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## Gender mainstreaming: a strategic approach

*Margo Thomas, Cesar Cordova Novión, Arjan de Haan,  
Gimena de León, Maxime Forest, and Sandhya S. Iyer*

### Abstract

As a starting point, this paper recognizes the importance of gender equity for economic growth, societal well-being, and sustainable development. Moreover, the paper acknowledges that while women make up half of the world's population, most policy, program and government initiatives affect women and men differently. To address gaps in policies, implementation and impacts the authors propose a strategic approach to gender mainstreaming that strengthens inclusive policy making by adding a gender lens and tools for assessing the impact of policies on women and other under-represented groups and targets the determinants of gender inequity, based on three pillars: systematic reviews of policies, laws and regulations that limit women's economic activity; gender budgeting; and improving the quality of gender disaggregated data to support impact assessments, policy analyses, and advocacy. The commitment of the Argentine presidency to fostering a gender mainstreaming strategy across the whole G20 agenda and boosting "women's empowerment, the elimination of gender disparities in employment, science, technology and education, and protection from all forms of gender-based violence." provides an opportunity for bringing this issue forward for the 2018 G20.

(Submitted as [Global Solutions Paper](#))

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*“Women make up a little over half the world’s population, but their contribution to measured economic activity, growth, and well-being is far below its potential, with serious macroeconomic consequences. .... The challenges of growth, job creation, and inclusion are closely intertwined.” (Elborgh-Woytek et al., 2013)*

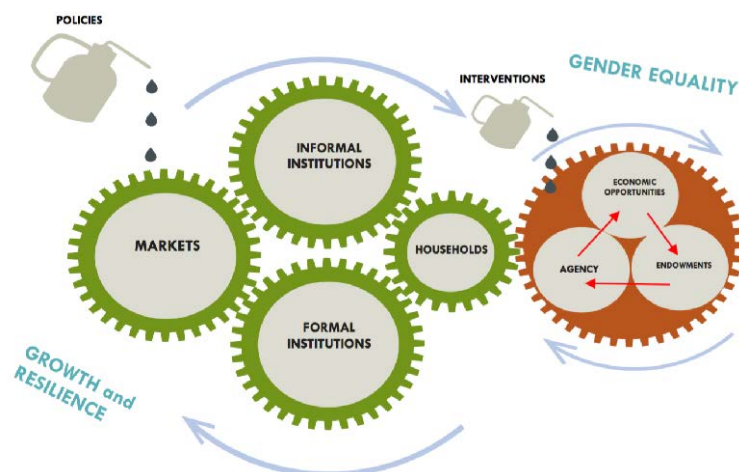
## Challenge

As a starting point, we recognize that because of the inherent and pervasive structural inequalities globally, the impact of most policies has inherently different impacts and outcomes for men and women. The challenge faced by policy makers in addressing gender gaps and systemic constraints (Figure 1) is the complexity and inter-connectedness of the wide range of policy interventions and multiple paths to reform, since “gender-differentiated market failures, institutional constraints, and persistent social norms often combine to reinforce gender inequalities and make improving gender equality much more complex. When there are multiple constraints, they all need to be addressed.” (World Bank, 2011)

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action called for the end of gender inequality through a range of actions including gender mainstreaming policies, gender assessment of policy impacts, and preparation of national budgets and programs to ensure that resources are allocated to support programs and policies beneficial to women. This call has been amplified in several international declarations and conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

In assessing the impact and progress of gender mainstreaming over the past two decades, feminist and policy scholars have largely concluded that the results are mixed and often disappointing, particularly at the national government level. Similar conclusions have been made about gender mainstreaming in multilateral institutions.

Figure 1: World Bank Group – Conceptual framework: gender equality, poverty reduction and inclusive growth



Source: World Bank: Gender Strategy, 2016.

In effect, efforts to mainstream gender in policy formulation and implementation have had limited impact as strategies and tools were technically flawed, poorly framed, lacked specific and measurable goals, and were subjected to considerable political and institutional resistance [Caglar, 2013]. Moreover, the institutions and policy actors tasked with implementation are often politically weak and poorly resourced (Chant and McIlwaine, 2016; True and Mintrom, 2001).

Gender mainstreaming is a broad and challenging agenda that requires a strategic and targeted approach in order to achieve impact and meaningful outcomes. This paper proposes to address some of the challenges of mainstreaming gender policies and implementation. It makes recommendations for: reframing and strengthening inclusive policy making processes, recognizing the importance of political support and action; addressing systemic issues including data gaps in order to achieve the essential outcomes and impacts; and, allocating budgets to support more robust impact analyses, policy design and implementation, and accountability for results. Mindful of the target audience of the G20, we have focused the discussion and recommendations of this paper on gender mainstreaming in the context of governmental policies and governmental institutions.

## Proposals

### **A New Approach to Mainstreaming**

Recognizing that “gender gaps are often the result of multiple and mutually reinforcing constraints ... require coordinated multi-sectoral interventions, or sequential interventions,” the World Bank proposed four principles including: comprehensive gender diagnostics, targeting determinants of gender equity; and strategic mainstreaming (World Bank 2011).

The 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life called for speeding up progress on gender equality goals, emphasized the need for policy makers in government and state institutions to implement new and innovative ways to promote gender equality, and avoid pitfalls in institutionalising gender equality to create systemic change across state institutions and decision processes (OECD 2015; OECD 2016). As stated by Gabriela Ramos, OECD Chief of Staff, G20 Sherpa and leader of OECD work on gender, the aim is to get state institutions and policy actors “to consider every aspect of policy through a gender lens”.

Drawing on the existing body of analytical work and the lessons of experience from various governments, this paper proposes a strategic approach to gender mainstreaming that targets the determinants of gender inequity and is based on three pillars:

1. Systematic reviews of policies, laws and regulations that limit women’s economic activity;
2. Strengthening inclusive policy making processes by adding a gender lens and tools for assessing the impact of policies on women and other under-represented groups; and
3. Improving the quality of gender disaggregated data to support evidence-based policy making.

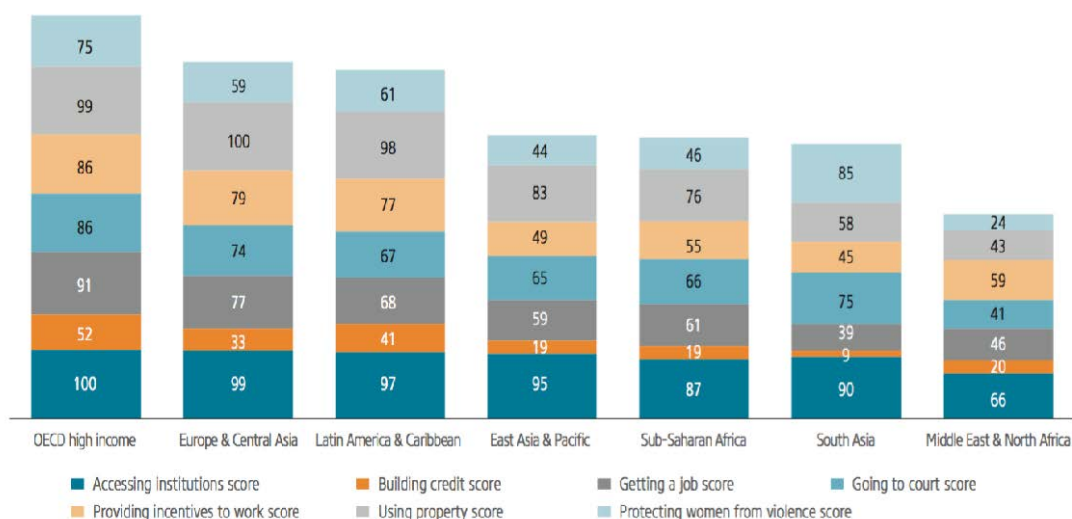
## Policy Process: Systematically Applying a Gender Lens

The case can be made that the goal of systematically applying a gender lens to policy should be considered as integral to efforts aimed at strengthening policy making processes, the quality of policies, and the impact of policies by applying the principles of inclusiveness, consistency, transparency. In principle, the systematic approach of *ex ante* and *ex post* impact assessments of policies, legal and regulatory frameworks, and their implementation, should be applied to all under-valued and under-represented groups, including for example, women and the disabled who represent more than half of the world's population. This would be consistent with inclusive, evidence-based policy making in democratic systems.

The findings of the 2018 Women, Business and Law Report underscore the pervasiveness of legal and policy impediments affecting women by scoring seven indicators across 189 economies. According to the report and as reflected in Figure 2, “over a third of the economies examined have at least one constraint on women’s legal capacity as measured by accessing institutions. Similarly, close to 40% of economies have at least one constraint on women’s property rights as measured by the using property indicator.”

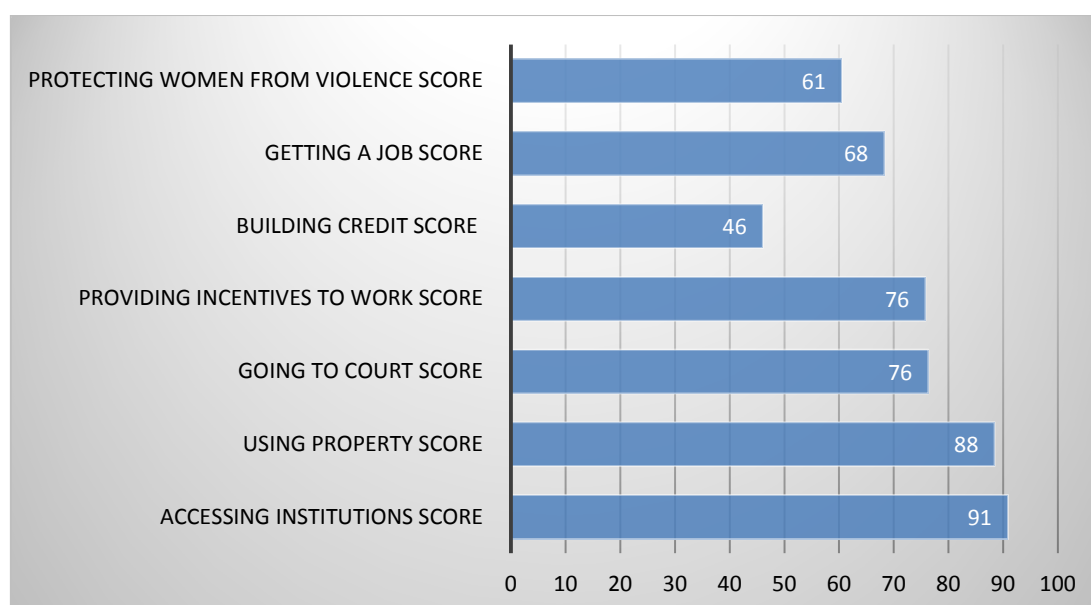
For the nineteen G20 member countries (Figure 3), the average scores indicate the need to target reforms of laws, regulations and policies, particularly in the areas of labour inclusion, access to credit and protections from violence. Within this group, the average scores are consistent with the findings that higher income economies perform best across indicators.

Figure 2: On average, OECD high-income economies perform best across most indicators



Source: World Bank (2018)

Figure 3: G20 member countries – Women, business and law 2018 indicators (average scores)



### **The Politics of Policies**

Several G20 member countries can potentially serve as models for systematically tackling the determinants of gender inequities by applying a gender lens in assessing policies, aligning policies and programs, and reforming the relevant laws and regulations. The effective implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies requires political support and demonstrated actions at high levels of government.

The United Kingdom's passage of the Gender Pay Gap legislation requiring firms with 250 or more employees to report on pay differentials for men and women has had considerable impact since its implementation in 2017. It provides an example of a coordinated effort to tackle one of the persistent gaps in women's labor force participation by changing policy and related legislation to institute a mechanism for collecting data to establish baselines and measure progress in addressing systemic pay inequities.

In 2016, Canada's Standing Committee on the Status of Women took stock of the implementation of the government's 1995 commitment to Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) analysis and concluded, to the surprise of few, that "despite the long history of work on the topic of GBA+, the federal government's commitment to the implementation of GBA+ is far from being fulfilled." The Committee concluded that in 2009 only 29 of approximately 110 federal organizations committed to GBA+ through the 2009 Departmental Action Plan on Gender-Based Analysis and identified political will as an important determinant of success in implementation. The incoming Government of Canada announced a feminist agenda and set about systematically and strategically aligning politics, policies and programs in support of this agenda. See Annex 1.

Mexico provides yet another example of efforts to align of politics, policies, and programs

aimed at advancing gender equity by establishing the key elements of the framework outlined in Box 1 below. The OECD report “*Building an Inclusive Mexico: Policies and Good Governance for Gender Equality*” noted that Mexico has taken very important actions at the policy level to promote gender equality, including the establishment of “the National System of Equality between Men and Women – headed, for the first time, by President Peña Nieto ... The presence of the President showed renewed commitment to allow a better integration of gender considerations into the policy cycle, in line with the original objective outlined in the National Development Plan 2013-2018. It also meant strong engagement to achieve better outcomes in the gender agenda and reaffirmed Mexico’s commitment to the G20 gender target” (OECD, 2017). Yet there are significant challenges regarding implementation of the framework as Mexico continues to significantly lag behind OECD members and countries in the LAC region on issues such as female labor force participation (47% in Mexico compared with Chile, Colombia, Peru and Brazil at 60%) and violence against women.

**Box 1. Mexico: Building an advanced legal and policy framework for gender**

- The 2006 General Law of Equality between Women and Men proscribed the establishment of gender mainstreaming requirements within the Planning Act and the Federal Budget and Fiscal Accountability Act.
- The National Programme for Equality and Non-Discrimination (PROIGUALDAD) 2013-2018 demonstrate increasing legal and political commitments to gender equality”.

## Gender Impact Assessments

The Gender impact assessment (GIA) is one of several evidence-based, policy-making tools that may be applied to facilitate the implementation of gender mainstreaming by systematically and objectively assessing the *ex-ante* impact of policies, laws, and implementing regulations and establishing a baseline against which subsequent implementation can be measured. The GIA is typically an ex-ante assessment of a proposed piece of legislation or policy from a gender perspective. Depending on context and the nature of the policy being assessed, the GIA can be performed at different stages of the law-making or policy cycles.

As summarized in Box 2, several member states of the European Union (EU) have established frameworks for GIA implementation.

One of the main findings of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2014) review of GIA implementation case studies shows that for GIAs to effectively challenge gender-blind policies, they must be performed early enough in the policy making/legislative cycle to

### Box 2. GIA in European Union Member Countries

GIAs are regularly performed *ex ante* on policies or legislations, for example:

- Austria, GIA is framed by constitutional provisions on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting adopted in 2013.
- Spain. A 2003 Law requires bills and propositions of regulation introduced by the government, to include a GIA; 2007 Law on effective gender equality, and a Royal decree of 2009 introduced GIA for policy planning; Regional governments, e.g. Catalonia, have managed to develop and implement GIAs that are more comprehensive than those implemented at the State level.

influence policy design and facilitate inputs by technical experts to substantively amend the proposed policy or legislation. Under these conditions, the evidence shows that *ex-ante* GIAs contribute to the quality and transparency of the law/policy making process and improve the overall impact of new policies and regulations. In a similar vein, the evidence shows that *ex-post* policy and legislative evaluation undertaken from a gender perspective, also contribute to increase accountability and quality governance.

Gender expertise is required to identify evidence of potential gender-blindness and the undesirable impacts of policies/laws on gender equality. In France, the High Gender Equality Council, an advisory body established by decree in 2013 and embedded into the law in 2017, has rapidly gained credit through its evaluation role, pointing out gaps to be filled in current legislation, acknowledging progresses, supporting the government in implementing gender mainstreaming and raising pending challenges to be addressed.

### Gender Budgeting

Gender budgeting has emerged as one of the critical pillars of efforts to advance gender equity in developed and developing economies.

There is a broad range of experience and lesson drawing from approaches to gender budgeting, starting with Australia in 1984 where the government was required to assess budgetary impacts on women and girls (Elson, 2006). The IMF survey (Stotsky, 2016) of gender budgeting efforts covering more than 80 countries noted a range of outcomes, including: changes in fiscal policies (e.g., India and Mexico); improved accountability systems for public spending on gender-focused initiatives (e.g., Austria and Ecuador); incorporating relevant line ministries into gender budgeting processes and institutionalizing tools such as gender budget statements, circulars, and spending reviews (e.g., Morocco, Philippines, and Timor-Leste); and incorporating gender budgeting at the level of sub-national entities (e.g., Bolivia and India) (Stotsky 2016).

In response to the challenges of implementing policies and programs to advance gender equity, the Finance Ministers' Working Group on Gender Equity was convened during the 2015 World Bank Spring Meetings. A founding member of the Working Group, Okonjo-Iweala (2016) opined that gender mainstreaming simply was not getting results fast enough and proposed that finance ministers leverage the budget more effectively to incentivize reform and achieve concrete impacts on gender equity. The assessment of the IMF Survey amplifies and



substantiates this view with the assessment that gender budgeting efforts “*seem to have led to meaningful fiscal policy changes only when they had the support of the political centre of fiscal decision-making ... the leadership of the minister of finance has clearly been essential .... Parliamentarians and parliamentary committees are important supports to the executive branch and have sometimes been catalytic.*” (Stotsky 2016, pg. 25-26).

*“Gender budgeting efforts are intended to commit public budgeting to weighing the benefits and costs of policies that would promote gender equality and girls’ and women’s development, and then to taking action in response to this evaluation. The important point is not whether an initiative is labelled as gender budgeting but whether fiscal policies and administration are formulated with an eye to promoting gender equality and girls’ and women’s development”* (Stotsky, 2016). In this context, gender budgeting should be viewed not just as an essential tool for assuring implementation and impact, but also as critical for strengthening policy processes.

Mexico’s experience with gender budgeting provides insights into the challenges of implementation despite political commitment. As noted in the 2017 OECD report, “Mexico has been making progress in strengthening the integration of gender requirements through the Planning and the Federal Budget and Fiscal Accountability Acts, as well as the National Development Plan of Mexico, which .... includes gender equality as a cross-cutting principle in support of Mexico’s goal to “unlock its full potential” (OECD, 2017). Despite the legal and procedural requirements for all government policies and budgets to be assessed in terms of their different impacts on men and women and boys and girls, “gender analysis is still missing from the mainstream budgetary process and women’s initiatives are seen as ‘add-ons’.” (OECD, 2017).

In 2017, the IMF Report “Women Are Key for Future Growth: Evidence from Canada” noted that if the “gap of 7 percentage points between male and female labour force participation with high educational attainment were eliminated, the level of real GDP could be about 4 percent higher today” (Petersson et al, 2017). Canada’s implementation of gender budgeting has received a new impetus with the feminist mandate of the current government and its efforts to increase economic growth (see Annex 1). The 2017 Budget included a ‘gender statement’, said to be the first of its kind. The 2018 budget, included a proposal for “adopting a comprehensive and permanent approach to gender budgeting” and set out a ‘gender results framework’ with specific objectives and outcomes indicators covering education, economic participation, leadership and political participation, gender-based violence and poverty reduction. This rigorous approach to analysis and implementation provides a basis for assessing the gaps and increasing accountability for results.

India offers a robust example of gender budgeting on the national and state level, with potential lessons on the complementarities, benefits and challenges of gender budgeting within this framework. The IMF conducted an empirical analysis of gender budgeting at the state level in India where 16 out of 29 states adopted and sustained gender budgeting efforts over a 15-year period, “with varying degrees of intensity, complementing a central (or Union) government initiative” (Stotsky and Zaman, 2016). The study concluded that “gender equality, as measured by gender equality indices for enrolment in primary schools, improved significantly in gender budgeting states compared to states that did not put in place gender

budgeting, ..... [and] had an ambiguous influence on sector-level fiscal spending” (Stotsky, 2016).

On a regional level, within the European Union, several member states have developed and implemented gender budgeting. In Austria, Article 51 of the constitution establishes the principle of a gender-sensitive state budget, requiring each ministry to formulate gender-impact objectives for proposed budgetary measures. In Finland, national gender equality plans have been adopted starting in 2008, with specific requirements for each ministry’s budget process. In Spain, the 2003 law requiring GIA in the State budgeting process has been complied with only twice on the national level – in 2011 and 2017. However, implementation at the regional government level has been more successful with Madrid or Valencia leading the way.

### **Information and Measurement: Gender Disaggregated Data**

The collection and dissemination of robust and consistent sex-disaggregated economic and social data to inform and support evidence-based policy making poses a significant challenge. Therefore, the integration and implementation of a gender focus on data collection, disaggregation, analysis and publication all demographic, social and economic statistics are critical for designing, implementing and monitoring gender-informed policies. Experts have clearly articulated the case for collecting gendered statistics in support of greater gender equity (Box 3).

#### **Box 3. Commentary on the Importance of Gender Disaggregated Data**

*“When we don’t count women or girls, they literally become invisible,”* says Sarah Hendriks, Director of Gender Equality, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The dearth of data makes it difficult to set policies and gauge progress, preventing governments and organizations from taking measurable steps to empower women and improve lives, noted Mayra Buvinic, a U.N. Foundation senior fellow working on the Data2X initiative aimed at closing the gender data gap.

Source: Gates Foundation, New York Times, 2015

According to the World Bank, while 80 percent of the its member countries regularly produce sex-disaggregated statistics on mortality, labour force participation, and education and training, less 33 percent disaggregate statistics by sex on informal employment, entrepreneurship (ownership and management of a firm or business) and unpaid work, or collect data about violence against women. In recognition of this challenge and the critical importance of data to track progress, the Sustainable Development Goals framework includes requirements for the collection and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data. The 2014 Report on Mapping Gender Data Gaps (Buvinic et al., 2014) identified 5 domains of gender equality and women’s empowerment in which there are significant data gaps. In the domain of economic opportunities, the gaps cover a broad spectrum in 4 buckets:

1. Labour inclusion: informal employment and unpaid work; earnings disparities and the opportunity cost of paid work; labour migration; employment mobility and job segregation; entrepreneurial activities and asset ownership;

2. Access to financial, digital and information resources;
3. Participation in the agricultural and agri-business sectors. These data are essential for the design of gender-informed agricultural policies; and
4. Access to child care.

There is a range of examples on the regional, national and sub-national levels that can provide lessons of experience and guide the development of models for the effective and efficient collection of gendered statistics. For the purpose of this Paper, we highlight the examples of Mexico, Argentina and the European Union.

Mexico has been heralded as one of the leading countries in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region in collecting gender statistics, with the extensive adaptation of surveys conducted by the Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) to collect gender-disaggregated information. Despite the availability of good quality gender-disaggregated data, the OECD reported that important “gaps remain when it comes to systematic collection and use of sex-disaggregated data at the crafting and evaluation stage of many sectoral policies that are perceived to be gender-neutral, but instead are gender blind” (OECD, 2017).

In Argentina, the City of Buenos Aires provides a model for sub-national data collection. The City has embarked on an ambitious project to systematically collect gender disaggregated data on the economic activities of its citizens to address gaps in critical data necessary to support policy design, implementation and assessment, the delivery of services to its citizens and reporting on the national level. This is a nascent effort (see Box 4) intended to support the gender mainstreaming strategy at the sub-national level in Argentina. It is clearly benefiting from the experience of other countries and initiatives within Latin America and other parts of the world.

The European Union provides a model for collection at the regional level and member country level. In 2015, the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) developed a regional Gender Equality Index, covering women’s access to employment, money, knowledge, time use, power and health. Drawing upon Eurostat, the EU statistical data collection system, the index provides a basis for identifying trends, establishing benchmarks and measuring progress on gender equality. In addition, several EU member states have developed increasingly comprehensive systems to collect, process and publish gender-disaggregated data.

These systems include:

- National annual statistics on men and women, as in the Czech Republic, Croatia or Sweden;
- Legally binding obligations to collect sex-disaggregated data entrenched in general gender equality laws, as in Spain; and

- Data collection on specific topics such as gender-based violence where collections have been fragmentary and lacking a unified definition due to the number of institutions involved in collecting the data. For this purpose, extensive surveys have been carried out on gender-based violence to reflect the multiple dimensions of this phenomena and inform policy making – such as the VIRAGE survey carried out in France in 2015-2017, and observatories of gender-based violence were established within different state bodies (as the Council of the Judiciary and the Ministry in charge of equality in Spain).

**Box 4. Closing Gender Information Gaps to Strengthen Policies for Growth and Development:  
The Gender Indicators System of Buenos Aires City**

The Gender Indicators System of Buenos Aires City was launched at the beginning of 2018. It collects data on different variables concerning the situation of women and men in the demographic, economic and political fields. The system aims at closing the statistical gap, based on the idea that information is essential to intervene through more and better public policies.

Key elements of this initiative include:

1. Adoption of the conceptual framework of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for three spheres of women's autonomy: physical, economic and decision-making processes.
2. Inclusion of all major stakeholders (including government, civil society, private sector, and academia) in the process of designing the data collection system and adapting collection instruments and processes.

The collection of gender disaggregated statistics is not an end in itself. Rather it is a means to achieving better gender policies. Therefore it is critical for effective gender mainstreaming, by:

- Making visible the main inequalities women face and critical issues that require policy intervention;
- Informing the policy making process and facilitating the design of policies within a gender lens; and
- Contributing to the follow up and monitoring of policies.

## Recommendations for Action

An overall vision and strategy for inclusive, gender sensitive, and sustainable development is indispensable for framing policy reform with positive long-term goals. Efforts to integrate gender equality in public life should be anchored by a coherent national strategy and action plan instead of a piece-meal and *ad hoc* or reactive approach to addressing gender equity. A coherent, strategic approach is more likely to generate the support of key stakeholders, including the private sector. It would improve consistency across policies and foster policy certainty. These factors contribute to a more secure policy environment, making it more likely that political, public and private resources will be invested in long-term initiatives such as gender mainstreaming. In addition, it must be recognized that the implementation of these recommendations will require not only resources but also capacity development.

Figure 3. Evidence-based policy making: framework for supporting gender mainstreaming

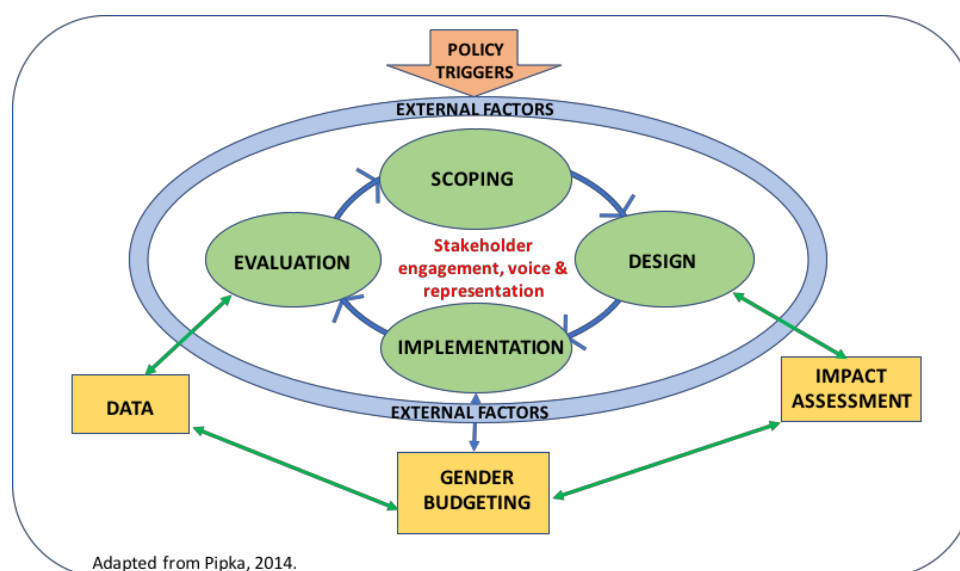


Figure 3, provides a model or framework for strengthening policy processes to ensure transparency, consistency and accountability for gender mainstreaming.

- I. Design and implement policy processes to systematically include a gender focus on the determinants of gender inequities by requiring, implementing, and resourcing impact assessments to assure inclusivity, transparency, consistency and accountability. In line with the methodological approach outlined in Annex 2, implement impact assessments for:
  - a. Fast paced and streamlined *ex-post* reviews of targeted, existing policies, laws, regulations, procedures which have been embedded with systemic constraints to women’s economic activity; and
  - b. *Ex-ante* analyses of new policies, laws, regulations, and procedures to limit biases that may disproportionately and negatively impact women.
- II. Implement gender budgeting at national and sub-national levels, placing implementation and accountability at the political centre of fiscal decision-making on the ministries of finance. As articulated by the OECD, effective gender budgeting would “require that agencies mandated to verify the quality of proposed budgets, such as the Ministry of Finance and Credit, the Office of the President and the Parliament, would integrate the inclusion of gender impact assessments as a requirement within any stage of quality control. This commitment should show tangible results in terms of resource re-prioritization and re-allocation decisions across sectors, and ultimately result in better public spending, for the benefit of both men and women” (OECD, 2017).
- III. Improve the collection and dissemination of gender disaggregated data to support policy making and implementation, identification of gaps, and reporting on progress in

closing these gaps. Data constitute essential inputs for quality policy design, benchmarking and measuring progress on implementation, and accountability. We recommend that governments take the following steps:

- a. Provide resources to close the data gaps.
- b. Give priority to the following categories of statistical data collection:
  - i. Labour inclusion;
  - ii. Participation in the agricultural and agri-business sectors; and
  - iii. Access to child care.
- c. Develop robust reporting and communication mechanisms to share this information with stakeholders for analysis, policy design, impact assessments, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy.

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## Annexes

### Annex 1

#### The Canadian Approach to Gender Mainstreaming<sup>1</sup>

Canada's government commitment to gender equality has a long history, but became a top priority after the 2015 general election. With continued leadership from the top, articulated for example in G7<sup>2</sup> and international trade debates,<sup>3</sup> the efforts to mainstream gender have been extensive. This note describes the most significant efforts made, particularly in the promotion of gender-based analysis.

#### Investments in the previous two decades (1980s–2000)

In 2016, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women took stock of the implementation of the government's 1995 commitment to Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) analysis,<sup>4</sup> the implementation of which was articulated in the Minister for the Status of Women's mandate letter in November 2015.<sup>5</sup> It concluded, to the surprise of few, that "despite the long history of work on the topic of GBA+, the federal government's commitment to the implementation of GBA+ is far from being fulfilled."

GBA+, Gender-Based Analysis Plus, is defined as "an analytical process which examines the possible effects of legislation, policies, and programs on diverse groups of women and men, girls and boys." It takes into consideration gender and other identity factors.

The Committee concluded found that in 2009 only 29 of approximately 110 federal organizations committed to GBA+ through the *2009 Departmental Action Plan on Gender-Based Analysis*. The Committee observed the "positive difference that the implementation of GBA+ makes to the quality, responsiveness, and effectiveness of government policies, programs and legislation."

Political will was considered an important determinant of success in implementation: "When we look at the departments that have been successful in implementing GBA, it is because it came from the top and was taken seriously from the top. It was seen not as something that they were doing because they were told, but because they understood the intrinsic value of doing this type of analysis and were able to translate that to the people who work for them."

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<sup>1</sup> Note prepared by Arjan de Haan, IDRC; comments and suggestions of colleagues are gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>2</sup> <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2018/04/26/statement-prime-minister-gender-equality-top-priority-canadas-g7-presidency>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/advancing-gender-equality-through-trade>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/FEWO/report-4/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-status-women-mandate-letter>

Further, the Committee highlighted four elements key to implementation: practical considerations, such as the need to implement GBA+ at the earliest stages of the development of policies, programs and legislation; resources and incentives; a workplace culture that supports GBA+; and data and research.

### **Progress since 2015**

A March 2018 report of Minister of the Status of Women – with the Privy Council office (PCO) and the Treasury Board of Canada Office Secretariat (TBS) – to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women provides an overview of measures taken since 2016.<sup>6</sup> This included the following. Budget 2017 included a new gender statement (discussed below). The Minister of Finance communicated to Cabinet colleagues that “funding proposals would no longer be considered without a clear and rigorous GBA+” (and this was matched by communication and training within the Finance Ministry – see Box). It also proposes that the gender analysis is presented when Finance presents the Budget in the House of Commons. Measures to ensure GBA+ is integrated have included new template for Cabinet Memoranda and TBS submissions, including the GBA+ annex and due diligence tool, with a SWC GBA+ Implementation Survey showing that over 90 per cent of respondents feel gender analysis is integrated in all (‘often or always’) submissions. The report further highlights future work on regulatory impact analysis (by TBS), and on integrating GBA+ into accountability mechanisms like departmental reports, and in the way the Governments consults the public on the impact of its policies.<sup>7</sup> And Status of Women will be made an official Department of the Government of Canada.<sup>8</sup>

Budget 2017 included a ‘gender statement’, said to be the first of its kind. This joint report was published just after the 2018 budget, which demonstrated the continued high-level and mainstreaming commitment (“adopting a comprehensive and permanent approach to gender budgeting”). Chapter 5 of the budget sets out a ‘gender results framework’.<sup>9</sup> This starts with objectives, in terms of outcomes in education, economic participation, leadership and political participation, gender based violence and poverty reduction. It also highlights the “feminist international approach to all policies and programs, including diplomacy, trade, security and development”.

#### **Box: Promoting Gender Equality – the Role of the Finance Ministry**

Feminist economists have long advocated for ensuring policy for gender equality is anchored in Finance Ministries, to ensure strengthening of gender analysis across all policies. The Canadian approach provides an important example of this. As mentioned, the Minister of Finance communicated the need for GBA+ to cabinet colleagues, and he consistently emphasizes the same within the Department. All staff responsible for assessing proposals need to pass the GBA+ course test. The training of analysts is regarded as a long-term transformative investment.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/FEWO/related-document/9759318>

<sup>7</sup> SWC departmental plan 2018-19 is here <http://swc-cfc.gc.ca/trans/account-resp/pr/dp-pm/1819/index-en.html>

<sup>8</sup> See interview here: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/status-women-monsef-budget-1.4556093>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2018/docs/plan/chap-05-en.html>

The 2018 budget includes a number of initiatives with clear gender dimensions, including: enhancing the Canada Workers Benefit; increasing uptake of the Canada Child Benefit and other benefits among Indigenous Peoples; Employment Insurance reforms to support sharing of child care responsibilities, and help individuals stay connected to the labour market; skills training support; promoting gender equality in research; and business innovation.

The budget received praise. Kate McInturff's Policy Alternatives blog commented<sup>10</sup> noted that "The government promised us a budget guided by gender analysis this year, and they delivered: on pay equity, on supports for women entrepreneurs .... Investments in child care, women's organizations and ending violence against women were more baby steps than the needed giant leap, but they still represent progress. And yes, there was a little something for the men and boys too." And to track future progress: "This budget includes the most thorough gender analysis we have yet to see in a public budget in Canada. It also sets benchmarks for progress. That means we can all see where the gaps are closing and where they are not. Which truly is a big step forward."

### **Concluding Thoughts**

There are concerns, including in the development policy experience,<sup>11</sup> that mainstreaming gender is unlikely to yield necessary results. It is too early to describe or analyse results of the Canadian efforts, and the gender-based analysis is only one of the instruments needed for transformational change. However, it is clear that efforts made are well-positioned to promote long-term transformation, in particular the systematic consideration of gender constraints and disadvantages in all policy areas, and the training of policy makers to understand how gender inequality matters across public policy.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://behindthenumbers.ca/2018/02/27/baby-steps-dad-big-steps-forward-women/>

<sup>11</sup> Grown, C., Addison, T. & Tarp, F. (2016) Aid for Gender Equality and Development: Lessons and Challenges, *Aid for Gender Equality and Development, Journal of International Development*. 28 (3).

## Annex 2

### Gender Mainstreaming Policy Process: Impact Assessment

Table 1. Methodological Approach to Impact Assessment

IA steps for a policy or regulation proposal	Objectives	Gender based aspects and dimension to develop
Problem Definition Objectives Options Selection	Evaluate baseline Scope key topics Identify key stakeholders early on Select options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the gender impacts in the current system</li> <li>Identify gender aware and organized stakeholders</li> <li>Provide methods and resources to</li> </ul>
Impact Assessment	Assess options Collect data & evidence Validate results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that gender aspects are discussed through panels &amp; Focus Groups discussed the proposal</li> <li>Include test questions on consultation documents and 'Notice and Comment' of the proposal</li> </ul>
Compare options 'Preferred option' Refine proposal	Minimize burdens while maintaining benefits of preferred option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the option in terms of its positive and negative effects on gender</li> <li>Ensure though gender budgeting that the preferred option is adequately resourced</li> </ul>
Monitor outcomes	Monitor the cost of implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the implementation of the policy includes monitoring of the impacts on women</li> </ul>

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