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**MDB's investments and operations are conducive to
women's economic empowerment**

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MDB'S INVESTMENTS AND OPERATIONS ARE CONDUCTIVE TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) Working Group on Gender aims to strengthen information-sharing and collaboration on gender equality in operations among multilateral development banks. Working Group members include the African Development Bank (AfDB), Asian Development Bank (AsDB), Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank Group (WB), represented by the World Bank (WB) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) have obtained an observer status.

Upon UNWOMEN's request, a short paper has been prepared on the MDBs' ongoing activities on the promotion of women's economic empowerment and their conducive efforts towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality (SDG 5) so as to feed into the discussion of the priority themes set out for this meeting. This paper provides a short summary of the MDBs commitments, activities and mechanisms that underpin their work on gender equality in the context of sustainable development. The information presented in this paper is a compilation of inputs provided by representatives of the institutions participating in the MDB Working Group on Gender under a considerably tight timeframe so it might not be fully comprehensive and can be updated as needed.

A. Enabling policy and legal environments

Throughout their investments and operations, all MDBs try to address policy and regulatory barriers restricting women's advancement in the economy and society. Most of the institutions support research on gender issues and undertake policy dialogue with counterparts in their respective regions of operations, with the aim to create an enabling policy and legal environment for both women and men. This includes dialogue on gender equality laws, sector-specific policies and legal reforms.

- The AfDB supports women's land tenure security as part of country dialogue on legal reforms and in its operations, by promoting women farmers' tenure security. The Bank also works with member countries and regional economic communities to promote women's entrepreneurship through legal reform and gender-responsive regulatory frameworks.
- The ADB has helped create policy and legal environments promoting gender equality by engaging with its counterparts and participating in the preparation and adoption process of the Gender Equality Law in Vietnam (2004-6), the Gender Equality Law in Mongolia (2011) and the Gender Policy for local transportation system in Nepal (2009), as well as the Nepal Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Project which targeted the 15 poorest districts in the country which helped women gain legal awareness and citizenship certificates to help improve their legal status.
- CDB has financed the development of Gender Implementation Guidelines to institutionalize gender equality in the Education Sector Strategy roll-out in countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean Countries (OECS). Education planners were introduced to the guidelines and exposed to gender data and trends in education, as well as gender patterns in education and their implications.
- EBRD's investment in Almatyelectrotrans (AET), Almaty's public transport operator, is one such example where EBRD sought to promote gender equality. The project addressed significant challenges in meeting its objectives of increasing women's equal opportunities in the workplace because of the labour legislation restrictions on women's ability to obtain bus driving licences. Following policy dialogue undertaken with EBRD, the Government introduced a new administrative order to enable women to drive buses.
- The IDB's Multilateral Investment Fund hosted the Global Banking Alliance for Women (GBA) Annual Summit in September 2014. So far, seven IDB client banks from the LAC region have joined the alliance (there were no GBA member banks from LAC prior to 2013). These IDB

clients can now access cutting-edge knowledge and technical expertise needed to target the women's market.

- IFC, for example, has an increased focus on the care economy and carries out private sector studies and reports in order to inform the creation of enabling policy and legal environments.
- The IsDB tries to create an enabling policy and legal environment for women by mainstreaming gender in Member Country Partnership Strategies, within the mandate of sector departments as well as in project design.
- The World Bank focuses on creating evidence of what works and what doesn't, including through ground-breaking impact evaluation studies by the Gender Innovation Labs (GILs). One encouraging example of innovation comes from the Brazilian state of Pernambuco. The WB has been using a \$500 million Development Policy Loan to help the Brazilian government make gender-based violence part of its broader strategy. Before project start, the numbers were compelling: a third of all women and girls in Pernambuco were exposed to high rates of physical violence, while fourteen percent were subjected to sexual violence. The WB worked to help promote women's economic empowerment with the setting up of a permanent Women's Secretariat with twelve regional coordinators throughout the state; and also dealt with the physical nature of the harm by training 2000 health workers and law enforcement officers in gender-related issues.

There are, of course, challenges MDBs face in realizing their objectives in this area. Overall, the limited availability of resources earmarked for gender related-work constitutes a constraint. The lack of data constitutes another challenge, as it makes it more difficult to inform policy dialogue and gender inclusive project design in new areas of MDBs operations. Sometimes a change in the political environment may result in lack of support by the counterpart to adopt legislation that advances gender equality (for instance, in the case of the adoption of the Gender Equality Law in the Maldives). Other times, even if gender policies and legislation have been adopted, their enforcement and monitoring of implementation may be weak or absent. Weak civil society capacity cannot always contribute to addressing gender issues, while the lack of funding and recognition given to national women machineries is yet another shortcoming. In addition, rigorous and evidence-based knowledge of what really works in closing the gender gaps is scarce, while creating such knowledge is often quite expensive (for instance, conducting impact evaluation studies). Sadly, at times, MDBs initiatives related to gender may not be supported internally by the institution. And, finally, implementation of such policies faces additional hurdles when investing and operating in fragile-conflict affected states.

B. Leadership and participation

In line with SDG 5, most of the MDBs have committed to promoting women's leadership and participation in the public and private sectors, within their respective mandates and regions of operations.

Within operations and investments:

- The AfDB promotes women's leadership and participation through advocacy (internally as well as externally), by identifying gender champions at the highest political levels and at technical levels across the Bank and by appointing a Special Envoy on Gender.
- The ADB supports pilot innovations to increase women's voice in decision-making in formal and informal institutions under its Gender Operational Plan. Female quotas in community organizations and temporary special measures and investments in women's leadership in Asia and the Pacific are integrated in some of ADB's operations, such as in water users associations, water and sanitation groups, irrigation committees, village committees, and farmer groups. An example is the Bangladesh Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project which promoted women's participation in local urban governance structures and infrastructure development: nearly 7,000 women were mobilized to hold positions on the executive committees of community-based organizations.

- The CDB commits to gender-sensitive stakeholder engagement during project preparation and implementation, which is a qualitative criterion ranked within the project gender marker.
- The EBRD has supported its Egypt-based client Juhayna, a leading producer of dairy products across Africa and the Middle East, to review its Human Resources policies in order to increase women's representation in its workforce, given the company has in total 4,610 employees, out of which only 3 per cent are women.
- IDB has long promoted women's leadership by supporting data gathering on women's political participation in the Americas, as well as through its PROLID program. This month (October 2015), IDB launched the PROLID Public Sector Leader's Network to create mentoring and skills-building opportunities to connect women leaders and government officials committed to public sector service.
- The IsDB has partnered with the Islamic Chamber of Commerce of Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA) to promote women's participation in the economy and has also established the *One Million Businesswomen* website to help create and support a network for women entrepreneurs in member countries. The IsDB has also established a *Prize for Women's Contribution to Development* in order to highlight the role of women as contributors and leaders in the development process, instead of passive recipients. Some examples from projects include the *Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs through GALS* (Gender Action Learning System) in Azerbaijan, *Save the Mothers* programme, aiming to improve women's access to quality maternal health services in Sierra Leone, Cameroon and Guinea.
- WB research on women's voice and participation has been prominent (and featured as a key dimension in the 2012 WDR on gender equality). Via its operations, the WB has been promoting women's leadership and participation, for example by introducing gender quotas in community-driven development (CDD) projects.

Internally:

- AfDB has appointed 85 gender focal points, which have now been trained on how to integrate gender in projects and has introduced systems of mentorship and leadership training to reach gender management quotas.
- The CDB has a specific target for women's participation in senior management and promotes women's leadership as an integral aspect of organizational reform.
- Both the EBRD and IFC have in place Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Policies ensuring non-discrimination in the workplace. The EBRD makes efforts to provide greater gender balance within the same (at end 2014, 22% of Bank Nominee Directors were women) as well as to encourage those companies in which the EBRD holds equity to consider diversity in decision-making positions. IFC has an internal target to ensure leadership diversity in its equity portfolio.
- Similarly, the Board of Directors at IDB has set specific targets for women in senior technical and corporate leadership positions.
- The World Bank Group has also committed to achieving EDGE certification, which is a standard for workplace gender equality ensuring certified organizations have a structured, systematic approach to measure, track, and close the workplace gender gap by focusing on five areas: equal pay for equivalent work, recruitment and promotion, leadership development training and mentoring, flexible working, and company culture. The WBG has targets for reaching gender equity in its middle and management ranks. IFC and EDGE have partnered along with other organizations in *She Works*, an initiative to advance women's employment in the private sector.

While quotas have been successful in most cases, in areas where gender social norms are strong it is rather challenging to meet the female participation in decision-making targets. Also, lack of support from usually male-dominated ministries/sovereign counterparts often constitutes an additional challenge. It is widely known that, across all EBRD COOs, the majority of companies have a man as a top manager, while women are under-represented on corporate boards. These inequalities are the

greatest in the SEMED region, where less than 6% of companies have a woman in senior management.

C. Financing and Investment Mechanisms

Some variation can be noted across the MDBs with respect to their financing and investment mechanisms as well as investment priorities. In terms of sovereign client support, the WB (100%), IDB (70%), ADB (80%) and AfDB (70%) provide loans and grants, conduct research projects and provide evidence-based policy advice. For the AfDB, infrastructure and agriculture constitute priority sectors. In ADB, gender is being recognized as one of the five drivers of change in the organization's Strategy 2020. Like other MDBs, CDB aims to mainstream gender across its financial operations and is exploring creative ways of developing and financing gender driven initiatives. For the IDB, the following areas constitute a priority: increasing women's agency, women's access to quality public services and enhancing women's entrepreneurship. The ERBD mostly invests in private sector clients (72%) through loans and equity; gender-related projects/activities aim at promoting women's access to employment and skills, finance, and services. IFC works exclusively with the private sector through SME loans, insurance products, micro-finance and equity.

The *African Women in Business Fund* (AWIB) is indicative of AfDB's efforts to enhance African women entrepreneurs' economic potential. The IsDB has established the *Arab Women Enterprise Fund* and has used grant resources to establish a *Women and NGO* program. The EBRD has rolled out specific products, which have proved to be successful in addressing gender gaps, such as the '*Women in Business*' Programmes. The IFC has set up the *Women Entrepreneurship Facility* and the *SME Venture Fund* to support women entrepreneurs.

D. Data and Statistics, including M&E

In this section it is better to start by outlining the challenge: MDBs experience a serious lack of sex-disaggregated data across regions. This could be attributed to the weak capacity of National Statistical Authorities, the limited availability of funds to engage in data collection, the absence or poor quality of baseline data and lack of regular updates, as well as the fact that some gender indicators are not culturally sensitive. This suggests inherent limitations in designing and conducting their operations and achieving gender targets and commitments. Both quantitative and qualitative sex-disaggregated data are essential to identify gender gaps and establish priorities for investment and policy dialogue that will be conducive to closing the gender gaps.

All MDBs promote better data collection and support the development of robust M&E systems that allow tracking progress (with appropriate gender-specific indicators); while some focus on conducting impact evaluation studies that prove what works and what doesn't (such as WB and IDB).

- AfDB, in partnership with client countries, is undertaking gender specific statistical activities, such as the development of regional gender statistics database for Census data dissemination, Agriculture and Rural Development Statistics and Financial inclusion. The *African Gender Index*, is an African-owned gender statistics tool measuring women's activities as producers, and women as active citizens and leaders, among other areas. Going forward, AfDB will work with UNECA on improving data collection & measurement. AfDB has also put in place a *CSO database* by sector in Africa. Gender is adequately captured by the database with data on credible and important CSOs working on gender and women organisation by country and sub-region. Finally, the *African Women Entrepreneurs Associations (AWEAs) Mapping and Framework for Enhancement*, is a West-Africa focused database that includes 564 AWEAs in 16 countries, to allow different stakeholders in targeting specific women entrepreneurs by sector of activity, and identifying AWEAs for capacity building, funding or information sharing.
- The ADB provides assistance to country-level statistical authorities with regards to data collection, such as the EDGE project that ADB is implementing with UN Statistics Division and UNWomen on SDG 5 gender indicators benchmarking.

- The CDB provides technical and financial assistance to member countries to build regional and national statistical infrastructure, such as the CARICOM Regional Programme on Gender Statistics.
- The *Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS)*, implemented by the EBRD in partnership with the WBG, is a face-to-face survey of enterprises' top managers that examines the quality of the business environment as determined by a wide range of interactions between enterprises and the state. Gender-disaggregated data are collected that allow EBRD to measure women's entrepreneurship activities in EBRD's COOs.
- The IFC uses the Development Outcome Tracking System (DOTS) and the Advisory Services Operational Portal (ASOP) to measure the development effectiveness of its gender investments and advisory services. IFC is currently redesigning the gender results framework in order to align with the WBG Gender Strategy (measuring employment, entrepreneurship and leadership at the moment but not yet across the entire portfolio).
- IDB focuses on conducting impact evaluation studies in two priority areas, namely women's economic empowerment and violence against women. As part of this effort, IDB has created the *WeVentureScope* Index, assessing the policy environment for women's entrepreneurship in 20 LAC countries. Moreover, IDB is currently developing key gender indicators that will be included in the *System of Labor Market Indicators*, a flagship product of the Bank's Labor Market Unit.
- The IsDB collects sex-disaggregated data for Core Sector Indicators and has established a partnership with the Development of Arab Women's Observatory.
- Likewise, the WB is continually working on improving the number of gender-relevant indicators available, and their quality—through new methodologies, redesigned surveys and so on. Some examples include *Findex; Women Business and the Law*; and the *WB Gender Data Portal*. At the same time, the WB helps countries build capacity to collect and use gender-relevant data by directly assisting National Statistical Offices and line ministries. Examples of support to statistical capacity building with a focus on gender include a gender focused analysis and time use surveys in Ethiopia and training workshops on gender data in Rwanda and Vietnam, covering topics such as awareness of gender statistics and *ADePT Gender* for gender data analysis.

E. Accountability mechanisms

Overall, MDBs have established robust accountability mechanisms to ensure that gender is adequately mainstreamed across their investments and operations.

- AfDB has developed a gender dimension of quality-at-entry standards in the Readiness Reviews, in order to: (i) facilitate monitoring of the quality of gender mainstreaming; and (ii) send a message to Bank task managers and senior management that the promotion of gender equality is not optional but a requirement for all Bank operations. Nevertheless, the Bank needs to put in place a functional institutional architecture on gender in order to have clear internal coordination mechanism on gender. A systematic accountability mechanism for implementation of commitments is planned to be established. AfDB has started to develop a gender marker system that will address accountability in projects.
- ADB's annual performance against sector-specific gender targets is reported annually to the ADB Board of Directors. All of ADB's gender mainstreamed operations are required to have a project Gender Action Plan (GAP). The GAP is ADB's key gender mainstreaming tool, which ensures accountability for implementing gender designs within the project since it clearly enlists explicit gender actions for the project, reflects quotas/targets for each activity, states who is accountable, and provides information for reporting mechanisms for GAP monitoring.
- The CDB has increased the number of gender indicators as part of the strategic plan 2015-2019 and annually reports on gender through the Development Effectiveness Report, while corporate

reports on portfolio performance provide an update regarding the status of the Bank's Gender Equality Policy. A draft gender marker system based on the gender management systems concept provides a roadmap for supporting and measuring gender performance across the Bank. However, beyond the core sector indicators, the Bank needs to have specific indicators that reflect its investments in specific areas of gender equality. These are being developed based on current regional data and will inform a review of the Bank's Gender Operational Strategy

- The EBRD has chosen to further reflect the importance it places on the promotion of gender equality by elevating its measurement to the institutional level via its Corporate Scorecard. This will allow the Bank to reflect the range of activities and impacts, and allow it to measure not only the operational parameters but also the policy and institutional development aspects of the Bank's mandate and operations. Additional indicators have thus been developed and will be captured through a fit for purpose Gender Strategy 'Performance Monitoring Framework'.
- The IDB has committed to contribute to gender equality and has set targets for the percentage of loans addressing gender issues, reports annually on gender progress in the IDB's Development Effectiveness Overview, and has included gender indicators in the IDB's updated institutional results framework (maternal mortality ratio, women's formal employment, women beneficiaries of economic empowerment activities).
- The IsDB tracks progress according to the key performance indicators and annually reports on gender.
- The WB undertakes regular monitoring of gender in WBG 'portfolio lending' that feeds into the Annual Monitoring Report. Gender is part of the Corporate Scorecard commitments and the IDA commitments, and features as a special theme under IDA 17. Under IDA 17 and integrated in the WBG Corporate Scorecard, several indicators were agreed that go beyond measuring the integration of gender issues in strategy and project design. Specifically, these indicators will consider whether and to what extent priority gender gaps actually shrink during project implementation as well as systematically track the impacts of IDA lending on gender outcomes, including through beneficiary feedback. Currently, the WBG is undertaking a challenging shift in focus from using ex ante measures to a results-based approach. Gender is also part of the IFC's Corporate Scorecard.
- Accountability mechanisms for the IDB's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment include: overall targets for the percentage of loans that address these issues; annual reporting on progress in gender mainstreaming and direct investment to promote gender equality; and the inclusion of gender indicators in the IDB's updated institutional results framework. The IDB's performance in including the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in its loans, grants and analytical work is reported on annually in the IDB's Development Effectiveness Overview, as well as in a more detailed report delivered to senior management.

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