

**Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and the IACHR  
Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women**

**Gender-Based Violence and Equitable Development:  
The Role of the International Community  
Monday, October 24, 2005**

**Opening Remarks**

**Roberto Dañino  
Senior Vice President & General Counsel**

- Thank you Mr. Wolfowitz for your remarks.
- I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our guest speakers, Dr. Yakin Ertürk and Ms. Villarán, my Bank colleagues and all of our external guests to the Bank to discuss a very important issue.
- We are here to continue the dialogue we began last year at the workshop we held on the development implications of gender-based violence (GBV). We had agreed then that the way forward on this critical issue was to take concrete steps in incorporating GBV concerns into our operational work. I am pleased to report that we have begun to do so. For example, when developing the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Uruguay, we were able to include women's groups in the preparatory consultations. As a result, the 2005-2010 Uruguay CAS has a strong gender component, which also addresses GBV. In addition, a \$338,000 IDf Grant to Cape Verde, "Strengthening the Rule of Law in Cape Verde" contains a component for assisting the government with the development of an action plan to fight GBV and with the development of a publicity campaign on gender issues, especially those related to the fight against GBV. I hope that we will have more such concrete examples to share with you next year.
- One of the key recommendations that resulted from last year's workshop was to increase engagement with the Special Rapporteurs. This Dialogue today is a follow up to that specific recommendation.
- Gender-based violence is not just an issue facing the developing world, it is a pervasive problem worldwide, one that too often is not taken seriously and which, as a result, leads to grave consequences. A very current example of the issues that we will be discussing happened just last week. A woman in Maryland, who had sought judicial protection against her estranged husband, was doused with gasoline and set on fire by him after the judge in the case, against her protests, lifted the protective order that had been issued against the husband. This is just one example of how endemic gender-based violence is

and the need to educate judges, lawyers and law enforcement on the importance of this issue.<sup>1</sup>

- **Before beginning today’s Dialogue, I would like to lay out the framework for the discussion.** Traditionally three provisions of the Bank’s Articles of Agreement have been viewed as constraining the Bank’s work on human rights. However these provisions should offer the Bank considerable latitude as discussed below:
  - **Article I. All Bank activities must be guided by the purposes set forth in Article I.** The Articles establish the Bank as a financial institution with a mandate for reconstruction and development. However, that mission has evolved considerably over 60 years to meet new challenges and to serve a broader concept of development. However, I strongly believe that human rights are thus intrinsic to the mandate of the Bank.
  - **Article IV, Section 10. Two distinct political prohibitions: Bank interference in a country's political affairs is barred and Bank decisions cannot be influenced by the political character of the member country.** The ban on political interference requires the Bank to distance itself from partisan politics, from favoring political factions, and from active participation in political life. Thus, taking human rights into account should no longer be viewed per se as interference by the Bank in domestic political affairs.
  - **Article III, Section 5 and Article IV, Section 10. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to the decisions of the Bank and its officers, and these must be weighed impartially.** In its processes of economic decision-making, the Bank is required to include in its analyses all factors that might have a bearing on investments, including the investment climate of a recipient country and its political realities, just as is done in the private sector. I believe that it is consistent with the Articles for the decision-making processes of the Bank to incorporate social, political and any other relevant input that may have an impact on its economic decisions. Thus, where human rights may have economic consequences, they form a necessary and legitimate part of the Bank’s decision-making process.
- The Bank’s work on gender is an excellent example of this evolved reading of how the Bank can mainstream human rights considerations into our operational and analytical work. I hope that we can now take these lessons and use them to mainstream other human rights considerations as well, so that we can truly meet our mission of equitable development and poverty alleviation.

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<sup>1</sup> For concrete examples of Bank work in this area, please refer to page 25 of the annexed “Background Materials.”