

## **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.<sup>1</sup>
- 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.<sup>2</sup>
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gender-budgets.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/23/fact-sheet-equal-futures-partnership-expand-women-s-political-and-econom>