



NILDS' CONTRIBUTION TO SHAPING THE WORLD BANK GENDER STRATEGY 2024-2030



Review Team

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|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman | - | DG, NILDS |
| Professor Peter Siyan | - | Ag. Director, Department of Economic and Social Research, NILDS |
| Dr. A. G. Abiola | - | Director, Department of Studies, NILDS |

NILDS Team/Analysts

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Oluwasola E. Omoju, Ph.D. | - | Senior Research Fellow, NILDS |
| Osaretin G. Okungbowa, Ph.D. | - | Research Fellow I, NILDS |
| Emily E. Ikhide, Ph.D. | - | Research Fellow I, NILDS |

Contact Information:

National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, National Assembly, Piwoyi District along Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport Road Abuja, Nigeria.

E-mail: info@nils.gov.ng

Tel: +234-(0)9-4137533| +234-(0)96719151/52

Mobile: +234-(0)8092786294

Website: <https://nilds.gov.ng/>

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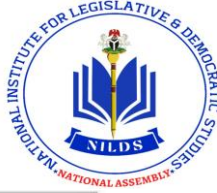


Preface

Since 2011, the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) has been at the forefront of shaping public policies in Nigeria and the West African subregion. The mandate of the Institute is to ensure that proposals and positions advanced by the legislators are informed by the requisite research and analytical support. Against this backdrop, the Institute is pleased to contribute to the proposed World Bank Gender Strategy for 2024-2030. NILDS' commitment to advancing gender equality has been consistently reinforced through various initiatives. One notable achievement is our pioneering advocacy work in gender-responsive budgeting, a practice that ensures that government budgets address gender disparities and prioritize the needs of women and girls. By emphasizing this approach, we have laid a solid foundation for gender-inclusive policymaking in Nigeria.

Moreover, NILDS has partnered with prominent international organizations, such as UN Women and UNDP, to build the capacity of women in political leadership, governance, and legislative processes. Our collaboration with these development institutions has not only fostered knowledge exchange but has also demonstrated our dedication to the cause of women's empowerment at the global level. In the same vein, the recent "Women in Governance International Conference" convened by NILDS which held at Abuja, between 23-24 of August 2023 was a momentous occasion that resonated closely with the objectives of the World Bank Gender Strategy for 2024-2030. The conference gathered experts, policymakers, and advocates from diverse backgrounds, united by a shared commitment to gender inclusivity and equitable governance. It emphasized the importance of women's participation in political and decision-making processes, echoing the core principles that underpin the World Bank's forthcoming strategy.

As we offer our contribution, we draw upon the insights and recommendations generated at the Women in Governance International Conference. We are keen to emphasize the significance of legislative reforms, institutional capacity building, and the integration of gender-disaggregated data in the World Bank's strategy. It is our strong belief that gender equality is a transformative lever that underpins socio-economic progress and fosters an inclusive world. The years 2024-2030 represent a pivotal period in our collective efforts to accelerate progress toward gender equality. NILDS is dedicated to leveraging its expertise and experiences to inform a comprehensive and forward-thinking strategy that will result in meaningful changes for women and girls globally. We look forward to collaborating with the World Bank and other stakeholders to translate this strategy into tangible actions, building a more equitable and prosperous future for all.



Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman
DG. NILDS

Background

The National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) is committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and we are pleased to provide this contribution to inform the proposed World Bank Gender Strategy for 2024-2030 (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy). Essentially, the opportunity to shape the Strategy is coming on the heels of our recent Women in Governance International Conference, 2023. Thus, drawing upon the experiences and recommendations generated at the Conference, we are pleased to seize this opportunity to offer valuable insights into shaping the Strategy. It suffices that this collaborative effort with the World Bank is in line Section 2 of NILDS Act, 2011 to foster intellectual discuss and collaborate with national and international institutions on issues related to democratic development in Nigeria. Bearing in mind the catalytic effect of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5, gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Thus, the proposed World Bank's Strategy is an opportunity to build upon the progress made in previous years and to address the persisting gender disparities and challenges that affect women and girls worldwide, and particularly in Nigeria. Consequently, NILDS suggests the following key elements that may be considered in the Strategy.

i. Legislative Reforms

The World Bank should support low-and medium-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa in enacting gender-sensitive legislations. Laws that address issues like domestic violence, sexual harassment, women empowerment, and discrimination may need to be prioritized. To get a handle on these issues, it is important to have a nuanced understanding of the stage of development of each country and the prevailing political economy. While some countries may have gone past gender equity and advancing towards achieving equality, some are yet to achieve equity. For instance, the failure of the 9th National Assembly to pass Gender Equality and Opportunity Bill, 2022 was partly because of the inclusion of the word "equality" as the title of the bill. Despite the germane provisions of the bill, the bill was not successful. This experience points to the need to consider the local context and stage of gender development in each country



while exploring the potential lever of legislative reforms. In this regard, NILDS is committed to providing the technical assistance and capacity-building in legislative drafting.

ii. Institutional Capacity Building

To ensure that gender equality policies are effectively implemented, it is crucial to strengthen the institutional capacity of government agencies, especially the legislature, and civil society organizations (CSOs). For instance, Nigeria's legislative institutions have suffered the most disruptive effects of many years of military rule. Suffice that while the executive and judiciary branches of government often continue to function during military rule, the legislative branch is typically disbanded. This has resulted in relatively weak institutional memory and capacity of the legislature to perform their statutory functions in relation to gender-oriented legislations and interventions. In the same vein, the high legislative turnover rate also has adverse impact on the efficiency and performance of the legislature. The relatively weak legislative capacity cuts across other democracies in developing countries especially SSA. Overall, the Strategy should include capacity building, mentorship programs that focus on gender mainstreaming and women's leadership aimed at strengthening democratic institutions.

iii. Data and Research:

Quality data is indispensable for informed policy decisions. The World Bank can support research initiatives that provide gender-disaggregated data and analysis to better understand the specific needs and challenges faced by women and girls in different regions and contexts. In this context, disaggregated data on several gender dimensions would be invaluable for research in the emerging effect of public policies. Findings from these data-driven and evidence-based research undoubtedly inform policies that would accelerate the implementation of the Strategy.

iv. Political Participation and Representation

Women's representation in political decision-making remains alarmingly low in many countries. At 4.7%, Nigeria is one of the countries with the lowest female representation in government. Thus, the World Bank can support initiatives that enhance women's political education and participation and awareness campaigns. This can be predicated on the World Bank's work to enhance women economic empowerment and shared prosperity.

v. Economic Empowerment

Gender disparities in economic opportunities persist, with women disadvantaged relative to men. The World Bank may prioritize programs that provide women with access to credit, skills development, and opportunities for entrepreneurship. Promoting equal pay for equal work and addressing the gender wage gap is also crucial. The collaboration with microfinance banks and institutions in low-and-medium income countries is a veritable pathway to empower women. Moreover, special attention may be given to sectors with high women participation rate such as wholesale and retail trade, social services, recreational services, health and education. These sectors should be targeted as a crucial lever to enhance women economic empowerment. In addition, efforts should be invested in understanding how public policy affects the performance of these sectors in the short and long-term.

vi. Health and Education

Health and education are crucial for women economic, social and political empowerment and overall human capital development. But due to economic and non-economic (social and cultural reasons), women still lack access to these key services compared to men. Educated and healthy



women is a boon for the labour force, labour supply and economic productivity. Thus, ensuring access to quality healthcare and education for women and girls is essential. The World Bank can support initiatives and interventions that focus on girls' education, infant and maternal health, and family planning services. Additionally, addressing issues like child marriage and female genital mutilation is critical. These interventions may be customised to the specific need of each country and specific regions within each country. In Nigeria, specific attention may be given to rural areas and Northern Nigeria.

vii. Protection from Violence

Violence against women is a global epidemic. In developing countries, this can be further aggravated by the economic challenges faced by women, low intra-household bargaining powers, and cultural and traditional factors and practices. The World Bank should support programs that enhance women intra-household bargaining power, raise awareness about gender-based violence, provide safe spaces for survivors, and enhance legal frameworks for prosecuting perpetrators.

viii. Rural and Indigenous Women

In many regions, rural and indigenous women face unique challenges. A significant proportion of women in poverty are in rural areas, and they lack access to basic services such as water, sanitation, clean cooking and electricity. The unavailability and lack of access to these basic services is a major issue in time-use and undermine the abilities of women to engage in productive economic activities and escape poverty. The World Bank should develop programs tailored to the specific needs of rural and indigenous women, including land rights, access to clean water, rural infrastructure, and sustainable agricultural practices.

ix. Technological Advancements

Technology can be a powerful tool for gender equality. The World Bank should support initiatives that bridge the digital gender divide, ensuring that women have access to technology and digital skills. This is particularly crucial as several countries develop digital transformation strategy and digital trade and e-commerce, of which women is a major participant, evolve. It is essential that women are not left behind.

x. Engaging Men and Boys

Achieving gender equality is not solely a women's issue; it requires the active involvement of men and boys. The World Bank should support programs that engage men and boys in promoting gender equality and challenging harmful stereotypes.

xi. Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings

Women are disproportionately affected by conflict and post-conflict situations. The World Bank should prioritize initiatives that address their specific needs, such as protection from sexual violence and providing economic opportunities for rebuilding their lives.

xii. Climate Change and Gender

The impacts of climate change often disproportionately affect women. The World Bank should integrate a gender perspective into climate adaptation and mitigation efforts to ensure that women are not left behind.



xiii. Global Partnerships

Gender equality is a global challenge that requires international cooperation. The World Bank should collaborate with other development organizations, governments, and civil society to share best practices and coordinate efforts.

In conclusion, NILDS strongly believes that the World Bank's Gender Strategy for 2024-2030 should be comprehensive, addressing the multifaceted challenges that women and girls face across the globe. Gender equality is not only a goal in itself but also a critical driver of economic and social development. By integrating these key elements into the strategy, the World Bank can make a significant impact in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, fostering a more just and inclusive world for all. We look forward to supporting and collaborating with the World Bank in these critical endeavours.