

AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION TRUST FUND (ARTF)

Gender Working Group Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Summary of Discussions

The ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) held its monthly meeting virtually on August 11, 2020, which was co-chaired by the World Bank (the Bank) and Australia. Representatives of 9 donor partners¹ and the ARTF Administrator attended the meeting.

The agenda for the August meeting was the following: (i) status update of the actions agreed in the July GWG meeting; (ii) presentation on a project under preparation - Drought Early Warning, Finance, and Action Project (ENEAWF) – Complementarity with other on-going/upcoming emergency operations and gender interventions; (iii) GWG updates to the Strategy Group – new PFFP and gender considerations; (iv) GWG Donor Co-Chair position call for nominees; and (v) AOB

Status of the actions agreed at the July GWG meeting: The finalized version of the GWG ToR was shared with partners along with the August GWG invitation on August 4, 2020 and has been posted on the ARTF website. A deep dive session on gender tagging strategy and GBV risk assessment of the World Bank was organized on July 24, which connected virtually various gender expertise across the Bank. A follow-on session focusing on a couple of case studies on how the gender tagging application will take place in the next few weeks. It was also recalled by the donor co-Chair that the Bank had offered to include a discussion/briefing of the Bank’s gender advocacy initiatives with the government in the follow-on session given the importance of it to the next PFFP. The Bank will share the updated PFFP matrix of comments and responses the partners and welcomed any further comments, which was shared right after the August meeting.

Afghanistan: Drought Early Warning, Finance, and Action Project (ENEAWF) – The team gave an overview of the project’s concept. ENETAWF is designed to increase food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable households (HHs) living in areas prone to drought and to build the foundations for an early warning system with mechanisms for financing. ENETAWF will build on the work of a series of emergency relief projects targeted at COVID-19 impact. The project will start in winter 2020-2024 (4 years). The project components focus on helping the government build a drought early warning decision support system to ensure timely delivery of critical information on weather and beyond; building a shock-responsive delivery mechanism targeting the most food insecure households to build community resilience; and establishing financing arrangements to help the most food insecure HHs at times of drought. The shock-responsive support component is a combination of unconditional cash transfer (UCT) to food insecure HHs without a labor, cash for work (CfW) programs for vulnerable HHs with able-bodied members, and a nutrition support package to HHs with children and pregnant women. This component will cover 78 plus districts at times of emergency. Project areas are selected based on the drought and poverty and will cover 800,000 HHs (1.9 million people). MRRD will be responsible for overall project implementation except for the early finance component that will be covered by MoF.

The project conducted a gender gap analysis with the help and support of the gender unit of the Bank during preparation phase and some gaps identified were: Female-headed households (FHHs) and HHs without able-bodied members are more vulnerable than male-headed households to drought in terms of increased

¹ Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, EU-EC, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and UK

poverty and food insecurity; women's lower access to information further leads to lower access to social protection services; and GBV prevalence, particularly, the practice of selling female children for survival, rises in some areas of the country when hit by drought. The project will address the identified gaps including prioritizing FHHs, widows and pregnant women in the chronically food-insecure HHs to receive cash transfers; consulting women and other relevant groups in the selection of the kind of public works that they are comfortable taking part in; the nutrition support specifically targeting pregnant women and those with children between 0-2 years of age; conducting behavior change campaigns to raise awareness on maternal child care practices as well as child marriage prevention; consulting women in the development of the early warning dissemination and communication plan; ensuring sufficient female staffing in the project; and finally through an RCT (randomized control trial), the project will explore the impact of CfW component on women's economic empowerment and change of social norms in conservative settings. In terms of gender disaggregated indicators, the project PDO level indicator, *food consumption score*, is gender disaggregated; shock responsive support component indicators such as number of beneficiaries for CfW and UCT are disaggregated by gender; the nutrition package is already targeted at women only; under the early warning component, number of community members receiving information will be disaggregated by gender; and finally the project will keep track of the female staffing at the project and field level. The project will also conduct an impact evaluation focusing on a couple of areas including impact of cash for work and women's labor force participation. M&E activities will be conducted through various methods at each level of the project: Management Information System (MIS); iterative Beneficiary Monitoring (IBM); rapid Assessments & impact Evaluation (IE).

The donor co-chair noted the ENETAWF presentation was one of the most focused, gender-relevant we had seen at GWG. This was echoed by others.

A question was asked whether each indicator will have a gender target/gender disaggregated data; and whether aside from the desk review for the gender gap analysis, any prior data collection from the field such as CDCs was done. Clearly, gender-focused activities will have disaggregated targets and data to measure the achievements. For instance, on the food consumption, women, especially pregnant women and those with children, are targeted, so women will be the high-end target. On the CfW, the female target will be a quarter of the total beneficiaries. The early warning system and project implementation support will target around 20-25% female beneficiaries. The project will start collecting data once the baseline surveys of the impact evaluation will begin. The project mostly relied on the desk review data as well as data and analyses from other projects such as the data on FHHs under CCAP was used.

Another point raised was whether the project has been coordinating with the FSAC (Food Security and Agriculture Cluster) or the protection clusters to avoid any duplication of work or to identify humanitarian and development related gaps that the project could potentially address. The WB team informed that they are working in close coordination with FSAC and MOPH on the nutrition and have indirectly been in touch with the protection cluster through its GBV sub-cluster membership and GBV sub-cluster will be further consulted as needed.

Finally, the team is currently brainstorming on the types of female friendly public work that the project could consider under its CfW sub-component such as community gardens, cooking sites near the public work sites, or childcare facilities, and soon MRRD will start field consultations through CDCs on finding the right types of public works for women as well. The team welcomed any ideas/suggestions on female friendly public works from the participants.

Gender Working Group Update to the strategy group – new PFFP and gender considerations: Since the last meeting, a unified write-up for GWG on the next PFFP has been put together and shared with GWG members, to be proposed to the Strategy Group. During the last Strategy Group monthly meeting, due to

the time constraints, PFFP was not discussed in detail. The Bank noted the importance of re-instating the GWG update as a stable agenda item for the Strategy Group, in order to maintain the link between groups. However, there was a brief GWG update, highlighting the focus on full and effective implementation of the existing reforms, progress towards gender mainstreaming, focus on the community and political will that translate into action, results and data to have impacts, closing gender gaps in human capital and women's economic empowerment assuring the Strategy Group that GWG is active and ready to engage more. The write-up would be shared and discussed in the upcoming Strategy Group meeting.

GWG Donor Co-Chair position call for nominees – As it has been 6 months since Australia took up the GWG donor co-Chair role in February 2020, new nominations for the next six months were solicited. Many GWG members acknowledged an outstanding co-Chair role played by Australia in the last few months and recommended that Australia continues to play the role for the next few months. Australia agreed to discuss the proposal with the Embassy leadership and get back to the GWG at the next meeting. It was suggested during the meeting to keep the call for nomination open for a short period in case other GWG members would be willing to take up the role.

AOB – The WB provided a few updates on certain projects and programs mainly WEE-RDP and WEE-NPP. On WEE-RDP, it was mentioned that a female Executive Director Ms. (Dr.) Latifa Majidi has been appointed for the project early August. Once fully onboarded, she may be invited to attend a future GWG meeting. On WEE-NPP, it was discussed that the closing date for WEE-NPP is now extended till June 2021 to allow more time for discussing the next phase of the project with the government. The next phase discussions will be shared, and updates will be provided to GWG.

In addition, the Bank requested the donor partners to share updates on their ongoing initiative/bilateral programs as well as collaboration and coordination with UN-Women regarding COVID-19 response. It will help all development agencies, including the Bank, to know about all initiatives in the country. It was suggested by donor partners to invite the UN-Women colleagues to provide updates on their work. Also, members agreed that each development partner may share a brief update about their gender programs in the future GWG meetings.

The importance of engaging the government counterparts, especially Ministry of Women Affairs and Ministry of Finance representatives, was discussed. Due to some recent turn-over of key personnel who used to join the GWG representing MoWA and MoF, the government participation is lacking in the last few months. The Bank will continue to engage them in gender dialogues and encourage their representatives to join future GWG meetings.

The Co-Chairs and GWG Members farewelled Grazia Redolfi (EU) at the end of her posting to Kabul, noting with appreciation her valuable contribution to GWG including as previous Co-Chair.

Agreed Actions:

- Development partners to suggest good candidates for female friendly public works to be included in the Cash for Work component of ENETAWF.
- Development partners to raise any important issue that needs to be discussed in the next Strategy Group meeting
- Development partners to send nomination for the GWG donor co-Chair position by the next GWG monthly meeting.
- Development partners to provide a brief update on their collaboration with UN-Women and their bilateral programs in response to COVID-19 at the next GWG monthly meeting
- The Bank continues to encourage the participation of MoWA and MoF in future GWG activities.