

Comment on the new World Bank Gender Strategy

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- The World Bank Group is preparing a new gender strategy, which is expected to be finalized and discussed by the Board of Executive Directors later this year.
- The strategy is being developed to reflect fundamental changes in the world and at the World Bank Group and to respond to accumulating evidence on what works to close gender gaps.
- The previous World Bank strategy on gender, adopted in 2001, emphasized gender equality as an issue of development effectiveness and laid the basis for integrating gender into the Bank's policy dialogue, analytic work, and operations.

- The World Bank Global Development Report 2012 – Gender Equality and Development
- Women, Business, and the Law (2014)
- New Report being released September 9th 2015
- Expansion of World Bank gender work and focus.
- Caren Grown hired as World Bank Group Senior Director, Gender in 2014.

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world development report **2012**



GENDER EQUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT



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- Women account for **58%** of unpaid employment (Ch 5)
- **552m** women joined the global **labor force** between 1980 and 2008 (Ch 5)
- About **2/5** of girls are never born due to a preference for **sons** (Ch 3)
- Globally, a **sixth** of girls **die** in early childhood (Ch 3)
- Globally, over a **third** of women **die** in their reproductive years (Ch 3)
- Girls now **outnumber** boys in secondary schools in **45** developing countries (Ch 3)
- Globally **4** out of every **10** workers is a woman (Ch 5)



Women, Business and the Law



- *Women, Business and the Law 2014: Removing Restrictions To Enhance Gender Equality* finds that while 42 economies reduced legal differences between women and men, 128 out of 143 economies studied still impose legal differences on the basis of gender in at least one of the report's key indicators.
- The report also identifies 48 law and regulatory reforms enacted between March 2011 and April 2013 that could enhance women's economic opportunities.
- In all economies, married women face more legal differentiations than unmarried women.
- In 25 economies, married women cannot legally choose where to live in the same way as married men, and in 29 they cannot be legally recognized as head of household in the same way as married men.

- Gender Strategy – some of FOKUS comments
- The UN Women in their report “Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016 – Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights” identifies three interconnected dimensions that need to be transformed to close the gender gaps.
- To promote gender equality the World Bank should focus on redressing socio-economic disadvantage, addressing stereotyping, stigma and violence and strengthening women’s agency, voice and participation.
- The current neo-liberal economic policies have promoted reduced government spending, deregulation, the privatization of public assets and services, and rampant unequal forms of trade liberalization, which has led to an increase in inequalities and has undermined the capacity of States to uphold human rights, in particular, economic and social rights (ESR). Women and girls, who comprise a majority of the world’s poor, are disproportionately affected by these policies.

- Austerity measures enforced on countries as means of regulating the economy has a documented gendered effect that deepens inequalities instead of ending them. Austerity measures drives more women into poverty. There is a need for measures that promotes equality and has a rights-based approach.
- Debts servicing continues to undermine women's human rights, through the diversion of scarce government resources from public services that reduce women's care burden; and through the attachment of harmful policy conditionalities, such as privatization or the introduction of user fees for services that are critical for women's enjoyment of human rights and gender equality.

- Gender equality is often said to be more than a goal in itself. Yes, greater gender equality is smart economics and will enhance productivity and allow business to perform better and improve development outcomes for the next generation, but first of all it is a question about basic human rights.
- There is a strong tendency towards the instrumentalization and commodification of women, where women's empowerment, and women's full and equal participation and leadership in the economy are vital to significantly enhance economic growth and productivity or to promote market access for financial services.
- We should be careful not to reduce gender equality only to be a tool to reach other goals. Smart economics has to be rights based and not only to be used as an economic trigger for increased growth.

- The World Bank Group's new Gender Strategy should have clear and strong references to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. There is a need for a global economic and financial framework that creates an enabling environment for the realization of all human rights for women and girls, including ESR.
- A right-based approach also means involving the people that are affected by a program or a policy. The World Bank should give priority to an early involvement of women and women's organizations and let them be part of the planning and design of programs and policies that affect them.

- Equal pay laws and national minimum wage policies and the implementation of these are often important tools to secure working women's rights. Public and private companies must be transparent and held accountable for their pay structures. World Bank programs and policies should also support the organizing of women workers.
- Is important that access to paid work doesn't increase women's total workload. Better jobs for both men and women should therefore provide childcare services in line with the needs of the parents. There should also be parental leave (not only maternity leave) entitlements covered by collective mechanisms.
- The World Bank should demand concrete plans to promote gender equality and women's rights when they support a country and company. This demand must be accompanied by long term funding for capacity building and the establishment of for example gender units within the country or company. Many countries and companies will need extensive training on gender and gender mainstreaming and the World Bank should link them up with gender experts and women's organizations and provide them with relevant and concrete examples and experiences from past programs.

World Bank influence and governance

- Nordic-Baltic Constituency:
- Satu Santala, Executive Director
- Danish Susanne Shine, Advisor to Executive Director and responsible for Gender Issues
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- Challenge to find out how gender sensitive the bank is in its work (and how good Norway and the other Nordic and Baltic countries are at making demands and putting pressure on the bank.

- Process to update World Bank Safeguard

AND lastly:

- FOKUS would like to have a Nordic network of women`s organizations who can work together to challenge the World Bank and our Nordic country representatives to the bank.