalia Wahba**, Country Manager (delegated SC member)
- MGF Secretariat: **Benu Bidani**, Practice Manager, Poverty and Equity MENA  
**Haneen Sayed**, Lead Social Protection, Jobs and Gender Specialist, World Bank  
**Jonna Lundwall**, Social Scientist, World Bank

### Observers:

- Jordan: **Nour Moghrabi**, Technical & Operational Officer (Consultant)
- Government of Canada: **Elizabeth Geagea**, Embassy of Canada (Jordan/Regional)  
**Jamie Schnurr**, Embassy of Canada (Lebanon)
- World Bank Group: **Sammar Essmat**, IFC (Regional)  
**Yasmin Mohamed**, IFC Mashreq Lead  
**Samantha Constant**, Consultant (Regional)  
**Karina Brito**, Operations Analyst WBG  
**Angela Elzir Assy**, Lebanon WBG Lead  
**Khalid Moheydeen**, Jordan WBG Lead  
**Shereen Abbady**, Consultant (Jordan)  
**Zheen Al Mukhtar**, Consultant (Iraq)  
**Amirali Batada**, Consultant (Iraq)  
**Naila Ahmed**, Leading Mashreq Displacement Work  
**Julia Barrera**, RIMP team (Matchmaking Platform)