

Gender Equality Community of Practice for Finance Ministers

April 13 2014

Discussion Summary

The inaugural meeting of the Gender Equality Community of Practice (CoP) for Finance Ministers took place at the World Bank Group, Washington D.C., on April 13th 2014. The global initiative was first proposed by Nigerian Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, during the October 2013 World Bank Group/International Monetary Fund Annual Meetings, and President Jim Yong Kim agreed to host the group's inaugural meeting, which was organized around the theme "Financing for Gender Results." The first meeting recognized Finance Ministers from Jamaica, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Romania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste. It was opened and co-chaired by World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and recognized Ministers were invited to share some of their experiences. The photos from the meeting and the CoP concept note are in the annex.

World Bank President Dr. Jim Yong Kim emphasized that investing wisely in women and girls was vital for the Bank and its partners to reach their agreed development objectives and goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. Finance ministers play a central role in delivering improved gender outcomes by supporting gender-sensitive spending allocations, tax regulations, and reducing structural barriers to gender equality. He laid out three main areas where the World Bank Group will support the gender agenda and the group of finance ministries: knowledge, financing, and partnerships. The Bank will support creation of knowledge and rigorous evidence of what works to close gender gaps. It will continue its gender mainstreaming strategy in its projects. The share of projects that integrate gender into the underlying analysis, program design and results frameworks has almost tripled in the last three years, standing at 54 percent in FY13. The Bank will seek to use direct budget support through development policy loans to support institutional and policy reforms for gender equality.

UN Women Executive Director Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka noted the timeliness of the initiative, as UN members states are advocating for a stand-alone goal for gender equality as well as continued gender mainstreaming in the post-2015 agenda. She emphasized that under-investment in women and girls is costly in terms of human development outcomes and growth. To help address this challenge, UN Women has been providing financial and technical support to 65 countries and finance ministries undertaking institutional reforms and implementation of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). It was also important to monitor progress, by closing data gaps on gender indicators and ensuring sex-disaggregated data. Moving forward, momentum is vital for strengthening the synergies and collaboration between all players working to end poverty and achieve gender equality.

Key Themes and Recommendations from Finance Ministers

The following is a summary of the key themes and recommendations the Finance Ministers noted as necessary for advancing financing for gender equality results.

- **Leadership and political commitment is critical** to increasing investment and results for gender equality;

- **Utilizing already available resources more effectively is vital**, but Finance Ministries can also explore innovative ways of attracting and using additional resources as incentives for ministries;
- **Appropriate financial and capacity building support towards strengthening data and monitoring of results** is critical to ensure sustainable and effective implementation of initiatives;
- **Public awareness and education is necessary** for effective implementation of reforms for gender equality;
- **Continued sharing of good practices and innovative approaches** in this CoP, as well as within regional groups, can be helpful for maintaining momentum

Nigeria Minister of Finance Ms. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala welcomed the launch, which was “born out of frustration” at the lack of knowledge sharing and scaling up of innovative initiatives through the budget. She highlighted recent progress in Nigeria, including the ‘Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria’ (G-WIN) Program¹ that provides additional resources to five select line-ministries (Agriculture, Public Works, Health, Water Resources, and Communication and Technology), for delivery of results for gender equality. Some early results of the initiative include: the Ministry of Health used the additional resources to increase the pace of obstetric fistula surgery; about 2 million female farmers have received mobile phones that allow them to access information and agricultural content to improve their farming methods, while an e-wallet system will allow the transfer of mobile money to purchase agricultural inputs; 1,500 poor women have received training in road maintenance and related vocations. Despite the progress, there is a need to raise awareness among MPs on the usefulness of mainstreaming gender in the budget and there is scope to scale up. The program had received technical and capacity building support from DfID, and additional support was welcomed in order for the program to be scaled up to other line-ministries. The creation of an Africa Finance Ministers CoP for gender equality, which met in the March 2014 African Ministers of Finance meeting in Abuja, brought together twelve African Finance Ministers. It was hoped that the global initiative would build on this group and provide financial resources and technical support.

Sierra Leone Minister of Finance Mr. Kaifala Marah underlined the government’s commitment towards gender equality, as the upcoming “Agenda for Prosperity” development plan in Sierra Leone includes gender and women’s empowerment as a stand-alone pillar. The government tracks gender in 10 key areas (Agriculture and Fisheries, Health, Education, Economic Empowerment, Access to Finance, Rule of Law, Access to Justice, Public Service, Legal and institutional, and Governance) of the development plan, and has developed a Web-based portal² that allows women to assess government’s delivery of services in these areas. The portal will help hold government accountable by allowing civil society feedback and generating an annual traffic light report that will show the lagging areas for gender. The results will be shared during a consultative group meeting, on the sidelines of a g7+ meeting in June, and inform government policies during implementation of the “Agenda for Prosperity.”

Morocco Minister of Budget Mr. Driss El Azami El Idrissi noted that Morocco’s efforts on gender began over a decade ago when they introduced gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in 2002. The 2011 Constitution in Morocco allows women and men equal economic, civil, and political rights and government and has through the years introduced various activities and legal reforms that helped

¹ G-WIN Website: <http://www.gwin.org.ng/> and YouTube Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3Erkza-U7E&feature=youtu.be>

² Sierra Leone Gender Portal: <http://genderagenda.sl>

institutionalize GRB in 2012. A gender report is produced annually, with gender analysis of the budget and gender informed policies of 30 budget departments. A GRB Centre of Excellence is based in the Ministry of Finance, which supports knowledge creation and sharing, while undertaking capacity building of key actors.

Romania Minister of Finance Ms. Ioana Petrescu endorsed the initiative and underlined the importance of supporting female leadership. In Romania while indicators in health, education and labor appear good, women's participation in leadership roles in public office is lagging. For example, although women make up 70% of employees in the finance ministry, Ms. Petrescu was the country's first female Finance Minister and there are few other women in other leadership positions. An agency in the Ministry of Labor has been established that will advance gender equality in leadership positions in government, but greater efforts and better statistics in this area is needed to help educate people and inform better policies.

Jamaica Minister of Finance Mr. Peter Phillips underlined the importance of norms. He noted that while there are no formal regulations that discriminate against women's participation in the public sphere, cultural practices like the unequal distribution of care work in the home ultimately limit women's economic opportunities and contribute to exploitation and acceptance of violence against women. Changing behavioral norms is thus critical. With support from the World Bank the government has implemented training programs targeting the youth and women, in service delivery and using ICTs to empower women. Jamaica is also in early stages of introducing gender-responsive budgeting and they look forward to learning more from other countries in the CoP on policy design and use of budgets for gender equality. The Caribbean will also look to learn from the Africa Finance Ministers CoP on gender equality, and consider the possibility of a comparable regional initiative.

Mauritania Minister for Economic Affairs and Development Mr. Sidi Ould Tah highlighted progress in increasing women's political participation. Currently 23% of their MPs are women, 25% of cabinet members are women, and the mayor of the capital city is a woman. There is an active women business community and they are working to establish a women's business community center for women. Mauritania will engage with the Africa CoP for gender to learn about innovative initiatives for empowering women, particularly through the budget process.

Timor Leste Minister of Finance Ms. Emilia Pires endorsed efforts to increase women's participation in senior positions in the Finance Ministries. She shared Timor Leste's efforts, where they encouraged female employers in the ministry to attend leadership and management training that resulted in women now holding 50 percent of Director General positions.

Rwanda Minister of Finance Mr. Claver Gatete highlighted the advances in Rwanda, including appropriate legal and institutional frameworks such as a constitution that guarantees women at least 30 percent leadership positions in government and across all sectors; and standards and statistics by which government can measure performance and be held accountable. The budget can be a useful tool for addressing gender inequality. He underlined the importance of involving all sectors and stakeholders, including women themselves in the planning and budgeting processes.

Bolivia Minister of Development Planning Ms. Viviana Caro Hinojosa shared the experience on gender budgeting in Bolivia, where gender is mainstreamed in the existing budgets and ceilings but more work is needed to track progress. Multi-year budget support provided by the World Bank can be powerful tool

to help countries put in place more sustainable institutions and processes for addressing gender inequality. The Minister requested the World Bank to review the use of budget support for gender results and addressing gender discrimination.

Several high level representatives of developed countries welcomed the initiative and expressed their support.

United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development Ms. Justine Greening confirmed the UK's interest and support. She highlighted the DfID Leveraging Initiative, which uses UK funds to pull in other donors and partners to galvanize the international community to deliver results for gender equality.

Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation Ms. Hillevi Engström emphasized the need to support women's entry into the labor market in order to achieve gender equality and economic growth, by ensuring parental leave, child care facilities, and sharing of household and care responsibilities. This is an issue that has to be championed by the most senior offices in government, including the Finance Ministry. In Sweden, every government bill must analyze and show how each budget proposal affects women and men, and statistics and data is crucial for this process.

Germany Deputy Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Mr. Thomas Silberhorn welcomed the initiative and expressed interest in learning from best practices on financing for gender equality. He noted potential synergies with the post-2015 agenda as well as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Good financial management for implementing gender equality is a key issue for German development cooperation, including in their support to Kenya and Kosovo. He underlined the importance of leadership for ensuring success of the initiative.

Commitments and Next Steps

1. Members to continue south-south knowledge and learning within and across regions (Africa and the Caribbean), supported by the World Bank, UN Women and partners like DfID;
2. World Bank President will ensure the new Gender Cross-cutting Solutions Area has the staff and resources needed to support the CoP;
3. The World Bank President committed to host and chair a meeting of the CoP every six months;
4. World Bank Group will hold a major public event on gender at the next annual meetings, presenting best practices from all over the world and ensuring media coverage;
5. World Bank Group to review the use of budget support for gender results and addressing gender discrimination.

**Annex 1: Photos from the Gender Equality Community of Practice for Finance Ministers
April 13 2014**





Annex 2: Concept Note

Gender Equality Community of Practice for Finance Ministers

Background

Ministers of Finance can play a critical role in promoting gender equality using such key instruments as the national budget, tax regulations, and institutional rules and regulations.

At the 2013 World Bank Group/International Monetary Fund Annual Meetings, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim welcomed Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala's proposal to create a Community of Practice (CoP) of Finance Ministers to advance gender equality, and offered to host the group's inaugural meeting at the WBG/IMF 2014 Spring Meetings.

There is a growing interest in identifying effective ways to promote women's and girls' opportunities, and to find specific and innovative approaches, tools to address binding constraints, as well as funding for reform. These are areas where collaboration can foster mutual learning, and where partnerships between countries at different income levels will help advance the agenda.

The World Bank invited Ministers of Finance from a diverse set of countries to the inaugural meeting on April 13, 2014, to draw on the innovative and recent approaches they have developed to promote women's and girls' opportunities.

Objectives and Proposed Approach:

- Promote financing for gender results;
- Make national budgets more effective in supporting women's and girls' opportunities by working through national budget processes and other finance ministry operations;
- Promote learning and cross-fertilization by sharing innovative finance ministry-led approaches; and;
- Support political momentum for gender equality goals in post-2015 agenda and associated financial commitments.

To meet the overall objectives the CoP will:

- Convene partners to share good practice and knowledge;
- Promote learning through bi and multilateral activities, including, where appropriate, in-country visits;
- Develop a set of indicators to monitor progress;
- Leverage other activities as appropriate, such as the Women, Business and the Law; the US-led Equal Futures Partnership; UN WOMEN's Gender-Responsive Budgeting Regional Centers of Excellence; and DFID's 'leveraging' initiative.

Medium Term Plan of Activities

The Community of Practice will define a relevant and appropriate program of activities. Some potential activities could include the following:

1. Selected Events

The Gender Equality Community of Practice of Finance Ministers will meet every six months at events and venues where finance ministers are scheduled to meet, such as the WBG/IMF Annual and Spring Meetings. The meetings will be co-chaired by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and will showcase innovative approaches and results of the group's work.

2. Knowledge Sharing

Summary reports and recommendations will highlight countries' innovative practices, along with major decisions made at the high-level meeting. The World Bank will develop a webpage to this end, and will use the social media platforms to host and disseminate useful resources and innovative solutions emerging from the CoP and elsewhere.

3. Learning

Regional meetings and technical workshops will be organized for interested parties, where best practices can be shared. These can be organized and hosted by members of the CoP or by other partners, including donor countries, supported by UN Women and the World Bank.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The key to an effective Community of Practice will be the development of a set of indicators that finance ministers can use to monitor progress on gender equality. A number of finance ministers are already working on this, and drawing on their initiatives as well as post 2015 indicators there is scope to develop a solid monitoring framework.

5. Linkages to Ongoing and New Activities and Instruments

- The World Bank Group uses Development Policy Operations (DPOs) to provide budget support to governments undertaking structural and budgetary reforms. The five DPOs approved in FY13 with gender prior actions amounted to over \$1 billion. Through the CoP, the Bank aims to support countries as they deepen their focus on gender using DPOs. While DPOs are increasingly more gender-informed, with one third integrating gender into the design, program and results framework in FY13, there is room for improvement. The scope for prior actions with potential for transformational change for women's and girls' opportunities will be explained.
- UN Women's work on gender responsive budgeting fits well with the scope of the CoP, and UN Women's Regional Centers of Excellence can provide crucial support to CoP members interested in pursuing this approach.³
- The Equal Futures Partnership convenes leading government representatives from 24 countries who have committed to increasing women's economic opportunities and rights. It is an important partnership to share commitments, new initiatives and experiences.⁴
- Through its new leveraging initiative, DFID will be providing technical advice and support for nationally owned solutions to promote gender equality. This initiative can create opportunities for CoP members looking to use their budgets to promote gender results.

Membership. The CoP will comprise a core group of leaders who have shown commitment and willingness to use their positions as Ministers of Finance to promote gender equality. It will be affiliated with a broader group of actors who are interested in promoting and supporting these ministers in their work.

³ <http://www.gender-budgets.org/>

⁴ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/23/fact-sheet-equal-futures-partnership-expand-women-s-political-and-econom>