

# Summary of Discussions of Executive Directors and of Board Committee on Development Effectiveness

On December 17, 2009, the Executive Directors (EDs) discussed the document entitled *Gender and Development: An Evaluation of World Bank Support, 2002–08*, prepared by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), and the revised draft Management Response. For this discussion, additional data and analysis were shared by IEG and management. Previously, the Board Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE) considered the IEG evaluation report and draft Management Response on October 28, 2009. A statement by the External Advisory Panel was also made available for the Committee meeting. Based on its review of the IEG report and draft Management Response, the Committee had recommended a subsequent Board consideration.

At the Board meeting held on December 17, there was concurrence with IEG's evaluation that gender was an essential and core development function, and with its findings that the Bank was improving in integrating gender in scope and quality. The EDs and management also agreed with IEG that the Bank can do better on gender mainstreaming. IEG's findings resonated with the Board on the areas identified as key to strengthening gender mainstreaming, including (i) the results framework, (ii) managerial accountability, (iii) Bank budget resources, and (iv) country-level diagnostics. Noting management's intention to address these areas, EDs urged management to quickly take action. In strengthening the integration of gender in the Bank's operations, they emphasized that gender analysis be reflected in Country Assistance Strategies (CAS). It was noted that the IEG evaluation report and final Management Response would be disclosed.

At the earlier CODE discussion, Committee members welcomed the timely report, noting that the Bank's gender work had been a topic at the IDA15 mid-term review and that the report would have broader relevance for the process leading up to IDA16. They found it encouraging that integration of gender overall improved during the period covered by the IEG evaluation when compared to the 1990s and took note of IEG's finding that the implementation of the Bank's gender policy weakened in the latter half of the evaluation period. Committee members suggested subsequent

discussions and exchanges between IEG and management to help develop an understanding on the implementation of the Gender Policy Operational Policy/Bank Procedure (OP/BP 4.20) in areas where there were disagreements, for example, the definition and effectiveness of country gender diagnostics and the analysis of gender mainstreaming trends. In addition, Committee members emphasized the need to strengthen Senior Management accountability, the importance of having sufficient resources to implement the Gender Strategy, and the continued use of incentive funding. In view of the differences expressed by IEG and management, Committee members underlined the importance of an appropriate communication plan for disseminating the IEG's findings and management's response, which was confirmed at the Board meeting.

## Main Issues Discussed

**Differences between IEG and Management.** At the Board meeting, IEG and management commented on their fruitful exchanges on the issues in the evaluation. When the IEG evaluation report and draft Management Response had been considered by CODE, many members had expressed difficulty in reaching a conclusion given the differences, including on methodology and data issues. However, both during the Board and Committee discussions, some speakers viewed IEG and management's differences in a positive light. IEG had noted that there had been significant consultations with management in the preparation of the evaluation report, including on the data used, and additional exchanges to reduce differences and clarify where differences remained.

During the Board discussion, management emphasized that the data and ratings shared by IEG following the CODE meeting generated new and useful findings that clarified the differences between IEG's and management's reporting of trends and led to a fruitful discussion with IEG. The Director-General, Evaluation (DGE) concurred that the additional exchange of data with management following the CODE meeting helped to develop an understanding of the three issues on which differences remain, that is, integration

of gender considerations into economic and sector work; statistical association between the preparation of a gender assessment and integration of gender in the CAS; and trends in gender mainstreaming at the project level. The DGE also noted that, in addition to the usual communications that are coordinated with management, IEG is working with management to support regional workshops to engage operational staff and client stakeholders. Furthermore, IEG has initiated its own program to raise its evaluators' awareness of the need to address gender-related issues.

**Country-Level Gender Diagnostics.** At the Board discussion, EDs re-emphasized the importance of country gender assessment, possibly using other diagnostic tools, to meet the requirement under OP/BP 4.20. Moreover, they underlined the need to ensure the integration of gender diagnostics in CASs. Management agreed that country gender diagnostics are important, while avoiding across-the-board prescriptions, to inform a country-specific approach to gender that is reflected in CASs. In this connection, the importance of country ownership and addressing gender issues to take into account the country context including cultural sensitivities was stressed.

At the Committee meeting, some speakers supported a return to preparing Country Gender Assessments (CGAs). Several others favored a flexible approach; a few of them noted that gender diagnostics could be integrated in other analytical work; some others encouraged the Bank to draw on gender assessments prepared by others or to prepare them with other development partners. One speaker cautioned against mandating CGAs. A few specific comments were made related to the need to assess the diagnostic value of CGAs, and interpreting IEG's recommendation as a call for a realistic implementation plan for country-level gender diagnostic work, without being prescriptive. Management elaborated on economic and sector work that in its view met the requirement for gender assessments ranging from core gender analyses to Poverty Assessments, Country Economic Memoranda, Poverty and Social Impact Analyses, and Public Expenditure Reviews.

**2001 Gender Strategy and OP/BP 4.20.** There was general agreement at the Board and Committee on the continued relevance of the 2001 Gender Strategy and OP/BP 4.20, and the need for management to focus on practical initiatives to improve implementation and results focus. During the Committee discussions, some speakers wondered whether there had been a shift away from the Bank's Gender Strategy, as suggested by the IEG; management stressed that there has been no shift—that both the Gender Strategy and OP/BP 4.20 call appropriately for a country-led approach. In supporting a greater focus on managerial accountability, many speakers echoed the external panel in highlighting the importance of training and linking gender work with managers' performance evaluations; this was reiterated at the Board meeting.

At both the Board and Committee meetings, speakers emphasized the importance of improving the development effectiveness of gender support; of allocating budgetary resources from the Bank instead of relying on external funding; of improving the results framework for monitoring and evaluation; of pursuing a demand-driven and country owned approach; and of keeping in mind that gender issues involve both men and women. Stressing the importance of gender for development, the topic was proposed as the theme for the 2012 World Development Report.

**Gender Action Plan (GAP).** Responding to comments made at the Board and CODE meetings on the role and limited focus of GAP on economic sectors, management noted that the GAP both covered more than 50 percent of the current lending portfolio and, through innovative mechanisms such as incentives-based funding, had yielded results particularly in sectors that historically have had lower gender coverage. Building on its experience with innovative mechanisms, management remarked that the GAP Transition Plan would support sectors not targeted by the GAP such as Education and Health. Management declared its intention to use the Transition Plan to help address the specific issues identified by both management and IEG, for instance by developing new targets and time-bound action plans for specific quantifiable indicators for sectors and Regions.