



## Global Progress Includes People with Disabilities

**W**ith about 650 million people with disabilities worldwide—or about 10 percent of global population—the celebration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities made a significant splash on December 3.

On this day, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities—the first of its kind—marked its 19th month in force. With 143 country signatories and 75

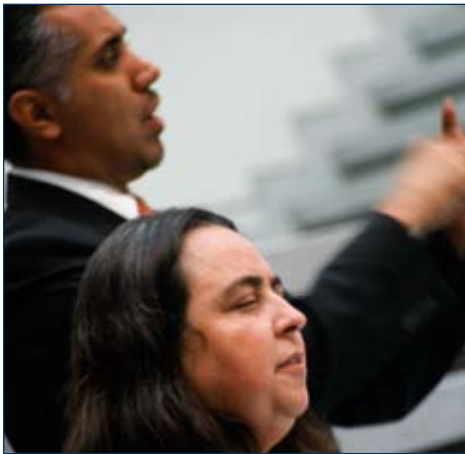
ratifications thus far, the Convention is poised to help ensure that persons with disabilities have a better chance of enjoying human rights on an equal basis with others.

Celebrating jointly with the UN, the World Bank Group convened a diverse community to celebrate with music, panel discussions, and an inspiring keynote by a noted champion—Kathleen Martinez.

With the theme “Making the MDGs Inclusive: Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Their Communities Around the World,” the event was sponsored jointly by the Office of Diversity Programs and the Disability and Development Team.

Speaking on behalf of Bank President Robert Zoellick, Ferid Belhaj, the World Bank Special Representative to the UN,

*continued on page 3*



“There’s nothing like employment that can change the expectation of a society with regard to people with disabilities,” said the afternoon keynote speaker Kathleen Martinez.

## Recruiting and Retaining US Minorities

**T**he second meeting of the US Minorities Working Group convened December 1<sup>st</sup> to improve the World Bank Group approach to hiring and retaining top talent from the US minority community.

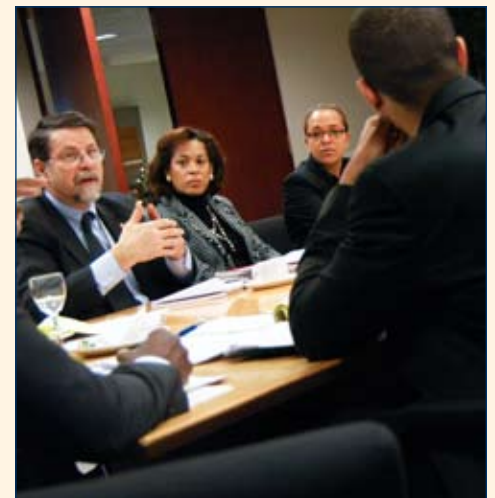
Half of the group’s membership is external, drawn from across the spectrum of US minorities. Also in attendance were key stakeholders inside the Bank Group’s HR complex.

Chief Diversity Officer Julie Oye-gun put the challenge in context: “We need to be systematic so that we can apply what we develop here to our country offices worldwide.”

The Bank Group has historically measured only national representation—Brazilians, South Africans, and Canadians, for example, without regard for their specific sub-national ethnic status.

Within individual nationalities, the institution simply has never kept records on whether, for example, a newly hired American self-identifies as an African American, Native American, or Caucasian American—or whether a long-time Cameroonian staff member sees herself as Eton, Bamiléké, or Bassa, for that matter.

*continued on page 4*



VP of HR, Hasan Tuluy, met with members of the Bank Group’s US Minorities Working Group.

## Promoting Women-Owned Business Worldwide

Today, women-owned businesses supply about 1 percent of global trade.

To promote women's economic empowerment and procurement opportunities for women-owned businesses, the World Bank Group co-sponsored the "Second Global Strategic Forum on Supplier Diversity" on November 11.

"We're really promoting access of women business owners, so they can become vendors in a more powerful way," said Founder and CEO, Elizabeth Vazquez, of Washington, DC-based WeConnect International, a co-sponsor of the event.

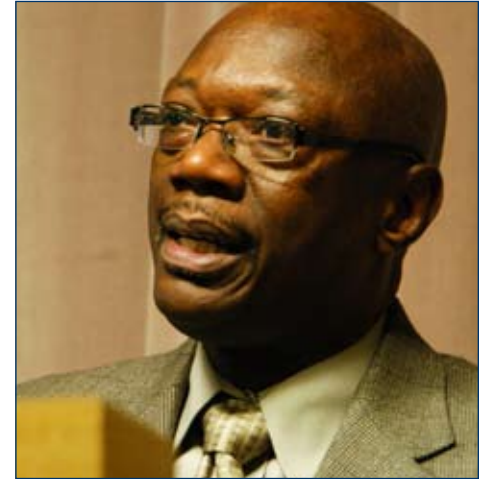
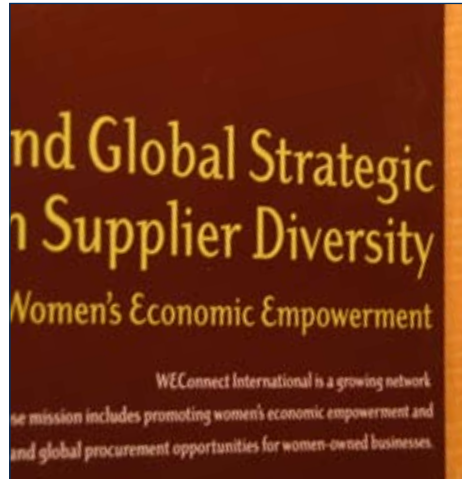
WeConnect has been a major force. Created in the United States 12 years ago, it has expanded its influence internationally by forging affiliate relationships in Canada, Europe, India, and China.

The day's rich program included more than 20 speakers. In attendance were key players from Walmart, Ernst & Young, Accenture, IBM, Johnson Controls, the Boeing Corporation, and other private sector and nonprofit entities.

Michael Robinson spoke on "Rolling Out a Global Program" based on his experience managing a supplier diversity program at IBM. Cultivating diverse suppliers yields a decided competitive advantage, particularly price, said Robinson.

Robinson advised participants to formulate an organized domestic program before going global: secure the CEO's commitment; and get to know each country before rolling out a supplier diversity program there.

"IBM operates in 170 countries. It takes time to go through the process ... because diversity has different definitions in different countries," explained Robinson. In the United States, for example, IBM has four categories of di-



AT&T's Joan Kerr said the business case for promoting women-owned businesses is the same internationally as it is in the United States.

iversity: women, people with disabilities, GLBT, and blacks, he said. "When you go into different countries, [you need to determine which] individuals have been left out of the economic mainstream."

AT&T's Joan Kerr said the business case is the same internationally as it is in the United States: "I think the case for supplier diversity has been made quite well in the US," said Kerr. "The data, the metrics, and the return on investment are well documented in many companies. We are working to promulgate that globally."

Since corporations invest in what yields a return on investment, it is important to measure and demonstrate



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results from efforts to foster diverse suppliers. "We have documented cost savings, operational efficiency improvements ... and sales enablement as being key deliverables attributable to supplier diversity," said Kerr. "Last year, we documented \$30 billion in revenue that was directly attributed to AT&T's supplier diversity programs."

WeConnect's Elizabeth Vazquez thanked the Bank Group's Office of Diversity Programs for being "tireless champions." "Julie Oyegun and her team have invited us to some major forums to promote inclusion and to help multilaterals be part of this process in a really impressive way."

## ...Global Progress Includes People with Disabilities

continued from page 1

said that disability is not a rare phenomenon, but rather a common part of life.

"It is the vision of the World Bank Group to contribute to an inclusive and sustainable globalization—to overcome poverty, enhance growth with care of the environment, and create individual opportunity and hope," said Belhaj, via video uplink from the United Nations.

"We recognize that persons with disabilities and their families—who are disproportionately represented among the world's poorest and most vulnerable—and expanding equitable opportunities for them, must be part of that vision," said Belhaj.

### Martinez: Employing and retaining people with disabilities

Kathleen Martinez, the US Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) strode to the MC-Atrium lectern alongside her sighted assistant. In preparation, she readied a single finger atop a page of Braille-indentured notes.

"Exclusion and isolation are the most prevalent forms of disability discrimination," said Martinez, who

keynoted the afternoon program. In the past, she said, experts and scholars have falsely justified the exclusion of people with disabilities, and the segregation of services for them.

"We all bring our various identities to our jobs; and a disability is an identity that you can acquire. [I]t is very necessary to have an inclusive work environment to support you so that you can continue to work."

Established in 2002, ODEP frames US policy for persons with disabilities. "There's nothing like employment that can change the expectation of a society with regard to people with disabilities," Martinez concluded.

### The World Bank Group and the UN Convention

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2006, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force in May 2008 after 20 countries had ratified it. It aims to help this often-excluded group overcome social obstacles that prevent them from receiving an education, accessing healthcare, getting a job, and generally being accepted.

Today, the Convention is breathing new life into the efforts of international development partners and country governments. Leading the Bank charge is the Disability and Development Team (D&D), which was created in 2002.

"The Convention brings legal obligations. States need to respond. We have to be ready and able to help our client countries translate the Convention into practice," said Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo, D&D Team Senior Operations Officer. "Increasingly donors are looking to it as a framework for engagement at the country level."

The Bank Group's Chief Diversity Officer, Julie Oyegun, agreed, highlighting the work of the Bank's Disability Working Group for helping make the day a success: "As an organization, we need to pay more attention to the UN Convention and continue to partner with external organizations to make sure it comes to life," said Oyegun. "It is so important to developing countries. Everybody will win if we use it more."

To read the full article online, type "diversity" in your browser.



New York-based blind musician Raul Midón entertained staff. He uses accessibility tools to create, edit, and mix his own music.



The theme of the day was, "Making the MDGs Inclusive: Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Their Communities Around the World."

## ...Recruiting and Retaining US Minorities

continued from page 1

What is more, the institution does not intend to begin an ethnic head count at such a level of detail, said VP of HR Hasan Tuluy. Given the Bank's multilateral shareholder structure and vast patchwork of ethnic groups across 186 member countries, this would "open a can of worms," said Tuluy.

Tuluy did emphasize, however, that it would no longer be acceptable for Bank country offices to be dominated by a single ethnic group, as has occurred in the past: "We have 121 country offices. We need to start working at that level, bring a deliberate purpose and effort to infuse the cultural change that we are talking about."

In view of that, the US Minorities Working Group discussed how best to make simple, practical progress at the Bank Group's largest country office—in Washington, DC. Multiple practical next steps emerged from the discussion.

Setu van Lare-Hodges, from the Office of Diversity Programs, invited participants to help the Bank Group forge stronger affiliations with academic institutions to improve outreach.

Rick Ramsey III, President & CEO of the LEAD Program, agreed that a focus on the college community is essential to growing a pipeline and creating a solid foundation. He recommended a "very aggressive approach," that would compete with the "Googles and Apples and Goldman Sachs" of the world for the very best available minority talent.

"What got us here is that there are not enough African Americans in the Bank," pressed Stan Straughter, the Chairman of the Board of Constituency for Africa, who reminded participants that the Bank Group is not alone. "We're facing a dearth of minorities in international work altogether." Straughter suggested the institution pool resources with other international financial institutions to take collective action.

Ofield Dukes, President of the eponymous DC-based PR firm, presented recommendations for a communications strategy that might enable the World Bank Group to reach out in a more targeted manner to US minority associations and organizations.

Marcene Broadwater, Global Manager of IFC's Chemicals Division, said



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the effort reflects the values of the World Bank Group: "We need to access the full breadth of perspectives on the issues we work on, and we do that by being inclusive," she said. "The U.S. is comprised of people from all backgrounds, and having American staff at the Bank be more representative of the country's diversity is a powerful way to capture these varied experiences."

Kevin Lu, MIGA's CFO, said the key now is to seize the opportunity and focus on the future: "As a truly global institution that taps talent from around the world, it is crucial for the Bank Group to reach all potential talent pools, including minorities. That's how we strengthen the institution to reach our goal of reducing poverty globally."

Julie Oyegun said she was getting great signals from leadership: "Having Hasan here at the table has given us a sense of cohesion, because we need to make commitments *with* our colleagues, not *for* them," said Oyegun. "My biggest hope is that we continue to forge better partnerships. Making a difference goes way beyond what we are capable of doing on our own."



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