

I. INTRODUCTION

1. **This fourth and last annual progress report summarizes the main accomplishments of the World Bank Group Gender Action Plan “Gender Equality as Smart Economics” (GAP) over the four years (2007-2010)** and discusses lessons learned and remaining challenges to further institutionalize gender mainstreaming at the Bank. The report reviews initial conditions and changes over the period (section II); summarizes GAP resource mobilization and governance (III), and accomplishments and lessons learned (sections IV and V), and outlines the challenges and next steps (section IV).

2. When all the results of the GAP and of a final independent evaluation are available later this year, they will provide a more complete assessment of results and lessons learned.

3. **Launched in 2007, the plan aimed to advance women’s economic empowerment by influencing the way the Bank does business in the economic sectors.** The GAP focused on increasing women’s access and participation in four key markets: labor, land and agriculture, private sector development and finance, and infrastructure, which underpins access to all markets. It spanned a four-year timeframe and four main action areas: operations; results-based initiatives; research, impact evaluation and statistics; and communications.

4. **In 2007, the Bank’s track record in implementing policies to promote gender equality was mixed, and performance was particularly weak in the economic sectors.** The plan’s focus on increasing attention to gender-related issues in World Bank operations in the economic sectors came in response to lagging progress in terms of economic opportunities for girls and women, matched by the Bank’s consistently stronger record in gender mainstreaming in health and education, as compared to the economic sectors.²

5. **Improving the Bank’s performance by more fully utilizing its comparative advantage in the economic sectors and in analytical work** was a logical focus when, in early 2006, it was challenged by member countries to “do more” to help achieve gender equality. While acknowledging that education and health are long-term investments in growth, the plan was thus narrowly focused on boosting women's economic empowerment in the short term.

6. **The GAP targeted operations rather than organizational change and processes; was evidence-based and oriented to measuring results; and used incentives to generate demand.** The plan assumed that providing evidence that strengthens the business case for gender equality could influence Bank staff and that demonstration effects could do the same beyond the Bank. The plan emphasized the importance of gathering evidence to support this business case and of measuring results and impact. It used financial incentives to increase internal demand for GAP work, assuming that incentives would be better than mandates in convincing Bank staff to

² Projects in economic sectors fall under the following sector boards/networks: Agriculture and Rural Development, Economic Policy, Financial Management, Financial & Private Sector Development, Public Sector Governance, Transport, Urban Development, Energy and Mining, Water and Sanitation and Global Information and Communications Technology.

embrace gender equality objectives in their work.³ By focusing on operations, the GAP aimed to develop sector-specific demand and capacity from the bottom up.

7. **Internally, the GAP aimed to change the way the Bank does business by enhancing gender awareness in operations in the economic sectors.** While the plan aimed to ultimately expand women's opportunities in client countries, intermediate measures of success were more Bank-specific. These include the generation of knowledge to make the business case for gender equality; gender-informing the Bank's analytical work in the economic sectors; influencing the tools and instruments the Bank uses to accomplish its economic sector goals and provide technical assistance; building a body of statistics and indicators on economic participation disaggregated by gender; and informing the Bank's capacity-building and learning programs. This report reviews progress primarily against these Bank-centric measures. Findings indicate that the Bank is well on its way to delivering on its GAP commitments.

- **Over the past four years, Bank operations have become significantly more gender-informed, particularly in the economic sectors.** The more rapid progress in GAP sectors, and the fact that this progress was uniform across all sub-sectors, suggests that the plan met the objective of increasing Bank attention to gender equality issues in its economic sector work.
- **A renewed Bank commitment to gender equality as a strategic development priority** was made in tandem with the plan's implementation and helps to explain the improved record in gender mainstreaming. This heightened Bank commitment is explicit in the Bank's Post-Crisis New Directions document, the six gender commitments made by President Zoellick in 2008, and the decisions to render gender equality a "special theme" of IDA16 and devote the Bank's flagship *World Development Report 2012* to the theme of gender equality and development.
- **Small amounts of GAP funding have influenced large lending operations.** The GAP has awarded US\$ 4.1 million in small grants to 75 lending operations for project activities aimed at strengthening women's economic empowerment. The total budget of these lending operations amounts to US\$ 8.6 billion.
- **The GAP helped increase the number of sector experts mainstreaming gender in their work.** Overall, competitive processes yielded over 550 proposals, of which 255 received funding. Adding strategic allocations brings the number of GAP-funded activities to over 270. Through such incentive funding, 120 TTLs whose primary function does not include gender issues, and the teams they lead, have benefited from hands-on experience of addressing the gender dimensions of their work.

³ The Bank's past experience, as well as that of other development organizations, showed that organizational changes, including mandates and staff training, had not succeeded in institutionalizing gender mainstreaming (see, for instance, Rekha Mehra and Geeta Rao Gupta, 2008, "Gender Mainstreaming: Making It Happen," in Buvinic, Morrison, Ofosu-Amaah and Sjoblom (eds), *Equality for Women: Where Do We Stand on Millennium Development Goal 3?*, Washington DC: World Bank).

8. **Externally, the GAP sought to influence the gender and development discourse.** It aimed to refocus the attention of development agencies on the importance of women's economic empowerment for development *as smart economics* and galvanize donor and client countries to embrace this objective.

9. The plan formed an external **Advisory Council (AC)**⁴ to guide the plan and mobilize international support for women's economic empowerment. The Minister-level council was comprised of representatives from donor and client countries, private sector leaders, civil society representatives and experts in the field.⁵ It met semi-annually and promoted a number of initiatives to refocus the attention of the development community on the plan's objectives.

10. **Women's economic empowerment and "gender equality as smart economics" have taken center stage in development discourse since the plan was launched and the AC was constituted in 2007.** Illustrations include the 2007 G8 Summit Declaration, under the chairmanship of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, that emphasized "the importance of the political and economic empowerment of women as a contribution to sustainable growth and responsible government," and Denmark's 2015 Call for Action on MDG3 and 100 commitments for gender equality and empowerment of women (2008). More recently, priority given to women's economic empowerment as smart economics was reflected by the main directions taken by the newly established UN Women and in the U.S. Secretary of State's statement on International Women's Day (2011).

11. While the plan's implementation focused on influencing Bank economic sector operations and the international development discourse, preliminary evidence suggests that **GAP funded initiatives also contributed to the plan's main objective of expanding girls' and women's opportunities in client countries.** Selected actual or expected results from WBG operations that received GAP support are listed in Box 1 below.

⁴ For more details, please refer to Annex 1.1.

⁵ Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, then Germany's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, was the Council's first Honorary co-Chair and Gender Champion.

Box 1. Expanding Girls and Women’s Economic Opportunities through World Bank Group Projects: Selected Results

Actual or expected results of World Bank Group (WBG) projects that received GAP contributions include the following:

- In Ethiopia, 12.9 million women gained access to land rights through joint titling;
- In Kenya, 88,000 women smallholder producers will gain access to markets and control over resources and systems of distribution;
- In rural Lao PDR, close to 15,000 disadvantaged households, including 1,000 female-headed households, now have electricity; connection rates for female-headed households increased from 67 to 95%;
- In Bangladesh, 11,000 poor and vulnerable women from areas of the country that are lagging behind, will be trained for jobs in the export-processing zones;
- More than 20,000 adolescent girls and young women in eight, mostly low income, post-conflict countries receive skills training and other support to help them transition from school to work;
- *Standard Chartered Bank* (a member of the Private Sector Leaders Forum) committed to provide life-skills education for 100,000 girls in developing countries;
- A US\$ 50 million IDA16 loan under preparation will be devoted solely to addressing key constraints to the growth of female-run micro-enterprises in Ethiopia;
- US\$ 120 million will be channeled through innovative product lines to provide financial services to women entrepreneurs in Egypt, aiming to reach between 350,000 and 400,000 women-managed SMEs;
- Thanks to IFC’s support for SMEs, 2,500 women entrepreneurs accessed US\$ 86 million in loans. Two thousand women SME owners received training and over 6,100 new deposit accounts were opened.