

**A Report on the Fourth Annual Meeting of the External  
Gender Consultative Group  
Tuesday, November 16, 1999**

**Opening and Welcome**

**Karen Mason, Director, Gender and Development**

Ms. Mason welcomed the EGCG participants and thanked them for their valuable contributions to the Bank's work on gender—both their critiques of specific activities and their advice about agenda setting.

**Global Development Network**

**Lyn Squire, Director, Global Development Network**

Mr. Squire described plans for a new Bank initiative, the Global Development Network (GDN), which has two main objectives: to build the capacity of research institutions in developing countries to undertake policy-oriented analysis; and to make it possible for that research to influence policymakers and enter the public debate. Between 1991 and 1999 the Bank established research networks in all *six* regions (Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia). The idea for a global network came from Joe Stiglitz, the Bank's Chief Economist, who wanted to foster interaction across regional networks, link those networks with research and policy institutes in the developed world, and provide products and services such as global data and funding for global research products. The Bank is in the process of seeking resources from other donors to support these activities.

Although the Bank is currently handling the secretariat's function for this new network, Mr. Squire said that an independent secretariat and management structure would be established, with a management committee perhaps consisting of the heads of the regional networks, a representative from the Bank, and a representative from UNDP. He then announced that a Global Development Network conference, scheduled for December 2000 in Tokyo, would focus on gender and development as one of its major themes.

## *Discussion*

**Ms. Sen** expressed concern that many of the research institutions included in the global network might be doing extremely good work on macroeconomics but be weak on gender, while separate institutions that focus on gender might not be included in the network. **Ms. Kabeer** and **Ms. Garba** noted that the global network could be a very powerful organization, and stressed the importance of supporting rather than excluding different points of view. There was a concern that this network could create an orthodoxy of like-minded departments and institutions by funding their specific research agendas. Several others raised questions about whether the global network would attempt to ensure that the regional institutions become more gender sensitive, by putting conditions on its support and having definite indicators. **Ms. Zulficar** raised the issue of governance and questioned how participatory and open the process of setting the research agenda and priorities will be. The EGCG members suggested that they might play a role in the GDN by providing inputs and awareness about gender issues. Finally, **Ms. Kabeer** pointed out that there is a difference between doing research on gender issues and doing research that is sensitive to gender issues. Almost all development problems have gender implications and it is important to be aware of them when carrying out research.

**Mr. Squire** responded that the global network has been more focused on the allocation of research funds among partner institutions than on the nature of their research, but that the network might encourage research on gender and other topics, for example, by offering prizes for the best papers on particular topics at the Tokyo conference. He stressed that the Bank is very reluctant to impose a research agenda on partner institutions, because the purpose of the network is to create the capacity to undertake independent research in developing countries, and because regional institutions have been strongly opposed to the Bank imposing any such requirements—mainly because of the diversity issue and the need to allow different views to prevail. He said that once a governance structure for the network is established, with participants from all parts of the developing world, that group can decide whether gender is something they want to push. He said that the EGCG could help to create an awareness of gender within the global network, possibly by making some presentations at the Tokyo conference.

## **The World Development Report (WDR) on Poverty**

**Ravi Kanbur, Director, World Development Report 2000**

Mr. Kanbur started by saying that the WDR is a strange instrument—not a research document, not an operational blueprint, not an advocacy document, not a country specific report, but a way for the Bank to take stock of how the debate on a particular issue has evolved. The 2000 WDR is the ten-year follow-up to the 1990 WDR, which was also on poverty, and it highlights ten ways that the Bank's stance on poverty reduction and poverty alleviation is different than a decade ago. The Bank now:

- has a much clearer view of how the unequal distribution of assets across gender and ethnic groups impedes poverty reduction and growth;
- provides more support for making government institutions at all levels accountable to the poor;
- supports capacity building for membership-based organizations that work to ensure the poor are represented in the formulation and implementation of policies;
- recognizes the importance of risk and vulnerability in perpetuating poverty and impeding growth;
- uses a modular approach to security, with different market, state, and community interventions to serve different parts of the population;
- more fully appreciates the impact of macro shocks on developing nations, and supports national and international responses;
- understands that the success of reform depends on institution building and on taking account of local realities;
- recognizes the importance of cross-sector linkages and cross-cutting impacts and of holding service delivery accountable to the poor;
- ensures that the voices of poor nations are heard in discussions of global arrangements; and
- recognizes that development assistance can only succeed when there is a broad-based consensus for the particular interventions.

We arrived at these ten points, Mr. Kanbur said, by broadening our conception of poverty to include not only low income, low consumption and low achievement; but also risk, vulnerability, voicelessness, and powerlessness. We went below global, regional, and national trends to look at

households and individuals. It is from that very micro perspective that we see tremendous variation and differentiation in experiences of poverty reduction and where our concerns for risk and vulnerability come into context. We also looked at the differential outcomes of these efforts and how they relate to economic growth. People seem to come at this question, he noted, from either a macro, medium-term performance perspective or a micro-level view of short-term consequences. His view is that the way to bridge the gap between these perspectives is to address ground-level risks. The line the report takes, he noted, is that if you address structural inequalities and develop security mechanisms for risk and vulnerability, then you have the basis for growth-enhancing macro policies. Another line of argument in the report is that poverty has gone down in those places where policies and interventions have been good for the poor. That is where we talk about the ability to monitor interventions at the ground level, often by organizations of the poor themselves.

### ***Discussion***

**Ms. Sen**, asked about the WDR's position on a regulatory framework for labor markets, to ensure that women have access to employment, decent working conditions, and maternity benefits. While the report emphasizes deregulation of markets, without regulatory mechanisms in the labor market, she argued, one finds appalling conditions. Ms. Sen stressed the importance of the Public Sector as a place where standards are set for other organizations and institutions for women in terms of wage parity and hiring parities. She asked how the report would address this and the effects of liberalization on the informal sector.

**Ms. Kabeer** addressed the issue of structural inequalities that could emerge as a result of liberalization, and the role the state should play in financing basic social services and safety nets, which make it possible for people to fight for better conditions in the workplace. She emphasized that these inequalities need to be viewed in terms of access, especially for women, and of how to improve the bargaining position of different sections of the poor. Finally, Ms. Kabeer expressed the need for elites within developing countries to take responsibility for what is happening to people in the context of liberalization and the state to provide for services that local interest groups cannot.

**Ms. Garba** commented on how globalization is changing the character of national sovereignty and the capacity of national and local institutions to provide governance. She questioned the

relationship between voicelessness and poverty, explaining that in Africa many feel they have lost their voice as a result of World Bank and IMF policies. Now they feel that the only way to be heard by their governments is to go through the Bank and IMF. Ms. Garba said in many countries debt is the fundamental burden to development and questioned how women and other disadvantaged groups will be able to have a voice in setting budgetary priorities when budgetary decisions are increasingly being decided by the international community in the name of debt relief.

**Ms. Kabir** raised the issue that growth and policy impacts do not affect socially disadvantaged groups equally and that this should be factored into the analysis, as should the shift of resources from one half of the world to the other. **Ms. Todaro** added that while poor women depend on labor market participation to climb out of poverty, their participation in the labor market has certain costs, most of which are now being borne by women themselves. She also commented that when one looks at income distribution, only the amount of income is measured, without taking into account what the individual needs to do with that income. She explained that, in Chile, even though the distribution of income is not worse than it was, the number of services people must now pay for has increased.

Other comments focused on the need to address the longitudinal aspects of transition in the ECA Region and the lack of linkages between micro-situations and macro policies; addressing inequality and vulnerability in liberalization and tariff policies; the role of the private sector; and the issue of labor migration.

**Mr. Kanbur** responded that the WDR takes a pragmatic view of labor market regulation, depending on the nature and structure of the market—for example, whether introducing a minimum wage would help the poor or create unemployment in a particular country context. But, more broadly, he noted that one of the things coming out of the Voices of the Poor (an initiative undertaken during preparation of the WDR) is how dysfunctional state institutions are vis-à-vis the poor. So in terms of the public sector's role in enforcing standards, he stressed the need to account for the fact that some of the problems facing the poor come from state outfits. He also acknowledged the problem of the social costs of women's participation in the labor market. Mr. Kanbur agreed with Ms. Kabeer that when donor agencies are too involved in developing countries it often leads to 'deresponsibilization' of government agencies and he personally was against donors making detailed conditionalities. He also addressed the issue of debt and the

tremendous cost it has on the domestic political economy. Mr. Kanbur stressed that the WDR generalizes that risk and vulnerability is important as a general proposition and the sooner we address these issues at the micro level the sooner or freer we will be to discuss the other issues.

### **Luncheon Presentation**

#### **Karen Mason, Director, Gender and Development**

During the luncheon, Ms. Mason addressed several issues related to gender and development in the work of the World Bank. On *targeting*, she said the Gender Sector Board believes that targeting should be done within countries rather than among countries on the basis of overall indicators, since gender gaps that might seem small on a national level may be significant within certain parts of the country. Additionally, there are gender issues in all countries and these issues differ from country to country. On *analytical work*, Ms. Mason suggested that country departments undertake gender reviews a year in advance of the CAS, to provide information on in-country gender conditions and household issues. She also suggested that the LSMS (Living Standards Measurement Survey) be revised to collect key information on household-level economic flows and resources, disaggregated by gender. Ms. Mason expressed hope that the analytical work underway with the PRR and a possible WDR 2004 on gender and development would help to make it clear that gender is intrinsically linked to sustainable development. On *operational work*, she emphasized the need to mainstream gender in the Bank's lending and non-lending activities and the need for operational staff need to understand what gender mainstreaming means. Additionally, each region should have at least one gender person who is fully supported. The use of trust funds for this purpose, she said, is not sustainable; gender work needs to be financed by the Bank's budget. In terms of *capacity building*, she proposed targeting specific groups within the Bank for gender training, as well as developing gender indicators and tools to facilitate gender mainstreaming in operations. To support *in-country change agents*, Ms. Mason proposed building capacity by, for example, providing female labor leaders with training in economics. She also stressed the need for *accountability* and adequate *budget allocations* for gender issues at the regional level.

### ***Discussion***

**Ms. Sen** stressed the importance of evaluating and monitoring what the World Bank has been doing in terms of gender. She suggested looking at the difference between what happens on the

ground and the PADs. **Mr. Perry** suggested framing gender as an efficiency issue so that it speaks to economists. He also said that gender is an issue for both men and women and that both groups need to be targeted. Ms. Zulficar said that looking only at gender gaps is not working, that one cannot focus only on the areas where there are crises to solve the problem. She also posed the question of how country gender reviews will play into the CAS. Other participants suggested looking at the link between gender within an organization and its outside goals; using local experts for capacity building; incorporating gender equity in the planning and design of SALs; and examining how gender as a cross-cutting issue is represented in the context of participation and the comprehensive development framework (CDF). The EGCG members emphasized the need to develop a consultative process of preparing the Gender Strategy so that it would include regional consultations, local participatory studies, roundtable meetings with women's organizations and other stakeholders, as well as consultations on drafts.

## **The Role of the Networks I**

### **Nemat Shafik, Vice President, Private Sector Development and Infrastructure**

Ms. Shafik said that lending trends in the Private Sector Development and Infrastructure network have shown a greater gender content in the past three years. This number has increased in terms of the number of projects and the share of overall lending which contain gender components. She discussed the recent lessons from four main sectors. She said that:

- In *transport* we have often been surprised by the impact of transport projects on women's lives. In Morocco, for example, we did a rural roads project, and female educational enrollment rates increased significantly and we suddenly appreciated the intimate link between providing adequate infrastructure and achieving social goals.
- In *water*, we have learned that non-consultative technical solutions can have negative social consequences. In Tanzania, for example, an effort to economize resulted in water pipes being located equidistant from every three or four villages, which meant that every woman and girl had to walk huge distances to collect water. Girls' enrollment in all those villages suffered as a result. We now have checklists for task managers and policymakers who want to think more carefully about the links between gender and water; and we have been experimenting with ways to give women a greater voice in the design and delivery of water systems.
- In *energy*, where we are most behind, we are starting to think more systematically about the links between gender and energy use, but we still need to do a great deal more analytical work to understand how that would affect our project designs.
- In *finance*, the lessons are very clear that giving women access to microfinance and other types of business support has enormous spillover effects on fertility, literacy, education, asset accumulation at the household level, and women's empowerment. We also have been able to demonstrate that poor women are more creditworthy than men, that lending to them is commercially viable, and now we are very much focused on encouraging commercial banks and other private sector institutions to expand microfinance for women. We are also trying to build networks of women entrepreneurs, and we are looking at the question of property rights.

## **The Role of the Networks II**

### **Masood Ahmed, Vice President, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM)**

Mr. Ahmed said that PREM has made substantial progress over the last year in linking gender work and poverty work in a number of different ways: through qualitative and quantitative assessments of poverty profiles, by linking gender to poverty in country assistance strategies, and by focusing on the multi-dimensional nature of poverty in the poverty reduction strategy papers. Much of this progress, he noted, has grown out of the collaborative effort on the WDR and the work on gender, which has clarified the Bank's thinking on the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and the importance of gender issues. Going forward, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) will become an important instrument for mainstreaming gender, and for ensuring that the macroeconomic work and choices made at the macro level are both sensitive to gender and responsive to poverty outcomes. There are two areas, however, he said, where PREM has made less progress: making sure that gender is built into the analysis of public sector reform and governance, and understanding the gender impacts of globalization and liberalization. He said the Policy Research Report on gender and development (PRR) will help create the analytical framework needed to factor social and gender impacts into the design of public sector reform and adjustment programs. Mr. Ahmed concluded by asking the EGCG members for their guidance in the preparation of the gender strategy paper and for their feedback on the PRR.

#### *Discussion*

**Ms. Charkiewicz**, responding to Mr. Ahmed, expressed concern that while the Bank is taking a more holistic approach to gender, bringing in issues such as household relations and violence, this has had the effect of decreasing the focus on macroeconomic policies and how they impact women's lives. She commented on the contradiction between Bank policies and statements, which appear to be making progress on issues such as gender inequality and poverty reduction and the actual work being done on the operational level, which remains very technocratic. In addition, she asked about the budget the Bank was willing to commit to gender work. **Mr. Ahmed** said that the Bank's research and operational programs have not caught up with its holistic understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and development. He expressed hope that the PRR and the PRSPs would help to identify areas for further analysis, so that the links between gender and poverty will begin to be more fully reflected in the design of

the Bank's operational work. Mr. Ahmed expressed hope that the gender strategy paper would help to answer budgetary questions and estimate the amount of resources needed to make progress in gender mainstreaming.

**Ms. Kabir**, addressing Ms. Shafik, said that microfinance as a way of helping women has been oversold: that women are now competing with each other for microfinance resources, their labor is being exploited, they are being used to bring credit into the household, they are paying a high rate of interest while no one is calculating their profits, and they are being kept at a survival level. **Ms. Shafik** agreed that microfinance provides supplementary income to a very small proportion of poor households, while few microenterprises ever go on to become more sustainable formal businesses. However, she disagreed that it exploits women's labor, since "poor women labor a lot and usually don't get paid for it." She cited two main messages from the Voices of the Poor project, which asked people how they had fallen into deep poverty and how they pulled themselves out. The project showed that people tend to fall into deep poverty, because of health crises, and tend to pull themselves out through entrepreneurial opportunities. Critical to both, she said, are financial services—health insurance to protect against crisis-induced poverty, and savings mechanisms to help poor families leverage their resources. She predicted that in the future, financial services are going to be more important to helping poor families than is microfinance.

**Ms. Sen** described a case where all of the good components were included in a project, however, the implementation of the actual project did not make proper use of them. She stressed the need to fix this problem in the project management structures and to look at how participation and gender issues are actually being integrated into the projects. **Ms. Kabeer** raised the issue that it is difficult for poor people who have no training to become entrepreneurs and stressed the importance of flexible use of labor time for women. She explained that in Sub-Saharan Africa women's time constraint is binding and women's ventures are very under-capitalized. Furthermore, women do not have the consumer power to buy the technology that would free up their time. Ms. Kabeer also raised the issue of governance in the EGCG and suggested that the group spend some time clarifying their role. Other comments focused on the trend of commercialization, how to ensure that microfinance projects have a social agenda, how to implement the Bank's analytical framework, how to close the gap between policy and operations, and how to ensure gender mainstreaming does not lose momentum.

**Mr. Ahmed**, in response to the question of integrating gender more effectively into the Bank's work, explained how linking these efforts to a multidimensional approach and impact assessment would be more effective, as they would be seen as an integrated approach rather than as competing demands on the task team. To facilitate this, he described work being done on making better toolkits, raising their profile, ensuring easy access to them, and doing impact assessments. Additionally, he and Ms. Mason have been meeting with Regional Vice Presidents to see what their vision of gender mainstreaming priorities are and which of the instruments that are currently being used are the most effective.

**Ms. Shafik** agreed with the need to look more creatively at where decision-making authorization lies and who has power over these decisions in order to ensure that other voices are heard in this process. She commented that commercialization is necessary for micro-enterprises to scale-up, and that the actual problems these enterprises face are more about capacity building rather than money. Here, Ms. Shafik suggested, NGOs have a key role in providing capacity building services and if combined with the financial leverage and branch networks that banks bring, this could be a very powerful instrument.

**The Role of Gender in the Work of the International Finance Corporation (IFC)—I  
Mark Constantine, Manager, Corporate Relations, IFC**

Mr. Constantine said that IFC is the single largest source of equity and loan finance for private companies in developing countries, although its assistance is now dwarfed by private financial flows—including short-term commercial bank lending, foreign direct investment, and portfolio investment, which has been rising steadily over the past 15 years and reached \$300 billion in 1997. Increased commercial investment in developing countries has led IFC to reevaluate its role, which has shifted away from simply assessing the bankability of a project to looking much more carefully at its development impact, at the social sectors, and at how environmental and social policies add value at the project level. While IFC was once resistant to environmental and social issues, Mr. Constantine said, now this focus is seen as one of the key development contributions IFC can make in terms of specific projects. In the financial and infrastructure sectors, where IFC conducts most of its activities, for example, there is an increasing focus on the needs of small and medium enterprises and on the needs of the rural poor.

## **The Role of Gender in the Work of the IFC—II**

**Kerry Connor, Social Development Specialist, Environmental and Social Review Unit, IFC**

Ms. Connor described IFC's procedure for reviewing and managing projects from a social and environmental point of view. It differs from that of the Bank in that IFC has one central Social and Environmental Review Unit that appraises, supervises, and monitors every IFC project. Projects determined to have significant impacts have a full-scale appraisal, and environmentalists and social scientists are brought in to work with private sector clients to devise proper mitigation measures and figure out ways to fund them. Recognizing that the private sector is weak on gender and other social issues, IFC tries to help clients turn mitigation measures into positive development impacts.

The review process also includes a requirement for documentation—an environmental impact assessment, a social impact assessment, a resettlement action plan, and/or an indigenous people's development plan—and for proper consultation. It also requires that women be consulted and that differential gender impacts be recognized. Ms. Connor said that IFC's attention to gender has been constrained by a lack of social scientists on their staff, although a number of people with substantial backgrounds in gender—as well as in community development and microenterprise development—have been hired in the past few months. In addition, IFC's good practice manual on consultation tells clients how to consider gender explicitly in planning and implementing projects. And the good practice manuals on resettlement, workplace practices, social impact assessments, and indigenous peoples' planning will all consider differential gender impacts and how to devise and implement gender-appropriate as well as culturally appropriate mitigation measures. IFC is also looking at gender as it redefines health and safety guidelines, considering, for example, how certain chemical pollutants may have differential impacts on men and women.

## **The Role of Gender in the Work of the IFC—III**

**Macodou I. N'Daw, Portfolio Manager, Business Department, IFC**

Mr. N'Daw spoke about his experience as coordinator of the African Project Development Facility, supported by IFC, UNDP, African Development Bank, and 16 other donors. The facility has been proactive, he said, in supporting women entrepreneurs, and now has 30 percent of its projects in the hands of women. The facility has financed feasibility studies for women-owned

businesses, supported a woman's cooperative, and identified women who were successful in the informal sector and helped them to develop their enterprises into small and medium-size enterprises. In one case, the facility hired a consultant to help a Ugandan woman in the cut flower business to develop economies of scale on two hectares of land, and then put her in touch with a Dutch company that bought all of her flowers. In another case, the facility helped a thousand Ugandan women who had never worked before to raise oyster mushrooms in their houses, and to sell their entire production to a company in England.

### *Discussion*

**Ms. Zulficar** said the presentations revealed another face of IFC—that of development partner and gender equality promoter rather than simply a business institution. But she questioned the commitment of the institution in terms of funding, staff, and the lack of requirement to do a gender assessment in addition to a social and an environmental assessment, particularly in light of the fact that helping women is one of IFC's development objectives. **Ms. Connor** responded that while IFC *does* require that gender be explicitly considered as part of the social impact assessment, it is also true that the institution and its clients have been very bad at telling each other what kinds of positive things they can do, not just for women but for all people. She said the impact assessments and other documentation should focus on the positive as well as the negative impacts of development activities.

In response to the same question, **Mr. Constantine** added that although IFC has a basis for rejecting certain types of projects, the institution still has a lot to learn about proactively looking for investment opportunities that will have positive gender impacts.

**Ms. Garba** asked for more detailed information about how IFC handles three issues: (1) consultations with local communities; (2) relocation and compensation, especially for indigenous women, who generally do not want to relocate; and (3) monitoring of IFC-financed activities to make them accountable to local communities. She also asked whether an interest in integrating gender has reached the policy level at IFC, or is only on the operational level. **Ms. Connor** responded, in regard to consultation, that IFC understands gender to be of central importance to getting a project right, and that IFC staff sometimes attend consultations and work with clients to ensure that they are consulting the right people. She herself once sent a group of men out of a room so that the women in attendance would speak. On the issue of resettlement, she said that if

it is done as development, if people are consulted and offered options beyond compensation, such as house for house, land for land, jobs, and training, it can bring a vast improvement in people's lives. **Mr. Constantine**, responding to the question of whether gender has reached the policy level, said that IFC does not have a separate policymaking organ, so that people in operations all get involved in policymaking discussions.

Other questions focused on private sector responsibility and social responsibility in the corporate sector, labor rights, and how to build accountability into not just the life of a project, but the life of a company. Additionally, comments were made regarding IFC's rigidity and women's need for flexibility, hedging against exchange risk, and possibilities for cross learning between IFC and the Bank. **Ms. Connor** said the institution has found that getting a company to do good doesn't come from prescriptive approaches. It has to come from the company wanting to do some good and then IFC helping the company identify areas where it can use human resources and funds in the community for the greatest benefit. IFC is experimenting with initiatives that encourage companies to take such an approach. She also explained that they do have a policy against harmful child and forced labor and are working on a guide that will explain to clients what that means. The Panel explained the new organizational structure, which allows IFC and the Bank to work more closely together and expressed their belief that this would result in greater collaboration and cross-fertilization.

**Wednesday, November 17, 2000**

**The Bank's Policy Research Report on Gender and Development**

**Andrew Mason, Senior Human Resource Economist, Gender and Development**

**Mr. Mason** spoke about the importance of the Policy Research Report as one of the Bank's high-profile publication series, about how it was conceptualized and is being developed. The idea for the PRR on Gender and Development, he said, took shape in mid-1997, when Joanne Salop, then Interim Director for Gender and Development, and Joe Stiglitz, then the Chief Economist, saw a gap in the empirical evidence about what promotes gender equality, and wanted to raise the profile of gender and development within the Bank. Mr. Mason and Elizabeth King then drafted a concept note, which, in keeping with their desire for a broad consultative process, was circulated electronically to a wide range of practitioners and researchers in the field of gender, both inside and outside the Bank. The electronic process culminated in November 1998 with a consultative workshop on the concept note that included the EGCG members and about 35 development practitioners from all regions of the world. He and Ms. King also did in-country consultations with donors and women's groups in four countries, and commissioned a number of background papers for the PRR. The analysis in the papers has proven to be so rich, Mr. Mason said, that the PRR can only aim at summarizing their findings, while the papers themselves will be made independently available on the web.

In addition to the consultative process, Mr. Mason and Ms. King are also doing an extensive scan of the existing literature and building up a database of gender indicators, based on LSMS and other household-level surveys, which will be posted on the web and be downloadable so that other researchers and practitioners can use it in their own work.

The PRR is now being written chapter by chapter, Mr. Mason said, and each chapter is being circulated for internal review. The full draft will then be sent for external review to a list of 500 people suggested by the EGCG, leading to a round of revisions and another set of reviews within the Bank. The completed report will be launched on the website in the spring (2000), and the book will be published in late 2000.

**Elizabeth King, Principal Economist, Development Economics Research Group  
(DECRCG)**

Ms. King spoke about the content of the PRR, chapter by chapter.

- The *Overview*, she said, defines gender and gender equality and summarizes the main messages of the report.
- *Chapter 1* presents the numbers, stories, and experiences that create a picture of gender inequality across countries, regions, and economic classes. The chapter looks at education and health indicators, including primary enrollment and female-to-male infant mortality rates; at the equality of political, legal rights, and economic rights, including female rights in marriage and divorce; at the proportion of women in parliament; and so on. The chapter then discusses the costs of inequality. For example, in looking at the factors that account for the change in child malnutrition levels in 63 countries—women’s education and women’s status, environment, and food availability—the study finds that women’s inequality accounts for 70 percent of that change. It also finds a very strong inverse relationship between the proportion of women in parliament and the labor force and corruption in government. And it looks at the costs of gender inequality on growth, fertility, and investment in a country, using a robust body of both microeconomic and macroeconomic evidence.
- *Chapter 2* looks at the effect of legal institutions and social norms on gender equality. The chapter is based in part on an analysis of legal institutions and in part on a 40-country survey that captured male and female views of the importance of different aspects of life, including jobs, children, and appropriate gender roles. Ms. King noted that male and female values were remarkably similar within each country.
- *Chapter 3* looks at how productive and reproductive roles are balanced in the household, how social norms and customs and legal institutions affect the way households make decisions about allocating resources, and how those decisions can be influenced by economic incentives.

- After consideration of household-level gender roles and the effect of gender inequality on growth, *Chapter 4* looks at it from the other side—the effect of growth and of development policy on gender equality. This is where the report looks at the development of markets and at organizational culture in the formal labor market, although, Ms. King noted, a lot of labor in developing countries takes place in the informal sector.
- *Chapter 5* looks at the forces of change, and at what the state, the economy, the private sector, and civil society need to do to promote gender equality.
- *Chapter 6* looks to the future and tries to identify the gender issues that will emerge in the context of the aging population, the expansion and deepening of market structures, the integration of markets, and the gender effect of the diffusion of modern technologies—as, for example, when a country undergoes a rapid transformation from an agricultural to an industrial economy.

In other chapters that are still in the thinking stage, Ms. King said, they want to offer some recommendations for policymakers, keeping in mind the specific problems that are quite different across cultures and across groups within a single society. She said they would like to focus on what shifts are needed in economic structures and what kinds of coordinated civic actions are needed to initiate change, using input from EGCG members to help build a framework for making these kinds of recommendations.

#### **Further remarks by Andrew Mason**

**Mr. Mason** elaborated on two of Ms. King's points: the confluence of male and female values in a country with respect to gender, and the way that institutions and legal frameworks affect gender equality. First, he said, considering how we think about civil society as an entry point for promoting gender equality, and as a key force for pressuring government to make the right policy decisions, there is some tension between those assumptions and the fact that men and women have similar values—so where, he asked the group, is the strategic entry point? Second, he said, when we think about the way that institutions and legal frameworks affect gender equality, we often think about gender oppression as something unto itself, almost disembodied from other forms of oppression or institutional dysfunction. But evidence from the Humana indices on the quality of rights suggests that gender oppression does not exist independent of other forms of

oppression, that there is a high correlation between gender oppression and political oppression using violent methods, political oppression using nonviolent methods, restrictions on ethnic groups and minority rights. So when we think about entry points for civic action, and about economic policies that promote gender equality, we have to be aware of the larger context.

### *Discussion*

**Ms. Garba** asked about the linkages between gender inequality and growth, which she found to be problematic on a conceptual level. She stressed the importance of linking gender, public policy and development and asked that the value-added of bringing a gender perspective into policy analysis be clarified in the report. **Ms. Kabir** asked about the relationship of corruption to women's rights, and what types of corruption were taken into account. Furthermore, she commented on the variations in relationships of formal and informal institutions and gender aspects of informal institutions. **Ms. Kabeer** made the point, in regard to the second chapter's focus on institutions and social norms, that it is important to separate rules and norms from the actual organizations through which they are manifested. She also questioned the focus in Chapter 3 on the household as an institution where problems begin and end, instead of being very much imbedded within and interacting with labor market forces, state malfunctioning, community organizations, and social networks. On the issue of the cultural affinity of men and women in most countries, and the lack of an entry point for talking about gender issues, she suggested two levels of intervention: (1) broad normative changes, in which the state and large organizations can play a role; and (2) more targeted interventions that open up choices to women other than those dictated by the culture. Finally, she noted the importance of the women's movement in challenging norms—a role, she said, that Bank reports rarely mention.

**Ms. Khoo** found it difficult to see the correlation between women's rights and corruption in the context of East Asia and asked about the definitions of corruption that were used. She also expressed discomfort that the women's movement is completely absent from the PRR. Ms. King and Mr. Mason responded that the women's movement is *not* missing from the report; that it recognizes the role of the women's movement in a lot of the gender-sensitive changes in government policy in Latin America, Africa, India, South Africa, Bangladesh; and that the women's movement is central to the report's cases and its arguments.

Ms. King then addressed the question of the household as an institution, agreeing that it is not just a recipient of norms and the regulatory and legal framework, but also a contributor to the social context.

**Mr. Mason** responded to Ms. Garba who questioned the concept of linkages between gender inequality and growth. What I am hearing, he said, is a concern that we are dealing with gender equality as an instrument and not in terms of its intrinsic value. He said a basic premise of the report is that gender equality is a development good in itself—a good consistent with a development that is inclusive, that cares about the alleviation of poverty of males and females and about building the capabilities of girls and boys and male and female adults. Previous Bank reports have not made a bold statement about the intrinsic value of gender equality, he said, while here that statement is made up front. From that starting point, the report then looks at the costs that gender equality exacts not only on women but on the larger society; and then discusses the business of measuring those costs. He acknowledged that establishing causality is always a problem, but that the PRR's reliance on both micro and macro cross-country literature is creating a high level of confidence that those linkages exist. **Ms. King** added that the report will contain a section that addresses these difficult methodological questions, identifies the weaknesses of some of the current methodologies, and pinpoints areas for future research.

**Ms. Mason** responded to the comment about institutions and social norms, and the importance of separating norms from the organizations through which they are manifested, using the example of the labor market. While it may be rational for men and women to agree that the male in the household should get the job because males earn more money, she said, the deeper question is, where does that norm come from? Norms, she said, are part of a whole system of material and social relations in which women don't have the same opportunities as men. Norms so pervade every institution that it is not easy to separate them.

On the issue of corruption, **Mr. Mason** said the report relies on several corruption indices that have been put together by private international agencies. These indices have not typically been used in the discussion of gender, but they are widely used by the business community to measure how bribes and other forms of corruption impede economic activity. They are also used by the Bank and other international organizations in their investigations of country-level corruption.

In a second round of questions, **Ms. Zulficar** commented that culture and religion in developing countries are often cited as barriers to change, but that if they were respected and properly studied they could be a tremendous force for gender equality, by assimilating and expressing gender equality in the indigenous language and cultural discourse. **Ms. Khoo** reiterated the importance of religion and the human rights discourse on equality, specifically in Islam. **Mr. Bamberger**, citing the rising male violence and decreased male life expectancy that often accompany reform, questioned the implicit assumption that traditional cultural patterns are universally beneficial to men and that women are at a disadvantage. **Ms. Sen** said that a cutting-edge area for research is the relationship between empowering movements—not just women’s movements, but trends toward greater voices for the poor and other forms of inclusion—and making institutions more accountable. She cited, as an example, the Scandinavian countries, where the labor unions were very important in fighting for gender equality as part of a larger social democratic package, a broader effort to redefine social relationships.

**Ms. Sen** also questioned the assumption in Ms. King’s presentation of Chapter 4 that growth promotes gender equality, which she said is starting to sound like a mantra. She suggested that the chapter address two questions that would add value to the discussion: (1) under what conditions is growth actually compatible with greater gender equality; and (2) what kinds of macro policy approaches are good for gender equality and for women’s well-being? She noted that if growth increases the risks and vulnerabilities for women, then gender equality is likely to be unsustainable. Another participant added that people working in development have started to question growth and developmentalist theory, in light of evidence that growth has very serious and deep social and political implications and has—as in China—actually reduced women’s equality.

**Mr. Mason** responded to the point about religion and culture, saying that the conflict between customary law and statutory law can have extremely deleterious impacts on women’s rights, but that there are also cases where statutory law has been repressive while customary law has opened up new opportunities for women’s economic participation. He has also seen cases where statutory law has been crafted to support the evolutionary changes in customary law that are leading to gender equality. On the issue of religion being a force for gender equality, he said he would welcome more evidence. **Mr. Bamberger** responded that the demands for rigor on religion should be no greater than the demands for rigor with respect to endogenous growth models.

On the question of whether growth promotes gender equality, **Mr. Mason** said the purpose of the report is to systematically say what creates gender equality and gender inequality. Part of what the report examines is the dynamics of change—the factors that have been successful in breaking down socioeconomic and other types of constraints. The report is doing this by identifying three pathways to change: (1) political leadership and government action; (2) changes in economic structure; and (3) civic action. **Ms. King** added that the report is analyzing the benefits and disadvantages to both men and women under conditions of rapid growth—how economic growth does or does not affect deeply rooted social and cultural norms. This means recognizing that change can be destabilizing and have social costs. She noted that in Eastern Europe, for example, publicly provided childcare suddenly disappeared, and this had an impact on gender equality that disadvantaged female workers. Another participant added that while sustained periods of economic growth and poverty reduction do increase gender equality, women face a unique set of gender-specific risks with respect to different growth strategies—for example, when social service budgets are cut in the context of adjustment operations, and when government retrenchment in labor policies leads to volatility in women’s employment.

### **Wrap-up**

#### **Karen Mason, Director, Gender and Development**

During the wrap-up session, the participants discussed their impressions of the two-day meeting as well as their thoughts on the role of the EGCG. There was consensus among the members that it was important to formalize the role of the EGCG and ensure that their comments were presented to decision-makers at the Bank through defined mechanisms. **Ms. Zulifcar** proposed that the group’s mandate should be: 1. To advise and consult; 2. To review draft policy papers and papers coming from the Sector Board; 3. To call for presentations from various sectors or various players within the Bank and to call for reviews where appropriate. She saw the role of the group as ensuring that civil society organizations’, NGOs’, and women’s voices are heard in the consultation process. The group stressed the importance of meeting with high-level decision-makers in the Bank and developing a clearer understanding of what the EGCG’s relationship with the Bank is.

Other concerns that the members expressed included the level of seriousness the Bank gives the EGCG, the amount of unsubsidized time that members put into the group, the suggestion of developing a work program, to have more interaction with people at the regional level, and the

possibility of finding a budget for the EGCG at the corporate level. The EGCG announced that the following members of the group had been elected to the Coordinating Group: Ewa Charkiewicz (secretary), Kassey Garba, Naila Kabeer, Gita Sen (chair), Lydia Williams, and Mona Zulficar.

**Ms. Mason** agreed that more thinking needs to be done about how the EGCG fits into the Bank's organizational structure and corporate agenda. She said she would discuss with the Gender Sector Board and Bank senior management the possibility of the EGCG speaking to top management at Corporate Day, and receiving management's responses to their recommendations in writing.

Karen Mason thanked all the participants for their frank remarks, and suggested that the dialogue be continued electronically throughout the year. The meeting was then adjourned.