

Thoughts on APEC Women Leaders Network Going Forward

By

Andrina Lever

President, Lever Enterprises, Canada

Co-Founder WLN 1996

2010 ~ A Time for Stocktaking

Is the WLN Living Up to Its Mandate to Represent Women from Business, Academia, Civil Society, and Government in Advancing More Enabling Policies for Women in the APEC Region?

Women leaders who gathered for the first WLN meeting in 1996 envisaged the WLN as a multi-stakeholder network with participation from the private sector, academia, civil society, technology and government. Part of the founding philosophy of WLN was for women who are leaders from all sectors to use their voices to speak for women who did not have access to policy makers. Its focus was on how women could better contribute to and benefit from trade and investment liberalization. Key thematic areas of concern included trade, human resources development, industrial technologies, and SMEs. WLN was purposely created as a multisectoral body that could inform policy makers about how to create a more enabling economic policy environment for women. All women in WLN are leaders in their own right and equal and the WLN founders did not envision a forum where policy makers would be making recommendations to policy makers but rather a forum where women from all sectors engaged in developing policy recommendations that the policy makers could take forward on behalf of WLN. WLN has adapted over time to broaden its mandate to include such critical issues as the development and support of microenterprises and the recognition and representation of indigenous women.

WLN created a simple governance structure whereby the current chair is a representative of the APEC host economy and is supported by co-chairs which represent the immediate past chair and the immediate future chair which ensures continuity. At the economy level, each WLN group chooses its own focal point who has the role of receiving and distributing information about WLN. Because WLN was envisioned as multisectoral and not government led and all women participants are Leaders in their own sectors, there was never any intent to create Heads of Delegations. WLN follows a model similar to ABAC with the exception that there is no central secretariat or funds to support such a secretariat. WLN has agreed to establish a permanent secretariat but has not done so as of yet.

Each economy nominates its own representative to the drafting committee which is chaired by the host economy. This representative may or may not be the focal point. This concept is at the core of WLN and its unique multi-sectoral composition, as it is not appropriate to have government representatives make recommendations to themselves. This is the role of the Gender Focal Point Network, which is composed solely of government representatives and is an official part of APEC. In addition, WLN occupies an historic and unique, be it tenuous, position in that it presents its annual meeting Statement directly to APEC Ministers, not through GFPN. WLN makes a formal request to APEC Ministers to present their statement to the target Ministerial meeting. This request is made by the Chair of WLN who comes from the host economy and makes the request through her own government officials.

In recent years, WLN meetings have become increasingly dominated by government officials and its agenda diffused. Increasingly, WLN meetings have tended to enumerate government initiatives that target women in export trade, rather than challenging, envisioning, advocating and contributing to specific interventions that will assist all women in full participation in trade. The result is that WLN's impact on APEC activities has at times not lived up to its potential. At a time when the World Bank is taking steps to promote Gender Equality as "Smart Trade", the APEC WLN is challenged to demonstrate that it remains relevant.

Why is 2010 an Important Time for the WLN to Reaffirm a Commitment to its Founding Mission?

The WLN meeting in Japan in 2010 presents an opportunity for an historic year for a variety of converging reasons:

2010 is a major global milestone, marking 15 years since the historic 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing and renewed commitments in 2000 by the global community for action to address barriers to women in the economy. The anniversary is significant for WLN, for it was an informal group of ASEAN women scientists who identified APEC as one multilateral organization with which to engage on the global community's commitment to engender multilateral and international trade processes. It is time for WLN to focus on its core principles and identify a path to build on its early successes. If not, it shall become just another annual women's conference.

The WLN meeting in Japan in 2010 presents an opportunity for an historic year for a variety of converging reasons:

- 2010 is the first target of the Bogor Goals of creating free and open trade among the developed APEC economies
- Japan, the host economy has elected a new government with a mandate for change
- 2010 marks an important anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women – a time when women's machineries worldwide and the CSW shall be taking considerable time and resources to assess the 15 year effectiveness of the Beijing Platform for Women
- 2010 is a key milestone for the Millennium Development Goals target of 2015 (see Appendix B)
- It provides an important opportunity for the WLN to speak on the effects of the expansion of the G8 to the G20, the impact of the global financial crisis and the position of women in APEC economies.

While WLN has targeted several APEC fora with recommendations, in recent years, the practice has been for WLN to report to the SME Working Group. In 2010, Japan's proposed SME theme is "Strategy for reinvigorating economic growth with dual engines: SME and Asia-Pacific Economy". The proposed sub-themes are:

- i) improving business environment of SMEs,
- ii) enhancing business support programs for SMEs, and
- iii) facilitating SME innovation and access to global markets.

Japan has also set aside two days for seminars, 28 September and 1 October 2010. The SMEWG is scheduled for 29-30 September, with the SMEMM scheduled for 2-3 October 2010 in Gifu, Japan. Indonesia has requested that Japan consider the inclusion of "Improvement of Financing for Micro- and SME Development" as a sub-theme for 2010. These topics are all of considerable relevance to WLN and given the advance notice provide WLN with an excellent opportunity to organize its annual meeting on the margins of the SME and prepare significant input.

Background on the Multi-sectoral Mandate of the APEC Women Leaders Network

The original concept of a network of women leaders grew out of the work of women throughout the APEC region who had first established a Women Leaders in Science and Technology Network which picked up the BPA challenge to multilateral trade and other organizations to address gender concerns. That Network included leading women scientists from the private sector, public sector and academia. Their original goals were to encourage more young women to go into the sciences, to offer themselves as experts in their fields, and to ensure that women in science and technology had a voice in APEC policy.

The impetus for the WLN came from a meeting in Jakarta hosted by LIPI (Indonesian Ministry for Science and Technology, and UNESCO, with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Participants for the most part were women scientists. They received support and invaluable advice from the Indonesian past-Lead Shephard on how to approach APEC).

As a result of that meeting, WLN was launched the following year, when the Philippines chaired APEC, under the leadership of the National Commission on the Role of Filipina Women (NCRFW). Sixty three women representing the then 18 member economies of APEC were invited to attend. Funding was provided by CIDA and the NCRFW with support from UNIFEM. Each of the participating women was invited to participate as a woman leader in her own economy representing the private sector, science and technology,

the public sector, civil society or academia. Full representation of each sector was considered key to WLN's effectiveness, to help ensure an inclusive approach to WLN discussions on trade-related challenges and opportunities for women.. Each sector brings its own unique perspective and does not exist in isolation. In 1997, during Canada's year of hosting, WLN was expanded to include Indigenous women.

WLN is unique. It is the only multi-sectoral, voluntary network of women leaders anywhere in the world that has access to government leaders and ministers in a multi-lateral trading arrangement. WLN could not have been launched without the important role that the NCRFW played and their direct access to the President of the Republic of the Philippines who pledged to take the first WLN Statement directly to APEC Leaders. WLN also could not have been launched or sustained throughout its first five years without the financial and policy support of CIDA. In addition, in 1997, Canada started the tradition of WLN presenting its Statement directly to the Ministers Responsible for SME's. Throughout its history, WLN has also been invited to make presentations to the Ministers Responsible for Trade and has met with other Heads of State such as in Vietnam. See Appendix A for a copy of the 1996 Call to Action so that we can all recall what the original purpose of the WLN was.

WLN was not set up to be an official part of APE.C. WLN determined from the beginning that it would adopt APEC protocol, terminology and priorities in order to be relevant to APEC. WLN's key role is to represent gender perspectives and impact on the priorities and workplans identified by APEC, and to offer members as experts available for consultation and private/public working groups. It is noteworthy that every APEC host economy since 1996 has recognized the value of the WLN by agreeing to host a WLN meeting. While WLN is a non-governmental driven network that exists at the invitation of the host APEC economy, most WLN meetings have received financial support from the government of the host economy.

The APEC Secretariat has provided assistance to WLN on an ad hoc basis since 1996, to help ensure that its agenda is consistent with APEC themes, priorities, protocol and language, . This is a valuable benefit to WLN and is greatly appreciated. The APEC Secretariat attends WLN meetings for informational and guidance purposes only. In addition, a senior government representative of the host economy has always provided support to WLN to ensure that the WLN Statement is consistent with the priorities of the host economy, that the statements are drafted in APEC 'language' and that the recommendations are received by the host economy. These are important relationships which make WLN unique but have also contributed to its viability over the years.

WLN is only as strong as its participants, their commitment to the network and the continuity that they can bring. The work of WLN members is not to just come together once a year, but to take the statement back to their respective economy, ensure that their officials are aware of the statement, and to dialogue with their APEC officials to promote, explain and, where appropriate, assist in implementation of the recommendations. Unfortunately this message has been lost over the years.

Ideas for Future Directions

Many of WLN's achievements have been at the APEC or regional level and many are at the economy level. As a result of the WLN meeting in Chile in 2004, the women have now organized themselves into a formal network and have helped impact the work of Chile's trade office and its office for women. WLN meetings have assisted in the recognition of indigenous women and their trade potential. WLN has helped establish village banks during the host economies year. Details of many of these achievements can be found in earlier presentations and on the WLN website at www.apecwln.org. WLN's informality and lack of structure have probably prevented it from being as successful as it could be and many long time participants believe this is a good time for the WLN to reconsider its own future direction. The following are some options that we could consider and we should welcome discussion on any or all of them. Each has its own pros and cons. They are not in any particular order or priority and other suggestions are welcome.

Integral to the success and performance of WLN is the focus on developing the program and drafting the statement. WLN Statements reflect inputs from invited speakers and discussion from

plenaries and break-outs (ie: the meetings are structured to GET that discussion, and there are volunteers from across WLN who deliver brief reports on the results of those breakouts to the drafting committee; the practice has been that in the absence of translation, native English-speakers volunteer heavily here). It is therefore necessary for the drafting committee to convene throughout the meeting to integrate those reports as they receive them. WLN is not just a conference but very much a working forum that must produce results. It is also vital that the WLN in plenary hears the draft WLN Statement and has an opportunity to comment on it before it is finalized.

In the part, some WLN hosts have looked at the WLN meeting as a way to reach out to women in their own economy to engage them in a multilateral forum, by inviting women in business, academia and civil society organizations to participate in WLN meetings, engaging their organizations in WLN organization and outreach activities while educating them about APEC and international opportunities. The WLN meeting is also a very useful opportunity for the host to raise the profile of women and women's economic contributions AND needs in their own economy. WLN meetings have become useful forums to showcase the host economy's women's businesses and organizations, but only if there has been enough time given to organize.

Since WLN follows the order of APEC, we already know who shall be the hosts for the next four years, and could easily put into effect a four year plan going forward:

2010 – Japan
2011 – United States
2012 – Russian Federation
2013 - Indonesia

Options

1. **Become a formal part of APEC along the model of ABAC ABAC is the APEC Business Advisory Council which was created by the Leaders in 1996 in the Philippines.** As such it is the only private sector group which has direct input into APEC. ABAC reports directly to the Leaders. There are three representatives from each economy for a total of 63 members. Representatives are appointed directly by their respective APEC Leader. Of the 63 members, typically somewhere between 5 and 7 are women. Despite campaigning and recommendations since 1997 that each economy should appoint at least one woman among its three representatives, no economies have done so. Previously it had been the policy of New Zealand and Canada to have at least one woman ABAC member, If WLN were to seek this type of official recognition it would have to lobby Leaders and have agreement by consensus. ABAC is funded either by the ABAC members themselves or their economies but each economy makes a financial contribution based on the same formula as that used to fund the APEC secretariat. This fund covers the cost of the ABAC secretariat. It is unlikely that APEC Leaders would agree to a similar funding formula to cover the costs of a WLN secretariat. In addition, the appointment of the women leader representatives is made by each Leader and could become highly politicised which is not the objective of WLN. However, using the model of ABAC, to at least have official status may be one that WLN could work on to adapt to its own particular multi-sectoral network. The concept of a separate 'women's' council may not appeal to many people.
2. **Become a formal organization or association or NGO** This option has been discussed in the past and does have merit in that it would be easier to raise funds for sponsorship or grants for research and activities. However, there are already thousands of associations and organizations in the region and the value of yet another organization seems doubtful. The

concept of the WLN was to be flexible and dynamic and to embrace other organizations and associations to act as a voice in APEC.

3. **Establish a secretariat with a formal administrative role.** WLN has agreed in the past to establish a permanent secretariat and the Philippines has offered to host the secretariat. If, after consultation, this emerges as the preferred option, WLN must make it a priority if it is to grow and be more effective and to try to gain funding. If WLN participants agree to this, then it should become a core outcome of the 2010 meeting with inter-sessional work done among WLN participants so that they can arrive in Japan ready to agree on the mandate and terms of reference for the secretariat. This should include recommendations for an initial management team. One management model could be the practice of APEC committees and ABAC, in which a representative from the host economy acts as chair, with the immediate past APEC chair and the immediate next chair supporting as co-chairs for continuity. Since WLN is multi-sectoral, chairs might be nominated for each sector thereby creating sub groups or working groups that mirror ABAC or the APEC working groups. Each sector would be responsible for work supporting the annual theme and priorities.
4. **Reduce the size of WLN to key representatives of each sector who are nominated from their own economy and committed to bringing the message home and to work with other stakeholders.** WLN is meant to be a high level policy discussion group that would have positive outcomes and recommendations for APEC. The women who attend are regarded as community leaders with expertise in their sectors who are willing to use their leadership, influence and access to promote women and the women's perspective for those who do not have access. Over time, WLN has lost this perspective. This option raises some questions about how WLN participants would be selected.
5. **Nominate champions** Each WLN representative group organizes itself differently. Some are more private sector driven and some are more public sector driven. Focal points are chosen in different ways. Canada has always preferred an informal arrangement whereby the core group agreed to rotate the focal point role every two years and in doing so, also rotated the sector of the focal point to ensure that all sectors have been represented. In order for WLN to succeed or continue, each group needs to have its champions. Unfortunately many have dropped out over the years and we are in danger of losing more. The champions may or may not be the Focal Point, it would be up to each economy to decide but they would have a responsibility to champion the statement of WLN and interacting to the extent possible with their own officials and NGO's and other stakeholders at the economy level and at APEC as well as to promote WLN to other women in their own economy.
6. **Integrate IWEBS** In 1999, New Zealand hosted, with the support of Canada, the first (and to date, the only) Indigenous Women in Export Business Seminar. The seminar was highly successful and great expectations were raised about a follow up meeting and about the potential for the role of Indigenous women in business in APEC. Unfortunately those expectations were never realized. It is timely and important to ensure that Indigenous women are fully integrated into WLN and its workplan and that another IWEBS be convened with the objective of having more representation within WLN as well as developing other business and policy initiatives.
7. **Collaborate with the Women Leaders and Gender Parity Programme of the World Economic Forum** (see Appendix D) This group was launched after WLN and is very much along the lines of WLN but has now aligned itself with the Davos Forum. As part of their work, they produce the annual Gender Gap report under the direction of Laura Lisswood. (see Appendix C). 18 of the 21 APEC economies participate in the research - many are starting to slide backwards in their rankings. The 2009 report was released in October. This report can serve as an excellent tool for WLN and APEC and the GFPN as to the status of women in their own economy and assist WLN with future policy work. Aligning WLN

with the group from the World Economic Forum could improve the status of WLN and possibly provide it with other resources which it is currently lacking

Next Steps

This paper is for discussion purposes only to try to invigorate the WLN. Please circulate it to any former and current WLN participants that you are in contact with and please feel free to respond to me. We could even set up a discussion line on our website at www.apecwln.org. I welcome all feedback and discussion. I fear that unless we redefine ourselves we shall risk losing our credibility and worse, shall be taken over by others who have their own agenda. I would very much like to have a broader distribution of this message and a discussion. Please feel free to circulate this paper and return feedback to me by the end of January 2010 and I will be happy to summarize comments and report to all who replied as well as post on the WLN website.

My thanks go to Heather Gibb of the North South Institute of Canada and also a co-founder and one of the original 63 and Patricia Foley Hinnen of the United States for their support and assistance in preparing this paper. It would have been much less focussed without their substantial input.

I can be reached anytime at andrina@leverenterprises.com

Appendix A

CALL TO ACTION *By* *WOMEN SENIOR LEADERS' NETWORK*

Manila, October 1996

We, as Women Senior Leaders from APEC Economies, came together in Manila on October 2 to 4, 1996 to launch the "Women Senior Leaders' Network". We propose mechanisms for integrating gender as a cross-cutting concern in APEC toward achieving the APEC vision and goals and ensuring equitable development. The Network acknowledges the vital contribution of women in APEC economies and recognizes that investment in women's human resources and their enterprises is sound economics. The Network affirms that the integration of a gender perspective in APEC will strengthen prospects for equitable economic growth, the reduction of poverty and the promotion of Sustainable Development in the Region.

We Wish to Build Upon:

- The APEC spirit of cooperation expressed in the Seattle Vision, the Bogor Declaration of Common Resolve and the Osaka Action Agenda; the Sustainable Development Framework embodied in the Joint Ministerial Statement of July 1996; APEC Tenets of Sustained Growth and Equitable Development; the APEC Human Resource Development Framework; and the Promotion of Harmony between the Environment and the Economy.
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the strategic initiatives of gender endorsed at other International Conferences and Summits.

To Integrate Gender Perspective in Its Work, We Propose that APEC:

- Undertake Joint Policy Dialogues
- Identify and Act upon Knowledge Gaps and Gender Themes for Joint Activities
- Identify, Measure and Assess the Differential Impact of APEC's Policies and Activities on Women and Men and Take Steps to Prevent and Ameliorate Adverse Impacts
- Promote Comparable Sex-Disaggregated Data Bases and Indicators
- Identify and Share Best Practices that Demonstrate Successful Examples of Integrating Gender into Policies, Programs and Projects
- Strengthen Current APEC Gender Initiatives and Open Future Opportunities within the Three Pillars of: Trade and Investment Liberalization, Trade and Investment Facilitation, and Economic and Technical Cooperation, beginning with themes identified at the Network Meeting namely, HRD, SME and IST

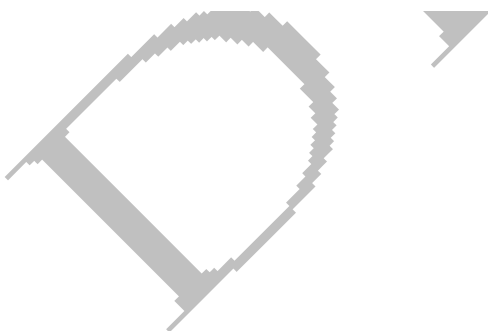
We Offer a Network that:

- Is Dynamic and Flexible
- Provides a Pool of Senior Experts from Diverse Sectors with the Capability to Undertake Gender Analysis
- Is a Source of Participants and Partners for the APEC structures and processes
- Offers a Source of Mentoring and Role Modeling
- Serves as a Consultative Forum and Advisory Body
- Acts as a Catalyst for Building Strategic Alliances and Business Matching; Facilitating Employment; and Promoting Access to Potential Venture Capital and Alternative Funding for Women-Led Businesses.

We Hereby Issue a Call to Action for APEC Leaders to:

- Recognize and Integrate Gender as a Cross-Cutting Theme in APEC
- Develop an APEC Partnership with the Network to Identify Mechanisms to Achieve this Objective
- Recognize the Women Senior Leaders' Network as a Flexible, Consultative Forum and a Strategic Partner toward the Achievement of the APEC Vision, Goals and Action Agenda.

We, in the Women Senior Leaders' Network, congratulate the Philippines as current Chair of APEC for its creative leadership in hosting this historic inaugural Meeting of the Women Senior Leaders' Network and in introducing the gender dimension into the Action Program of APEC. We urge Canada and Malaysia, as Chairs of the 1997 and 1998 APEC Leaders' Meetings, to continue this momentum and enhance this commitment.



Appendix B

Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the **Millennium Declaration** that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the **UN Millennium Summit** in September 2000.

The eight MDGs break down into **21 quantifiable targets** that are measured by **60 indicators**.

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

The MDGs:

- synthesise, in a single package, many of the most important commitments made separately at the international conferences and summits of the 1990s;
- recognise explicitly the interdependence between growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development;
- acknowledge that development rests on the foundations of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and peace and security;
- are based on time-bound and measurable targets accompanied by indicators for monitoring progress; and
- bring together, in the eighth Goal, the responsibilities of developing countries with those of developed countries, founded on a global partnership endorsed at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico in March 2002, and again at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in August 2002.

Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals

In 2001, in response to the world leaders' request, UN Secretary General presented the **Road Map Towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration**, an integrated and comprehensive overview of the situation, outlining potential strategies for action designed to meet the goals and commitments of the Millennium Declaration. The road map has been followed up since then with annual reports. In 2002, the annual report focused on progress made in the prevention of armed conflict and the treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and Malaria. In 2003, emphasis was placed on strategies for development and strategies for sustainable development. In 2004, it was on bridging the digital divide and curbing transnational crime.

In 2005, the Secretary-General prepared the first comprehensive five-yearly report on progress toward achieving the MDGs. The report reviews the implementation of decisions taken at the international conferences and special sessions on the least developed countries, progress on HIV/AIDS and financing for development and sustainable development.

Appendix C The Global Gender Gap Index 2009 Rankings: Comparison with 2008, 2007 and 2006

Based on 130 participating countries

Economy	2009 Rank	2008 Rank	2007 Rank	2006 Rank
New Zealand	5	5	5	7
Philippines	9	6	6	6
Australia	20	21	17	15
Canada	25	31	18	14
United States	31	27	31	23
Peru	44	48	75	60
Russian Federation	51	42	45	49
Thailand	59	52	52	40
China	60	57	73	63
Chile	64	65	86	78
Vietnam	71	68	64	n/a
Japan	75	98	91	80
Singapore	85	84	77	65
Indonesia	93	93	81	68
Brunei Darussalem	95	99	n/a	n/a
Mexico	99	97	93	75
Malaysia	101	96	92	72
Korean Republic	115	108	97	92

Notes:

- (1) an economy's ranking may be affected by an increasing number of participating countries, however, the comparison does serve to show a trend
- (2) three APEC economies do not participate in the Gender Gap Index: Hong Kong, China, Papua New Guinea and Chinese Taipei

Appendix D Women Leaders and the World Economic forum

Women Leaders and Gender Parity Programme

Our Mission

Through the Women Leaders and Gender Parity Programme, the World Economic Forum is committed to promoting women's leadership and closing global gender gaps. The programme strives to increase the participation of women in the Forum's activities by ensuring their involvement as members in communities and inviting women leaders to be active contributors to the global dialogue.

The programme also aims to monitor progress of countries through benchmarking tools that measure the global gender gap and to showcase best practices in the business world for increasing gender diversity. This unique content is used to promote dialogue and catalyze action through Gender Parity Groups – multi-stakeholder communities of highly influential leaders (50% women and 50% men) committed to closing gender gaps.

Global Gender Gap Appeal

President of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, launched the Forum's International Women's Day appeal for ideas to help close the global gender gap. Business, civil society and religious leaders - as well as members of the public - responded with their solutions.

Community

Engagement

Global Gender Parity Group: The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Parity Group is a multistakeholder community of 100 highly influential and committed leaders – 50 women and 50 men – from business, politics, academia, media and civil society who believe that companies and countries will benefit by addressing the gender gap and optimizing the flow of talent. A [Summary](#) of the outcomes from this year's Global Gender Parity Group meeting is now available.

Regional Gender Parity Groups: The World Economic Forum's Regional Gender Parity Groups are multistakeholder communities committed to closing the gender gap, each consisting of 50 leaders (25 women and 25 men). The four Regional Gender Parity Groups are in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Women Leaders Community: The Women Leaders Community is drawn from the female participants of the various stakeholder groups convened at the World Economic Forum, brought together to collectively engage in dialogue and address current gender and diversity issues.

Benchmarking

Global Gender Gap Report: The flagship report produced annually by the Women Leaders Programme provides a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender disparities around the world and aims to serve as a tool for benchmarking and tracking gender inequalities based on economic, political, education and health criteria.

Corporate Best Practices: This new study will assess the practices that successfully promote gender equality in the corporate world by conducting comprehensive surveys of the 100 largest companies in each of the OECD and BRIC countries.

Internal Diversity Practices

The World Economic Forum has established a strong record of increasing gender equality in its activities, most notably at the Annual Meeting where women's participation has risen from 9% in 2001 to 17% in 2008. It is the Forum's goal to maximize women's participation at the Annual Meeting and regional events, drawing from the pool of the highest-level women leaders in business, politics, academia, media and civil society.

DRAFT