



IMPROVING WOMEN'S LIVES

WORLD BANK ACTIONS SINCE BEIJING



THE WORLD BANK



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THE WORLD BANK
GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP
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CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Acknowledgments	4
Abbreviations	5
Introduction	7
Improving Women’s Lives: Progress and Obstacles	9
Global Progress	9
Persistent and Evolving Challenges	12
The World Bank and the Beijing Platform for Action	17
Improving Women’s Access to Resources	18
Reducing Gender Disparities in Rights	38
Strengthening Women’s Voice and Power to Influence	45
Creating and Sharing Knowledge on Gender Equality	53
Supporting Analytical Work	53
Investing in Knowledge Networks	54
Improving Sex-Disaggregated Statistics	56
Enabling Institutional Changes	57
Adopting a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy	57
Monitoring Implementation of the Strategy	60
Gender Equality Partnerships	61
The Way Forward	65
Helping Countries Meet Their Goals for Empowering Women and Girls	65
Bibliography	69

Boxes

1.1	The 12 Critical Areas of Concern Recognized in Beijing	8
2.1	The Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals	17
2.2	Expanding Girls' Education in The Gambia and Mauritania	22
2.3	Improving Women's Health in Bolivia and Malawi	25
2.4	Stemming the HIV/AIDS Pandemic in Brazil and Chad	28
2.5	The Roundabout Outdoor HIV/AIDS Awareness Initiative in South Africa	30
2.6	Connecting Isolated Villages to Markets in Peru and Guatemala	32
2.7	Improving Women's Access to Land in the Lao People's Democratic Republic	34
2.8	Creating Income-Generating Opportunities for Women in Tajikistan	37
2.9	Connecting Villagers through Phones in Bangladesh	37
2.10	Improving Egyptian Women's Access to Entitlements through Identity Cards	39
2.11	Increasing the Awareness of Gender Issues in the Delhi Police Force	42
2.12	Assisting War Widows in Indonesia	44
2.13	Strengthening Women's Voice in Timor Leste	48
3.1	Raising Awareness about the Links between Gender and the MDGs	56
4.1	Evaluating the Bank's Gender and Development Activities	58
4.2	The Operational Policy and Bank Procedures Statement on Gender and Development	60
4.3	The Norwegian and Dutch Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming	63

Figures

1.1	In No Region of the World Are Women and Men Equal in Legal, Social and Economic Rights	14
2.1	Faster Progress in Closing Gender Gaps in Schooling Would Accelerate Economic Growth	18
2.2	Female Representation in Parliament Remains Low	46
2.3	Steady Increase of Women in Management and Senior Technical Positions in the World Bank	51

FOREWORD

The World Bank is committed to building a world free from poverty. Where gender inequality persists, efforts to reduce poverty are undermined. Numerous studies and on-the-ground experience have shown that promoting equality between women and men helps economies grow faster, accelerates poverty reduction, and enhances the dignity and well-being of men, women, and children.

Among the world's six billion people, half live on less than \$2 a day and one-fifth on less than \$1 a day. Gender inequalities create additional burdens, not only for women, but also for society as a whole.

At the Fourth World Conference in Beijing a decade ago, the World Bank committed itself to actions that would enable women and girls everywhere to realize their potential, improve their quality of life, and help build better economic outcomes for all. In Beijing, representatives from several hundred women's organizations recommended ways in which the World Bank might help meet the growing global consensus to promote gender equality and empower women. Partly in response to these recommendations, the Bank increased its efforts on gender equality in its assistance to member countries. As a result of these efforts, gender issues are now better integrated into the Bank's country assistance strategies than was the case 10 years ago, support for girls' education has increased, and more of the Bank's lending operations promote gender equality. This emphasis on promoting gender equality has included addressing emerging challenges, such as the changing face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that now threatens women more than men.

The World Bank recognizes that its efforts to promote gender equality and empower women must continue so that the goals agreed on in Beijing can be fully realized. The last decade of innovation, experience, and activism has shown that improving women and girls' lives is not a problem that has no solution; there are many practical steps that can be taken to reduce inequalities based on gender. The World Bank remains committed to the goal of gender equality and will continue to work in partnership with governments, the development community, and women and men across the world to make this goal a reality.

James D. Wolfensohn
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ABBREVIATIONS

BP	Bank Procedures
CAS	country assistance strategy
CDD	community-driven development
CGA	country gender assessment
CGAP	Consultative Group to Assist the Poor
CSO	civil society organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EFA	Education For All
EGCG	External Gender Consultative Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTI	Fast-Track Initiative
GNP	gross national product
GENFUND	Norwegian/Dutch Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
HNP	health, nutrition, and population
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
<i>InfoDev</i>	Information for Development Program
KDP	Kecamatan Development Project
MAP	Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Program
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OED	Operations Evaluation Department
OP	Operational Policy
PEKKA	Woman-Headed Household Empowerment Program (Indonesia)
PROGRESA	Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación (Mexico)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
STD	sexually transmitted disease

UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WBI	World Bank Institute
WHO	World Health Organization

Note: All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

INTRODUCTION

Ten years ago, at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the development community agreed on a Platform for Action to advance the lives of women and girls. Today, disparities between men and women remain pervasive around the world—in resources and economic opportunities, in basic human rights, and in political voice—despite significant gains in some areas and countries. These disparities are strongly linked to poverty. Ignoring them comes at great cost to people’s well-being and to countries’ abilities to grow sustainably and govern effectively.

The World Bank is committed to helping member countries fulfill the Beijing Platform for Action and recognizes that gender equality is critical to development and to poverty reduction. The World Bank has addressed gender issues since the 1970s, but the Bank’s emphasis in this area increased following the 1995 Beijing Conference. Today, gender equality is explicitly recognized as essential to achieving the World Bank’s poverty reduction mission.

During the last decade, the ways in which the World Bank addresses gender issues have evolved, in step with the evolving environment for development work. The prominence of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty reduction strategies, combined with responses to global agendas, as set out at the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, have had a strong impact on how the World Bank addresses poverty reduction and, within it, gender issues. Emerging global trends, such as the rapid spread and feminization of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, have also influenced the Bank’s work on gender equality.

This report is the World Bank’s contribution to the 49th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which will review the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the UN General Assembly, commonly referred to as Beijing+5. The report describes the World Bank’s role as a partner in the international effort to promote gender equality and empower women. The World Bank’s strategy is to mainstream gender issues into its work, examining the ways in which policies and programs affect women and men. While its work addresses both male and female gender issues, this report focuses primarily on

female gender issues because the Beijing Platform for Action's goals focus on improving the status and lives of women and girls.

Recognizing that the world has changed remarkably over the last 10 years, this report illustrates how, by assisting countries' efforts to advance gender equality and improve women's and girls' lives, the World Bank supports the goals outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action and helps countries secure a better economic future. The World Bank contributed a similar report to the Beijing+5 Special Session of the General Assembly in 2000.

The main section of this report describes World Bank activities that have furthered the Beijing Platform for Action goals. The next section outlines global trends in improving girls' and women's lives, and highlights some areas in need of further action. Subsequent sections describe World Bank projects that have helped to improve the lives of women and girls, the Bank's analytical work on gender issues, and enabling institutional changes that have helped the Bank to increase attention to gender issues in its work. The final section discusses the way forward.

BOX I.1 The 12 Critical Areas of Concern Recognized in Beijing

Held in Beijing, China, the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women represented a watershed in the movement for securing equality, development, and peace for all women across the world. With the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by representatives from 189 countries, the conference gave the world a new comprehensive action plan to enhance women's social, economic, and political empowerment.

At the Beijing Conference, 12 critical areas of concern and priorities were identified. These were: 1) women and poverty; 2) education and training of women; 3) women and health; 4) violence against women; 5) women and armed conflict; 6) women and the economy; 7) women in power and decision making; 8) institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; 9) human rights of women; 10) women and the media; 11) women and the environment; and 12) the girl child.

The development community met again in 2000 at the Twenty-Third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to review progress in the five years since Beijing. Commonly referred to as Beijing+5, the Special Session adopted a political declaration and outcome document entitled *Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. In addition to a continued focus on the 12 critical areas of concern, the outcome document recommended that the international community focus on current challenges affecting the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, including globalization, the impact of science and technology on development, the changing patterns of migratory flows, demographic trends, and the rapid progression of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.