

MINUTES

Steering Committee Meeting, no. 3

June 13, 2019

Virtual connections included WBG offices in Baghdad, Iraq;

Amman, Jordan; Beirut, Lebanon

Washington DC, Dubai, Istanbul

Chair: Saroj Kumar Jha, Regional Director World Bank



Discussion Points:

- An initial discussion around the **Mashreq Conference on Women's Economic Empowerment II** was held, with Jordan confirming its intention to host the conference. The patronage of the Prime Minister will be sought for this. The most convenient time for the Conference is February 2020. Countries will get an opportunity to highlight selected achievements towards enhanced economic opportunities for women, and findings from a regional report that aims to create a baseline on the state of Mashreq women will be presented. Efforts will be made to build capacity of research institutions in the region in the development of the report. Women in the digital economy was mentioned as a potential thematic area, and the Jordan-WBG team will draft a concept note to be shared with the SC by September 2019.
- Dr. Salma Nims presented the detailed, costed **Jordan country work plan**, emphasizing how it fits into the broader vision of the government and its forthcoming National Women's Strategy, building on existing strategies, coordination mechanisms and initiatives. The MGF Jordan work plan focuses on opportunities to bridge gaps in addressing constraints to women's economic empowerment, such as in the areas of family friendly work environment; measuring the pay gap; women in leadership positions in the private sector; women's financial access, among other. The plan identifies in each activity how to support and learn from private sector and work with business associations. To ensure effectiveness of activities, there will be advocacy to address stereotypes and promote change in behaviors.
- The **Regional Work Plan** was presented in the three pillars of Dialogue & Participation; Data & Knowledge; and Innovating for Results. The SC considered the overall plan good, and the support to the MGF Secretariat, the attention to Syrian refugee women and the focus on knowledge and learning was considered appropriate. However, before fully endorsing the plan, the SC requested the MGF Secretariat to present a more detailed budget as well as the identification of how the regional work plan will directly support country priorities of regional scope and interest, once all countries have finalized their plans. It was recommended that the Secretariat consult closely with the National Coordinators and MGF country teams on areas in which the country work plans could benefit from the regional work plan. It was further clarified that the share of the budget for the Dialogue & Participation pillar is higher than the other pillars, as the overall MGF was conceptualized based on a US\$ 20M budget and coordination and administration related costs will be similar no matter the amount. It is expected that once the Facility attracts additional funding, and can take advantage of economies of scale, the proportion of funding from the overall budget assigned to the other pillars will dramatically increase.
- **IFC** reiterated their support to the objectives of the Facility to ensure a strong private sector angle, and to the development and implementation of the country and regional work plans.

- It was suggested that an online, **publicly available tracking mechanism** – to track the progress of the MGF and donors’ commitments – be developed as part of the Regional Work Plan. The Secretariat will look into this option and inform SC members of its recommendations.
- To facilitate the coordination of the subsequent **Steering Committee meetings** specific weeks/dates will be identified up front on a quarterly basis, and SC members who are not able to make it will be requested to delegate their participation.

Decisions and next steps:

1. The next regional conference will be held in Amman, Jordan in February 2020; with the aim for it to be under the patronage of the Prime Minister. An initial concept note will be developed and shared with the SC by September 2019.
2. The Jordan Work Plan was endorsed.
3. Lebanon and Iraq will share their costed work plans by July 1. The World Bank and IFC will support governments in this work.
4. The Regional Work Plan will be updated with specific reference to how it will support and be interlinked with the three country work plans, and shared by July 8.
5. The next Steering Committee meeting will be held virtually on July 10 (2pm-4pm) to discuss the Lebanon, Iraq and Regional Work Plans, as well as fund-raising. Lebanon will co-chair with the World Bank.
6. Subsequent SC meetings will be held second week of October, January and April. Tentatively on the afternoons of Wednesdays.

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
Zeina Maalouf, Assistant Administrative Director, National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW)
- Government of Jordan: Salma Nims, Secretary General, Jordanian National Commission for Women
Boshra Mashour Ben Tareef, Head of Gender Division, MoPIC
Huda Ayeshe, Project Manager at JNCW (National Coordinator)
- Government of Iraq: Thikra Alwash, Mayor of Baghdad, Chairperson of Permanent High Committee of the Advancement of Iraqi Women
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: Karen Mollica, Jordan Country Program Manager, Embassy of Canada
- Government of Norway: Raghda Allouche, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beirut
- World Bank: Saroj Kumar Jha, Regional Director, Middle East Department
- IFC: Mouayed Makhlof, Regional Director for the Middle East & North Africa
- MGF Secretariat: Haneen Sayed, Lead Social Protection, Jobs and Gender Specialist, World Bank
Jonna Lundwall, Social Scientist, World Bank

Observers:

- Government of Canada: Elizabeth Geagea, First Secretary and Operations Officer, Embassy of Canada
- Iraq: 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
Frances Abu Zaid, Ministry of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth
Maha Quol, Technical & Operational Officer (Consultant)
- World Bank Group: Sammar Essmat, Gender Lead for MENA
Ramzi Afif Neman, Sr Program Officer (Iraq)
Angela Elzir Assy, Labor Market Specialist (Lebanon)
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)