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WORLD BANK GROUP
Gender

FORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED 2024-2030 WORLD BANK GROUP GENDER STRATEGY

Consultation with parliamentarians

November 9, 2023

World Bank Office, Washington DC

OVERVIEW

On November 9, 2023, the World Bank Group (WBG) held a consultation on the proposed gender strategy 2024-2030 with parliamentarians from various countries. This consultation was held as part of the [Parliamentary Dialogue Series](#), organized by [The Parliamentary Network](#), which brings together about 2,000 parliamentarians from over 140 countries. The aim of the discussion was to engage, learn, get feedback, better understand opportunities and challenges for gender equality and empowerment, and identify potential areas for collaboration. Key inputs are summarized below and will be considered in developing the strategy. The event recording can be viewed [here](#)¹.

KEY THEMES AND FEEDBACK

Relevance of gender equality for progress:

- In his opening remarks the Rt. Honorable Liam Byrne, MP, UK and current chair of the Parliamentary Network, stated the 'seven giants' that block the road to progress – poverty, hunger, disease, lost learning, conflict, debt, and climate change. He added that progress is simply impossible without gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, and that progress so far has been slow and fragile. It was further underscored that parliamentarians are mission critical for building the political and social will to deliver gender equality. Lastly, he mentioned that the relationship between parliamentarians, countries and the World Bank is critical for faster progress, and it is important that parliamentarians take a hands-on role in helping to shape the WBG's gender strategy.
- Hana Brix, global director for gender at the World Bank presented an overview of the proposed strategy and invited inputs, particularly examples on what works, examples of success for inspiration and specific perspectives on what the WBG could do better or differently.

¹ This consultation summary diverges from Chatham House rules by identifying some participants as this was a public event.



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Perspectives from Egypt:

- Honorable Sahar Albaza, MP, Deputy Chair, Committee for Foreign Relations, Egypt, appreciated the WBG's consultations in multiple countries to get inputs for the proposed gender strategy. She highlighted the following initiatives for gender equality in Egypt:
 - The first women's empowerment strategy in the region.
 - Initiatives for women and girls who are aspiring entrepreneurs.
 - A national strategy to combat violence against women.
 - A presidential healthcare initiative including free breast cancer checkups.
 - Partnership with World Economic Forum to address the gender pay gap.

Outcomes included an increase in women's political participation to over 25 per cent.

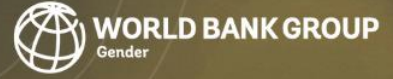
- She further mentioned that it is challenging to address sensitive issues like female genital mutilation (FGM), marriage, divorce, inheritance and sexual harassment. These issues affect millions and lead to pushback and backlash, including from within governments, rooted in social and cultural norms. This was mentioned as an arena where the proposed WBG gender strategy could support countries and parliamentarians.
- Another suggestion was that the WBG could support a mapping of policies from all over the world, that promote women's rights. Learning about how others addressed an issue and successfully passed a legislation could guide and inspire parliamentarians.
- It was also suggested that more solutions for easing debt be explored, and the resources that go as surcharges and payments could be used for gender equality measures.
- Lastly a suggestion was made to enable grants for parliamentarians to gather inputs from rural communities in partnership with the WBG, for inclusive development.

Perspectives from Zimbabwe:

- Honorable Daniel Molokela-Tsiye - Chair of the Health and Childcare Committee, Zimbabwe shared that Zimbabwe is mostly a rural country and most rural residents are women. In the 43 years since independence in 1980 government policies have led to an increase in the numbers of women who are educated, are in urban areas and have access to better opportunities. He highlighted the following initiatives for gender equality in Zimbabwe:
 - The legal age of majority act, 1982, which gave women decision making rights starting at the age of 18.
 - The goal to achieve 50% gender equality that informs all policies, laws and government decisions. This is supported by a statutory body called the Zimbabwe gender commission.
 - A women's parliamentary caucus that includes women parliamentarians and allies to integrate gender lens into government activities.
 - A quota to ensure proportional representation in the upper house of the senate.
 - Encouraging the private sector to have affirmative action for women.
- It was suggested that the WBG could play a role in advising on how to work with informal sector workers, most of whom are women, so that they are included in the mainstream economy.



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- The WBG could also foster international learning partnerships for parliamentarians, to promote gender equality.
- The need to move gender equality from political rhetoric to a reality was emphasized.
- He welcomed the WBG role in informing policy frameworks, the potential to leverage the proposed gender strategy for progressive outcomes, and the importance of partnering with the WBG and other international agencies to achieve gender equality.

Perspectives from Tanzania:

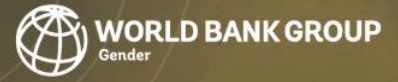
- Honorable Neema Lugangira MP, Member of the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security Committee, Tanzania commended the WBG for the consultation process and stated that the content of the consultation draft showed that the WBG is truly going through an evolution, prioritizing issues that are not necessarily rooted in monetary aspects. She shared inputs on each of the proposed strategy's objectives:
 - **End gender-based violence (GBV) and elevate human capital:** Highlighting Tanzania's national plan of action to end violence against women it was highlighted that online gender-based violence is a priority now. Another impactful initiative shared from Tanzania was gender desks in police stations with trained police officers. It was suggested that the WBG could support scaling up this initiative. She added that the WBG could support countries to have acts against GBV through technical and financial support. It was also suggested that nutrition be prioritized, including through school meals for building human capital. Further boarding schools for girls could be offered to mitigate GBV and school connectivity improved for uninterrupted learning.
 - **Expand and enable economic opportunities:** Major areas that could be addressed included access to loans, collateral and interest rates, access to land – lack of ownership for women farmers, access to water and clean cooking energy, the gender digital divide, and formalizing the informal sector.
 - **Engaging women as leaders:** It was emphasized that this objective be backed by strong initiatives to make it a reality and creating an enabling environment for women political leaders.
- It was suggested that the Parliamentary Network could collaborate with the [Inter-parliamentary union \(IPU\)](#).
- A query was raised whether the strategy will be implemented in terms of loans, as obtaining loans on some of the issues would be challenging and newer financial mechanisms like zero interest loans or grants might be needed.
- Finally, the need to involve parliamentarians right from the beginning of program design was emphasized, to get insights that ministries of finance alone might not have. A suggested pathway to address this was WBG country offices funding travel for parliamentarians for global discussions.

Additional inputs:

- A participant from Côte d'Ivoire highlighted the gaps between strategic frameworks on women's rights and the rights of African women. They inquired if the aims of existing awareness-raising campaigns match the reality of women citizens.



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- The example of India was shared, where women have been constitutionally guaranteed 33% of seats in the lower house of parliament and state assemblies. The role of constitutional commitment to bring this about was highlighted, and the need for strong advocacy to build constitutional and legal commitment emphasized.
- A participant from Romania inquired if the WBG and IMF could do more to develop programs like school meals, especially by supporting local women entrepreneurs as suppliers. They added that among other positive outcomes, such programs help decrease domestic violence by enabling women to become economically independent through full-time work.
- An observer from Luxembourg highlighted the need to involve non-government partners to develop programs from the beginning.
- Lastly a participant from Senegal suggested finding means to support the [Ubuntu initiative](#), to help countries ease debt burdens.

PARTICIPANTS

MPs from these countries registered for the event

Singapore
Bolivia
United Kingdom
Ghana
Ukraine
Mexico
Côte d'Ivoire
Suriname
Morocco
Egypt
Luxembourg
Greece
Central African Republic
Cameroon
Germany
Togo
Mauritania
Azerbaijan
Romania
Djibouti
Argentina
Portugal

Observers from these organizations registered for the event

Fingo, Kenya
Parliament of South Sudan
Parliament of Argentina
European Parliament, Spain
McMaster University, Canada
Freelance observer, Greece
Narasi.TV, Indonesia
EHESS, Nepal
Parliament of India
Swiss Foundation for Kosovo UN Recognition, Kosovo
Sajha Foundation, Nepal
Committee of foreign policy, Romania
Chamber of Deputies, Luxembourg
Women Committee, Colombia
Chamber of Deputies, Romania
Nova University, Portugal
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, United Kingdom
European Commission, Belgium
European Parliament, Belgium
Instituteur, Senegal
CRDF, CEPT University, India
Senate of Chile



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African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs, Ghana