

Mr. Zoellick's Announcement of Six new World Bank Group Commitments on Gender Equality

"Ways to Bridge Gender Gaps"  
6:00 – 6:45 pm, April 11, 2008, MC4-800

**Commitments**

- 1. To measurably improve the integration of gender equality into our agriculture and rural developments projects by the end of the implementation of the Gender Action Plan in December 2010.** For instance, in the Africa Region, at least half of the Bank's rural projects will include gender-responsive actions in their design (37% in FY05).
  - The soaring world food prices underscore the importance of redoubling efforts to increase productivity and incomes in agriculture to stave off hunger and malnutrition, and women make up a majority of the workforce in small and subsistence farming.
  - Studies from sub-Saharan Africa indicate that yields could increase by up to 20% merely by redistributing existing resources more equally between men and women. Women, who in many parts of the world make up a majority of the agricultural workforce, often lack access to basic extension services, land rights and support to start agribusinesses.
- 2. To channel, through the IFC, at least \$100m in credit lines at commercial banks for women entrepreneurs, by the end of 2012.** [This is a new IFC program.]
- 3. To have World Bank Country Directors report to me, by June 1, on what we are doing and what more we should be doing to empower girls and women economically in countries that we support.**
- 4. To launch a work program on "young women count for economic development," starting with an event prior to the 2008 Annual Meetings.**
  - The event will convene private and public sector leaders on the development value of increasing adolescent girls' economic opportunities, and seek to mobilize government, donors, foundations and private sector engagement and funds.
  - We're also working on the partnership with the Nike Foundation and the Government of Liberia that I mentioned earlier.
- 5. To create a Private Sector Leaders' Forum and convene their first meeting on the margins of the 2008 Annual Meetings.**

- This is to support the Gender Action Plan and our efforts to expand opportunities for girls and women in developing countries *as both the right and smart thing to do*.

**6. To increase IDA Investments for Gender Equality.**

- I will ask for a review of IDA-funded activities with regard to gender mainstreaming at the end of the IDA15 cycle, with the objective of increasing IDA investments on gender equality in operations financed through IDA16.
- This is a step urged by Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, and it's time we act on it.