

Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality (UFGE) Partnership Council Meeting

Wednesday, December 3, 2025, Washington, D.C. – Virtual 8:30 - 11:30 am ET

Summary

The [Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality \(UFGE\) Partnership Council \(PC\) Meeting](#) was held virtually on December 3, 2025, bringing together representatives from the World Bank Group (WBG) and UFGE Partner organizations (Annex 1).

Partners reflected on the strong alignment between UFGE programs and their own institutional priorities, noting opportunities for scaling through One WBG collaboration and country-driven engagement. Partners reaffirmed their strong commitment to the UFGE, highlighted the relevance of its work in a challenging global environment, and endorsed each of the decisions proposed by the Secretariat (see Annex 2 for Meeting Agenda).

Decisions Endorsed by the UFGE Partnership Council:

UFGE Partners endorsed the following decisions:

- ✓ Approval of the FY26 Workplan and Budget
 - ✓ Approval of the targets in the new UFGE Results Framework (RF)
 - ✓ Approval of the UFGE Annual Report FY25
 - ✓ Approval of the release of the US\$1 million contingency funds to allocate for a new call for proposals to fund the second phase of the Gender Strategy Fast Track Country Program
 - ✓ Approval of the timing and modality of the next Partnership Council meeting. Partners agreed to hold the next PCM in late May 2026, with a preference for an in-person format in Europe
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Session 1 | Partnering to Implement the Gender Strategy

Opening Remarks.

Hana Brix (WBG Global Director for Gender).

- Strong momentum in the first year of Gender Strategy implementation, including integration of gender into country diagnostics and Country Partnership Framework processes.
- UFGE’s pivotal role in enabling evidence-based, country-led, and One-WBG approaches.
- Progress on the 2030 institutional targets on social protection, access to capital and digital inclusion, noting faster progress in social protection and the need for deeper efforts on women’s access to capital.
- Opportunity for expansion of Fast-Track Gender Strategy Countries from 16 to a larger cohort based on rising country demand.

Karine Bachongy (Acting Director, Gender & Economic Inclusion, IFC).

- IFC’s Gender and Inclusion Roadmap 2030 outlines how IFC delivers on the Gender Strategy through the private sector, embedding gender across all interventions—including investments (e.g., Performance Standards, gender flag, Sustainability-Linked Finance) and advisory services.
- Strong progress toward institutional targets on digital inclusion (25 million women reached in FY25) and access to capital (3 million women reached).

- Expansion of IFC’s four Regional Gender Hubs which are designed to advance gender equality in the private sector and deliver innovative client-focused solutions across countries and sectors.
- Deepening One-WBG collaboration, illustrated through examples such as Morocco4Diversity with an expected reach of 4,000+ women beneficiaries.

Elena Palei (Manager for Gender and Evaluations, MIGA).

- Growing integration of gender into MIGA’s guarantee operations, with 45% of FY25 guarantees including gender components.
- Opportunities created by the new WBG Guarantee Platform hosted by MIGA to scale gender-responsive private investment.

Laura Rawlings (Lead Economist, Gender, WBG).

- Commented on UFGE’s central role in both shaping and enabling implementation of the Gender Strategy.
- Importance of UFGE’s flexibility and ability to respond to emerging opportunities.
- The need to sustain momentum amid institutional transitions, reaffirming the strong support for gender in the WBG, notably from the Board of Directors and senior management for the Strategy, targets and IDA21.

Emanuela Do Gropello (Manager, Gender, WBG).

- Emphasized that the new One WBG organizational structure is a major opportunity to accelerate Gender Strategy implementation, enabling a unified global gender team that can drive thought leadership, strengthen the evidence base, and support more gender-intentional operations across public and private sectors.
- Bringing teams together will enhance the WBG’s ability to scale and replicate effective interventions, ensuring that proven solutions reach more countries and beneficiaries, ultimately helping the institution deliver on its gender targets with greater coherence and impact.

Discussion Highlights.

Partners expressed deep appreciation for Hana’s and Laura’s leadership and emphasized:

- The importance of maintaining ambition in a challenging external environment.
- The need for continued evidence of uptake in FCV contexts, and alignment with upcoming WBG strategies (FCV, Digital Transformation).

UFGE Secretariat and WBG management confirmed that:

- Gender inputs were provided to inform the FCV Strategy, including emphasis on women's leadership and agency.
- The One-WBG reorganization strengthens the ability to deliver gender results.

Session 2 | UFGE Highlights, Achievements & Forward Look

UFGE FY25 Highlights.

Tazeen Hasan, UFGE Program Manager, WBG

- UFGE’s systemwide impact, noting that UFGE evidence has informed 373 WBG operations, shaped policy dialogue in 111 countries, and influenced practices in 225 private-sector firms, with 58% of grants active in IDA and FCV settings.
- The scale and return on investment of UFGE programs, including Gender Innovation Lab (GIL) evidence leveraged in operations amounting to \$12.8 billion in Africa, \$7 billion in East Asia and

the Pacific, and \$671 million in South Asia, while flagship programs—Fast-Track Countries, Behavioral Science and Social Norms, Gender, Climate, and Jobs, and Integrating Gender into Macro-Fiscal Analysis—are driving reforms, expanding women’s economic opportunities, and improving policies across regions.

- Concrete country results, such as 84% of new land titles including women in the Philippines, evidence informing Bangladesh’s draft sexual harassment bill, fiscal reforms in Kazakhstan and Mauritania focused on women’s economic opportunities to promote growth, and Jordan’s first WBG operation dedicated entirely to women’s economic opportunities under a fully coordinated One WBG approach.
- Emphasized UFGE’s role in scaling solutions, citing interventions reaching 160,000 students in Brazil, 4 million women in Nigeria, and 2.4 million adolescent girls through the East Africa Girls’ Empowerment and Resilience (EAGER) Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA) — demonstrating how UFGE-funded evidence translates into regional programs.
- Reinforced UFGE’s catalytic function by spotlighting the breadth of analytical outputs—over 533 knowledge products, 226 impact evaluations, 183 data activities, and 570 learning events—and how these tools accelerate evidence uptake, operational innovation, and policy reform.

UFGE Deep Dives: Operational and Policy Uptake Lightning Video Presentations.

- [Integrating Gender Analysis in Country Core Diagnostics and Macro-Fiscal Policies](#). Peru WBG Public Finance Review, strengthening links between GBV policies, budgeting, and implementation.
- [Gender Strategy Fast-Track Country Program](#). Côte d’Ivoire’s coordinated action toward women’s economic empowerment.
- [Changing Behaviors and Mindsets Around Women’s Economic Empowerment and Gender-Based Violence](#). EAGER MPA and GBV programming in Bolivia.
- [Federation of Gender Innovation Labs](#). Women and Jobs; What works.

Forward Look: WBG Women and Jobs Knowledge Program.

Namita Datta, Global Thought Leadership Head for Gender and Economic Inclusion, IFC and **Ana Maria Munoz Boudet**, Lead Economist, WBG

Highlights include:

- A new Women and Jobs Knowledge Program designed to support the Gender Strategy, the institution’s jobs agenda, and the unified knowledge Bank by bringing WB and IFC expertise together.
- The program will create an Evidence-to-Policy Solutions Platform, synthesizing fragmented research into practical guidance through deep-dive notes, results stories, and ready-to-use resources for task teams.
- A key feature is an AI-assisted tool that helps teams quickly identify what works, find comparable project examples, and access evidence-based recommendations; a beta version will launch internally in March 2026.
- The initiative will operate WBG-wide, evolving iteratively over three years to fill evidence gaps and serve as a central hub for gender and jobs solutions.

Discussion Highlights.

- Partners commented on the high quality of the deep-dive videos and asked whether they would be shared publicly; UFGE Secretariat confirmed they will be featured on the UFGE website, newsletter, and broader communications channels as part of UFGE’s dissemination efforts.
- Partners commended the strong results and clarity of UFGE’s FY25 achievements, noting the impressive delivery despite a challenging global context and appreciating the clear comparison between annual and cumulative progress.
- Partners raised questions on three themes:
 - Opportunities to strengthen collaboration on behavioral science and social norms, including alignment with UN-led initiatives.
 - Enhancing country-level engagement between Gender Innovation Labs and UFGE Development Partner country offices.
 - Ensuring public accessibility of UFGE-supported data platforms for wider technical and analytical use.
- UFGE team confirmed:
 - Active collaboration with the UN Behavioral Science Network and joint implementation of projects in multiple countries.
 - Gender Innovation Labs are willing to connect with UFGE Development Partner country offices to deepen operational synergies.
 - Major gender data platforms are open-access and available for partner use, including the Strengthening Gender Statistics (SGS) [Gender Factbooks](#), the [Gender Data Portal](#) (including [Country Gender Data Landscapes](#)), Women, Business and the Law ([WBL](#)), and the Living Standards Measurement Study ([LSMS](#)).

Session 3| FY26 Work Plan and Budget, UFGE Replenishment, Contingency Funds, UFGE Results Framework, and UFGE Study Tour Plans

Tazeen Hasan, UFGE Program Manager, WBG

FY26 Work Plan & Budget.

- Presented the FY26 Work Plan and Budget, noting continued investments needed to meet the ambition of the WBG Gender Strategy and sustain newly launched programs.
- UFGE has allocated \$20.4 million across FY25–26, with ongoing multi-year grants supporting gender data, macro-fiscal integration, behavioral science and social norms, gender, climate, and jobs, and Fast-Track Countries.
- Partners were pointed to the \$145 million replenishment need (FY24–2030) set out in the [UFGE funding proposal](#) to fully implement the Gender Strategy across all four pillars.
- The Secretariat emphasized UFGE’s role as a stable and strong platform for gender equality work, despite external uncertainties.

Contingency Fund Proposal.

- The Secretariat requested release of the \$1 million contingency fund, originally set aside during COVID-19 for emergency research, and no longer required.
- Releasing the fund will enable a new call for proposals to finance Phase II of the Gender Strategy Fast-Track Country Program, ensuring a competitive and well-resourced second round.

UFGE Results Framework (RF).

Anthony Finn (M&E consultant, WBG)

- UFGE RF is fully aligned with the Gender Strategy Implementation Plan and Corporate Scorecard.
- Development of the RF included multiple consultations, comparative analysis with other trust funds, and peer review by the World Bank Group Development Finance Vice Presidency (DFI).
- Task teams submitted updated targets for all ongoing grants; the RF is a living document and will be refined as programs evolve, and new funding comes online.
- A new Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Technical Advisory Group (MELTAG) will oversee RF use and improvements, with the next meeting planned for June 2025.
- The RF strengthens both quantitative and qualitative reporting, capturing outcomes and stories of impact for future annual reports.

Discussion Highlights.

- Partners expressed support for the proposed FY26 Work Plan and Budget, the new UFGE RF, and the proposal to release the \$1 million contingency fund for the next phase of the Gender Strategy Fast-Track Country Program.
- The Secretariat highlighted that channeling the contingency funds to the Fast-Track Country Program reflects its country-driven, multisectoral, One WBG approach, which brings together WB, IFC, and MIGA teams around shared gender priorities and has proven effective in shifting how the WBG works at country level.
- Partners welcomed alignment of the RF with the Gender Strategy Implementation Plan and the Corporate Scorecard, noting appreciation for the strengthened indicator structure and suggesting continued work to more closely align the theory of change and RF as implementation progresses.
- On timing and format of the next PCM and a possible future study tour, partners indicated that May 2026 is generally feasible (with a preference for the second half of May) for the PCM and that an in-person meeting in Europe would be convenient, while underscoring the need for early notice and a long planning runway for both the PCM and any study tour.
- Partners also requested that CSW-related event details be shared by mid-February to facilitate internal planning and high-level participation.

Next Steps.

Tazeen Hasan, UFGE Program Manager, WBG

- The UFGE Secretariat will confirm PCM dates and venue by February 2026 and share a timeline for a possible 2026 study tour, subject to partners' availability.
- It was noted that the UFGE Secretariat will undertake bilateral outreach in Europe in late January to meet partners in person.

The UFGE Secretariat thanked partners for their continued engagement, guidance, and trust, and invited them to the UFGE December 10 event on *Evidence-Based Action to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls* as part of the 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

ANNEX 1 | PARTICIPANT LIST

| Name | Title | Organization |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| UFGE Partners | | |
| Anne Sablotny-Mubika | Advisor, Sector Program Feminist Development Policy | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) |
| Chloë Horne | Deputy Director, International Financial Institutions - Multilateral UN & IFIs Unit | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland |
| Diva Dhar | Deputy Director, Women's Economic Empowerment & Gender Equality | Gates Foundation |
| Elizabete Rēzija Nīmante | Senior Expert, International Financial Institutions Division | Financial Market Policy Department, Latvia |
| Hege Bakke Sørreime | Senior Advisor | Global Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway |
| Kayla Pearce | Policy Analyst | Global Affairs Canada |
| Marta Baldursdottir | Advisor, Sector Program Feminist Development Policy | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) |
| Niamh Fallon | Development Specialist Officer, International Financial Institutions - Multilateral UN & IFIs Unit | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland |
| Thomas Piras | Senior Advisor, Federal Department for Foreign Affairs | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Switzerland |
| World Bank Group | | |
| Ana Maria Munoz Boudet | Lead Economist | World Bank |
| Anthony Finn | Consultant | World Bank |
| Atia Byll-Cataria | Senior Social Development Specialist | MIGA |
| Bartol Letica | Senior Operations Officer | IFC |
| Diego Javier Ubfal | Senior Economist | World Bank |
| Elena P. Palei | Manager for Gender and Evaluations | MIGA |
| Emanuela Di Gropello | Manager, Gender | World Bank |
| Era Andriambololona | Operations Analyst | IFC |
| Hana Brixi | Global Director, Gender | World Bank |
| Isis Gaddis | Senior Economist | World Bank |
| Kate Vyborny | Economist | World Bank |
| Kavell Gianina Joseph | Consultant | World Bank |
| Laura B. Rawlings | Lead Economist | World Bank |
| Lorena Levano Gavidia | Economist | World Bank |
| Luciana De la Flor Giuffra | Economist | World Bank |

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| Manuel Contreras Urbina | Senior Social Development Specialist | World Bank |
| Maria Lourdes abundo | Consultant | World Bank |
| Mariana Viollaz | ET Consultant | World Bank |
| Nadia Islam-Maswood | Program Analyst | World Bank |
| Namita Datta | Global Thought Leadership Head for Gender and Economic Inclusion | IFC |
| Natasha Rovo | Senior Economist | World Bank |
| Nathalie Hoffmann | Operations Officer | IFC |
| Sara Troiano | Senior Economist | World Bank |
| Sreelakshmi Papineni | Senior Economist | World Bank |
| Sundas Liaqat | ET Consultant | World Bank |
| Tazeen Hasan | UFGE Program Manager | World Bank |
| Toni Johannes Weis | Financial Sector Specialist | World Bank |

ANNEX 2 | UFGE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

| Time | Activity |
|--|--|
| 08:30 - 09:15 AM <i>45 min</i> | <p>Introduction and Welcome (20 min)</p> <p>WBG Gender Strategy Implementation and Strategic Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hana Brix, Global Director, Gender, WBG • Karine Bachongy, (Acting) Director, Gender & Economic Inclusion, IFC • Elena Palei, Manager for Gender and Evaluations, MIGA <p>Remarks: Laura Rawlings, Lead Economist, Gender, WBG (3 min)</p> <p>Partner discussion on strategic priorities (22 min)</p> |
| 09:15 - 09:25 AM | Break |
| 09:25 – 10:20 AM <i>55 min</i> | <p>UFGE Highlights and Achievements of FY25 & Forward Look (7 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tazeen Hasan, UFGE Program Manager, WBG <p>Partner Reflections and Discussion with Task Team Leaders on Synergies with UFGE Programs (pre-shared videos) (30 min)</p> <p>Spotlight themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Integrating Gender Analysis in Country Core Diagnostics and Macro-Fiscal Policies</u>. Peru WBG Public Finance Review strengthening links between GBV policies, budgeting, and implementation • <u>Gender Strategy Fast-Track Country Program</u>. Côte d’Ivoire’s coordinated action toward women’s economic empowerment • <u>Changing Behaviors and Mindsets Around Women’s Economic Empowerment and Gender-Based Violence</u>. East Africa Girls’ Empowerment and Resilience Multiphase Programmatic Approach (EAGER MPA) and GBV programming in Bolivia • <u>Federation of Gender Innovation Labs</u>. Women and Jobs; What works <p>Forward Look: WBG Women and Jobs Knowledge Program and Partner Reflections (8 min presentations and 10 min discussion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ana Maria Munoz Boudet, Lead Economist, WBG • Namita Datta, Global Thought Leadership Head for Gender and Economic Inclusion, IFC |
| 10:20 – 10:30 AM | Break |
| 10:30 – 11:30 AM <i>60 min</i> | <p>FY26 Work Plan and Budget, UFGE Replenishment, Contingency Funds, UFGE Results Framework, and UFGE Study Tour Plans (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tazeen Hasan, UFGE Program Manager, WBG <p>Administrative Discussion with PC Members (45 min)</p> <p>Wrap Up and Next Steps (5 min)</p> |