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The main conclusions by the Chairs of the sessions were as follows:

- Fostering gender diversity in public decision-making is critical for inclusive growth.
- Enabling equal access to positions of political power requires a comprehensive and bold approach.
- Achieving gender balance in public leadership, including the judiciary, requires a deep culture change at both societal and organisational levels.
- Enabling equal access to opportunities in public life must go beyond participation towards full empowerment.
- Tackling stereotypes and addressing social and legal norms that discriminate against women requires a society-wide approach.
- A whole-of-government approach, supported by effective institutions and robust accountability, is needed to ensure that gender equality efforts are sustainable.
- Inclusive and gender-responsive policies, programmes and budgets are essential to achieving gender equality across the whole of government.
- The OECD should play a leading role in international dialogue on gender equality in public life.

Introduction

Women’s participation in economic and public life, from the community level to top policy-making circles, strengthens economic growth, equitable governance and public trust. Closing the gender gap calls for a whole-of-government approach to systematically embed gender considerations into the policy process.

This Forum brought together public leaders from around the world to talk about their experiences in making it to the top, to discuss which policies work in achieving gender diversity in public life, and to explore ways to strengthen institutions and instruments for more inclusive and gender-responsive policies.

These exchanges will support the efforts of governments and civil society to improve women’s access to economic and public opportunities. The Forum was a platform for dialogue between the OECD and various partners, with over 60 countries and many organisations represented. It also marked the launch of the OECD report on Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries.
Acknowledgements

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an inter-governmental organisation founded in 1961 (www.oecd.org/about). The OECD mission is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

This 2014 OECD Global Forum on Women’s Leadership in Public Life was organised by the OECD Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development (GOV), under the aegis of the OECD Public Governance Committee and its Public Employment and Management Network and in collaboration with other OECD Committees and Directorates. The mission of the GOV Directorate is to help governments at all levels design and implement strategic, evidence-based and innovative policies to strengthen public governance, respond effectively to diverse and disruptive economic, social and environmental challenges and deliver on government’s commitments to citizens.
Beyond the basic issue of fairness, there is a strong business case for fostering diversity. The OECD Secretary General, Mr. Angel Gurría, stressed that decision-making bodies that fully represent the diversity of the societies they govern are more likely to take advantage of the approach to policy and service delivery that addresses the needs of people from diverse backgrounds.

"Empowering and encouraging women to participate more fully in the public sphere is essential. Gender diversity in public institutions – such as parliaments, executive councils and courts – is particularly crucial, given that these institutions make decisions and create rules that affect people’s rights, behaviors and life choices."

Mr. Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the OECD

The OECD report on Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries shows that there are lower levels of inequality in countries where women make up a greater share of the legislature. The participation of women in public life also reinforces confidence in governments, which has been a great casualty of the crisis. Therefore, improving the representation of women can also bolster trust in governments. Therefore, improving the representation of women can also bolster trust in governments. OECD Countries

The judgment system of a country has to represent the society it serves if it wants to have the trust of the population, which is why parity is crucial. For example, women have shown a more flexible approach to litigation, which is particularly important in the current context of the crisis, where people are forced to forge legal representation in some countries for financial reasons.

"Advancing promptly and properly in the right direction is not only a question of consistency with human rights or the principle of non-discrimination; it is also a matter of taking advantage of the evident benefits of empowering women and leveraging their talent for sounder, more sustainable and more inclusive growth."

Ms. Anrenia Turfboom, Minister of Justice, Belgium

Gender diversity at all levels of government makes it more representative and provides greater legitimacy. Women may have different skills and perspectives than men, which may lead to taking different approaches to complex contemporary problems. Not involving women is therefore a waste of talent. In fact, whether there is a "business case" for having women in top management positions was mostly viewed by the Global Forum as a purely rhetorical question.

"Ensuring equal representation is not only the just thing to do, but the smart thing to do."

Ms. Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile

Yet despite progress, women represent less than one-third of decision makers in all branches of the public sector with a high point of 45% of judges in Belgium and a low point of 17% of parliamentarians in Morocco. German Chancellor Angela Merkel remarked that the fact that so many of the participants of the forum were women in positions of political leadership may make it seem that this is a rule rather than an exception; however, that there is a need to organize such a forum suggests that there is still a lot of work to be done in this regard, as the OECD report demonstrates.

"We, the resolution in gender equality is incomplete. This generation of well-educated, hard-working women still face a glass ceiling when it comes to top and leadership positions… This is particularly worrisome in the public sector, which is meant to serve as a role model for society. Having more women in government and in high levels encourages others, and sends a powerful message of what is possible, cutting through thick stereotypes."

Ms. Gabriela Ramos, OECD Chief of Staff and G20 Sherpa

Preventing a large portion of a society’s talent pool from participating in the economy results in a loss of potential and growth, both in quantity and quality. The President of Chile, Mr. Michelle Bachelet, stated that governments cannot afford to lose out on the talents of women, because it is only when they are equally represented that we can be certain that their issues are adequately addressed. By becoming more prominent in the socio-economic and political spheres, women can serve as role models and examples for other women to encourage them.

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"Ensuring equal representation is not only the just thing to do, but the smart thing to do."

Mr. Ricardo Diez-Hochleitner, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Spain to the OECD

Governments have an important policy-setting role in promoting gender diversity in public life: they can both provide the legal impetus for change and set an example by ensuring a better representation of women at the ministerial or parliamentary level.

"Governments can create incentives that foster a change in attitudes."

Ms. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany

Countries are already taking active steps to achieve parity. South Africa is finalising a bill that will require 50-50 parity in both the public and private sectors. Compliance is ensured through fines and even prison sentences, where applicable. Morocco has been actively reforming its family and nationality laws, with Moroccan women currently able to transmit their nationality to their children if the latter were born abroad. South Africa and Morocco also put great emphasis on laws that address gender-based violence. In terms of policy evaluation, South Africa reported working on gender-disaggregated data collection for policy monitoring, while Morocco is setting up a gender observatory to analyse and promote the participation of women in public service. Yet further efforts are needed to achieve true parity.

"Governments have a great responsibility for being a good gender-sensitive employer."

Mr. Rolf Alber, Director, OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development

Conclusion 1: Fostering gender diversity in public decision-making is critical for inclusive growth
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“This topic is at the heart of our government’s programme as the rule of law, democracy, good governance, economic and social development depend on the participation and the active involvement of women in all decision-making processes.”

Ms. Mohammed Abdo, Minister for Civil Service and Modernisation of Administration, Morocco, and Chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Initiative

Ms. Luapula Zingamza, Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, South Africa

“This forum is critical to ensure that we move forward globally on women’s rights, empowerment and gender equality.”

“Despite a very high educational attainment, women still do not reach leadership positions as they should. This is a shocking waste of talent.”

Promoting a better representation of women in the public – but also the private – sphere requires action on multiple levels, starting with education, family laws, and tackling gender-based violence. Women’s issues need to be mainstreamed in public policies to eliminate deep-rooted prejudices in the patriarchal structures of our societies. The State needs to take action, both to raise awareness, but also to undertake legislative reform. Both the employment and the wage gaps need to be addressed.

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In OECD countries, women still hold only about 25% of ministerial positions on average and only 27% of seats in lower-or single-house parliaments, so much remains to be done. As Hillary Clinton put it, women remain the largest reservoir of untapped potential in the world.

In the European Union, women represent 63% of the labour market, and, despite their high educational achievements, remain underrepresented in leadership positions. As noted by Ms. Viviane Reading, Justice and Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Commissioner at the European Commission, while equality between women and men is a fundamental principle, there are currently only 27% of women MPs and only 22% of women presidents of courts. In Germany women make up only one-third of the federal cabinet, although they head ministries such as Labour or Defence.

“Patterns can be changed from the Parliament; the legal frameworks can be changed. Perhaps cultural changes take longer, but legal changes can be made to help narrow the gender gap which makes it impossible for us to make headway in achieving equality.”

Ms. Dina Gastelu Bajo, President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, Mexico

“Cultural stereotypes are one of the most important barriers to the achievement of parity in politics, as they often prevent women from reaching positions of power or, at least, discourage them from the attempt. Women who do persevere often have to work much harder to prove their competence.”

Conclusion 2: Enabling equal access to positions of political power requires a comprehensive and bold approach.

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Ms. Maryline Lalrancha, Minister of Decentralisation, Reform of the State and the Civil Service, France

“Why is there a 20% gap between what, on average, men earn and women earn in the same occupations, when you know the productivity is the same? So, it’s an institutional factor, it’s a cultural factor, it’s a social factor.”

Mr. John Evans, General Secretary, Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC)
Conclusion 2: Enabling equal access to positions of political power requires a comprehensive and bold approach.

Affirmative action measures, such as quotas, can serve as effective temporary measures to correct gender imbalance and prevent rollbacks; they have shown conclusive results in the countries where they had been implemented. The Belgian Minister of Justice underlined that quotas, while perhaps a brutal way to promote gender balance, have proven their efficiency; they should remain in place until effective parity is reached, then be phased out. Different types of quotas can be introduced: they do not have to be straightforward percentages. Belgium, for example, has a system whereby party lists must not only include 1/3 of women members, but also have one woman in the top two positions on the list to ensure fair representation.

“When you leave it up to normal tendencies, on average, there is a kind of co-opting system where men that have the leadership positions on the list.”

Ms. Olga Sotnik, Member of Parliament, Estonia

Yet the effectiveness of quotas strongly depends on penalties for non-compliance. The controversy around quotas mainly relates to the challenge of perception: some may deem it unfair that women are automatically “given” certain positions, while women themselves may perceive it as degrading. Alternatively, “zipper lists”, where every other candidate is a woman, are considered important to ensure that women are placed in winnable positions during the elections.

“There’s it’s very important how parties make their lists for elections, it’s really important that party leaders understand and want to put women in the positions where they will be elected.”

Mr. Olga Sotnik, Member of Parliament, Estonia

All participants agreed on the importance of enabling people to balance work and family life, including measures for better childcare and public services, and revising meeting timetables in ministries and parliaments. Both men and women should be encouraged to use these measures. Finally, gender impact assessments of laws and gender-responsive budgeting were also brought up as effective means of ensuring parity.

“If we use quotas, we also need to use other measures to capacitate and help women to ensure that, eventually, you phase out the quotas and the issue of women representation has been mainstreamed within society.”

Ms. Lindwe Masuku, Member of Parliament, Speaker of the Gauteng Provincial Legislatice, Johannesburg, South Africa

Political will is critical to create the real push for change. Monitoring the effectiveness of gender parity measures is also a crucial element of change. Some women face a double discrimination in certain countries, not only as women, but also as members of indigenous or social groups that are sometimes poorly regarded. This calls for complementary measures to promote the rights of these groups.

“Having women play a leading role in public life is not merely an exercise in mathematical equality, it is also about harnessing the talents and ambitions of girls and women from all parts of society, and it is about allowing the different experiences and voices of women to make a real contribution to public life.”

Mr. Laura Chinchilla, President of Costa Rica

The OECD Secretary-General, Mr. Angel Gurría, noted that the rich ideas generated during this Forum will help pave the way for creating a world in which gender equality and diversity are the standard. In the words of Susan Anthony: “There will never be equality until women help to make the laws.”

Participants highlighted that a three-step approach to the promotion of parity and the socio-economic autonomy of women is necessary:

- an integrated, whole-of-government and/or whole-of-society approach to gender equality measures, to ensure that they have a deeper, more sustainable impact;
- the need to work on cultural representations, which are still often harmful to women and/or indigenous groups; and
- the need for international and regional networks to promote good practices.

“We need consciousness and commitment [to tackling gender bias] from leadership as well as from men in the whole of society.”

Mr. Robert Cluane, Chair, OECD Public Employment and Management Committee Network, Swedish Agency for Government Employers' Council on Basic Values, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden

Peer review mechanisms could serve as a promising way forward. For example, the African Peer Review Mechanism, which currently covers 34 African countries, aims to promote good governance policies. It provides countries with an evaluation questionnaire to help them reinforce the role of women in their societies. Each evaluated country has to provide evidence of its progress on the situation of women, using such mechanisms as legal provisions, affirmative action, the participation of women in political and public institutions, but also promoting the leadership of women in the private sector and their access to resources. The results are very encouraging – for example, currently there are three women heads of state in Africa – but there are still resistances to be overcome, such as cultural stereotypes, the limited access of women to senior management levels, wage gaps, and discriminatory common laws.

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Conclusion 3: Achieving gender balance in public leadership, including the judiciary, requires a deep cultural change at both societal and organisational levels.

“Regulatory and structural reform is simply not going to be enough: there are invisible barriers that need to be addressed by leaders.”

Ms. Helen Silver, Chief General Manager, Albanc Australia, former Secretary of the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Head of the Victorian State Public Service, Australia

Cultural awareness training to address unconscious bias can go a long way to reducing stereotypes, and should be supported by committed leadership. Mainstreaming flexible work practices can increase productivity in both the female and male workforce. Regarding access to work practices such as teleworking or flexible hours, employees should be able to ask the question “If not, why not?” The European Commission has developed a concept of talent management, which combines sponsorship and accountability for results with a system of rewards and penalties, all based on qualitative and quantitative indicators. Together, these measures combine to create a “balanced workplace” label.

“And why are we celebrating short term and significantly increase in the long term.”

Mr. Aroop Bhosela, Secretary General, Office of the Public Sector Development Commission of Thailand

To address this gap, comprehensive measures are needed to address unconscious biases in gender perception and workplace culture. Role models were deemed important, as they demonstrate to other women that advancement is possible. Having women in key decision-making positions also helps pave the way for more women to follow. Political will is crucial, especially in supporting diversity at the entry level. Formal sponsorship, mentoring and addressing work-life balance can also encourage women to put themselves forward for leadership roles. In Australia, sponsorship is found to have had a greater impact than just mentoring. This can serve as a counterbalance to the informal sponsorship that takes place in men’s clubs and networks.

“Among all countries, integrating men into the dialogue was raised as an important point.”

Ms. Nathalie Loiseau, Director, École nationale d’administration (ENA), France

While women constitute a majority in most public sectors across OECD and partner countries, they are mostly concentrated at lower-level jobs and are often confined to social portfolios. In the top echelons of the civil service they exceed 40% representation in only a few countries.

Australian research shows that difficulty in balancing work and private life, career breaks, and a lack of confidence are among the top factors preventing women from reaching senior levels. Other barriers include stereotyping, the exclusion of women from male networks, low tolerance for flexible work practices and unconscious and conscious bias. These seem to be particularly prevalent in male-dominated departments.

“No society can achieve its full potential when half of its own population is denied achieving their.”

Mr. Geraldine Byrne-Nason, Second Secretary General, EU/Mien and Coordination Division, Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Ireland

Overall, the message was clear: women need to be encouraged to put themselves forward for higher-ranked jobs. The tools to do this exist, but they need to be used in a better way through conscientious leadership, a better use of statistics, effective sponsorship and a better management of work-life balance. Drawing on private sector examples and making a greater use of incentives can help speed progress in this area.

“You long do women need to wait for parity? ‘And why are we celebrating 20 or 25 quotas?’ No one is speaking out loudly about these issues today”

Ms. Laurel Bellows, Immediate Past President, American Bar Association, United States

Similarly, despite advances over the past 20 years, women are still underrepresented in the legal and judiciary professions. This raises several questions, such as what happens to all the women law students after they graduate? Why, when initial entry into these professions seems to pose little problem for women, does further progress become more and more difficult?

“In some places, women make up more than half the students in law schools today, but then the question is: what happens after law school?”

Ms. Joan Winship, Executive Director of the International Association of Women Judges, United States

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Conclusion 3: Achieving gender balance in public leadership, including the judiciary, requires a deep cultural change at both societal and organisational levels.

"In the end, giving women the chance to hold the jobs for which they have trained and that they want to do, is simply a way to ensure that our organisation has the right people in the right jobs."

Ms. Flaminia Buonacchie, Head of Unit of Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming, European Commission

While there are more women studying for judicial and legal professions (in Austria, for example, this proportion has grown from 2% to over 60% in 40 years) – sometimes more women than men – there is a very high attrition rate in the profession, and the glass ceiling is still very strong. For example, only 17% of equity partners in large firms in the United States are women, and they earn less than their male counterparts. In fact, the situation of women in the judiciary is similar to the situation of women in the workforce in general: a high concentration at lower levels, but a very high attrition rate as you go up the ranks.

There are persistent, strong barriers to accessing senior jobs in the judiciary and the legal profession, including a lack of information about new positions and opportunities; unfavourable and opaque nomination systems and a more general lack of transparency; very heavy workloads with a lack of flexibility; more harmful to the progress of women in judiciary and legal professions. Moreover, women need to receive encouragement if they are to apply for top positions.

A range of measures can improve women’s access to leadership in judicial and legal professions. These include better information and better support, in the form of mentoring, shadowing, salaried part-time work and a guarantee of full-time employment should one choose to return to it, as well as more flexible schedules, teleworking and strict sanctions, such as budget cuts, in cases of non-compliance.

Mr. Ushi Schreiber, Global Leader, Ernst and Young, United States

Conclusion 3: Achieving gender balance in public leadership, including the judiciary, requires a deep cultural change at both societal and organisational levels.

"What really makes a difference is explicit leadership from the top."

Ms. Uschi Schreiber, Global Leader, Ernst and Young, United States

For instance, in the UK, women tend to consider themselves as less capable than men and lacking skills for a judicial appointment. There is also a persistent myth that only top lawyers in a firm may apply to become judges. In Lebanon, women have to fight against perceptions of incompetence, while, in the United States, it is taboo in many companies to discuss one’s salary with one’s colleagues, on pain of dismissal. It is these types of stereotypes and practices that are considered most harmful to the progress of women in judiciary and legal professions. Moreover, women need to receive encouragement if they are to apply for top positions.

But even when women make it to the top of their professions, they have to deal with many obstacles. In the US, for example, there are legal precedents that allow sexual harassment in the workplace to go unchallenged. There is a lack of political will, exemplified by the persistent inability to include an equality clause in the US Constitution since 1975, but, most importantly, persistent stereotypes and taboos.

"Concerning the business case for a judiciary that embodies gender equality, [...] what is the business case for women not making up half of the judiciary? I think if you turn the question round that way, it becomes indefensible, and it’s obvious that something has to be done about the situation that we have now."

Ms. Alison McKeana, Judge, Judicial Appointments Commission, United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, for example, the Crime and Courts Act in 2013, which extends the right to salaried part-time work – previously only available at lower court levels – to judges in the High Court and above. The Act also introduced an Equal Merit Provision, not yet implemented, which will allow the Judicial Appointments Commission to prefer a candidate with a protected characteristic (e.g. gender or ethnicity) that is deemed to be under-represented during the hiring process, if all candidates are of equal merit.

Quote was seen as a controversial measure in the judiciary and merit-based approaches were emphasised. The UK, for example, passed the Crime and Courts Act in 2013, which extends the right to salaried part-time work – previously only available at lower court levels – to judges in the High Court and above. The Act also introduced an Equal Merit Provision, not yet implemented, which will allow the Judicial Appointments Commission to prefer a candidate with a protected characteristic (e.g. gender or ethnicity) that is deemed to be under-represented during the hiring process, if all candidates are of equal merit.

Ms. Alison McKeana, Judge, Judicial Appointments Commission, United Kingdom

"Female judges, female lawyers and female professors are often the only voices raised in favour of constitutional provisions and the observance of women’s rights as human rights, jointly with specialised women’s NGOs."

Ms. Lilian Hofmeister, Substitute Justice of the Constitutional Court, former Justice of the Vienna Commercial Court, Austria

Tunisia underlined the important role of civil society in improving legislation, pointing out the role of Tunisian women magistrates in drafting a new constitution committed to protecting the rights of women and guaranteeing parity, which goes beyond existing legislation in the country.

Ms. Lilian Hofmeister, Substitute Justice of the Constitutional Court, former Justice of the Vienna Commercial Court, Austria

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Ms. Flaminia Buonacchie, Head of Unit of Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming, European Commission

There are persistent, strong barriers to accessing senior jobs in the judiciary and the legal profession, including a lack of information about new positions and opportunities; unfavourable and opaque nomination systems and a more general lack of transparency; very heavy workloads with a lack of family-friendly schemes, measures or networks (this is especially problematic in MENA countries, where a lack of separation between the state and the church compounds the problem); a lack of political will, exemplified by the persistent inability to include an equality clause in the US Constitution since 1975, but, most importantly, persistent stereotypes and taboos.

Note: The text contains some placeholders and symbols that are not transcribed accurately.
Conclusion 4: Enabling equal access to opportunities in public life must go beyond participation towards full empowerment.

“It’s not only about participation, it’s about empowerment. Participation in itself is not enough – we need to go further.”

Ms. Monika Guasner, Head of the Social Policy Directorate, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD

Workplace conditions need to be addressed and better tailored to women’s needs. Lack of childcare and family care arrangements is still a formidable barrier for many women – in Japan, for example, 60% of women leave their jobs when they have their first child – as are long working hours and unpredictable schedules, which are especially prevalent in political or judiciary positions. IT-based solutions were mentioned as a possible way of dealing with this, for example via teleworking.

“The media promoting positive, non-stereotypical women’s images or promoting women’s motivation, their self-esteem […] can have positive results.”

Ms. Algimanta Pabedinskiene, Minister of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania

Affirmative action and affirmative search are very important. Affirmative search aims to actively encourage employers and the government to search for qualified women to recruit. This would show that businesses and employers are conscious that diversity leads to greater profitability and are taking measures – quotas, or promoting women’s motivation, their self-esteem – to have positive results.

Mr. Peter Urwin, Professor, Westminster Business School, United Kingdom

Governments and civil societies need to work hand-in-hand to address this problem. Hidden discrimination in the form of gender norms is still a problem, which could be addressed through gender training for employers, gender-sensitive education and ways to promote women’s self-esteem in, for example, via networking. Gender mainstreaming needs to become a norm in policy-making, as do gender impact assessments.

“The power of affirmative search if you decide that you want to find female talent, you will find it.”

Mr. Laura Tyson, Professor, Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, co-Author of The Global Gender Gap Report, United States

Single-threaded diversity solutions […] are not sufficient to create lasting change or sustainable advantage and diversity. Firms and institutions need to go back to the drawing board and see how diversity sits within their entire strategic approach.

Mr. Peter Urwin, Professor, Westminster Business School, United Kingdom

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Barriers – such as limited access to education, healthcare, resources, networks and childcare – still restrict women’s access to opportunities in public life, including public employment, running for office or heading an NGO. Interestingly enough, according to an Australian study, men usually perceive family responsibilities and career breaks as the main barriers for a woman’s professional progression, while women also tend to factor in a lack of confidence.

Ms. Fumiko Hayashi, Mayor of Yokohama, Japan

It is necessary to move from legal gender equality to real equality by addressing such issues as occupational segregation and family responsibilities. Women need to take ownership of their work and their possibilities for career advancement, as well as being able to fund themselves.

“The discussions we are having show that this subject is universal: we all have different national experiences, but we’re all discussing the same things, and we have different cultures, different positions, but the problems are more or less the same.”

Ms. Odile Renaud-Basso, Deputy Director General of the Caisse des Dépôts, France

Economic empowerment is the prerequisite to professional and social empowerment. There is also a psychological element in which women need to perceive that they can be the architects of their own fate and then be given the means to achieve their goals.

“The advancement of women enriches society, making it fairer and also more prosperous.”

Ms. Soraya Sáez de Santamaría, Deputy Prime Minister of Spain

What is needed is not just equal participation of women in public life, but empowerment. It is necessary to move from legal gender equality to real equality by addressing such issues as occupational segregation and family responsibilities. Women need to take ownership of their work and their possibilities for career advancement, as well as being able to fund themselves.

“The media promoting positive, non-stereotypical women’s images or promoting women’s motivation, their self-esteem […] can have positive results.”

Ms. Algimanta Pabedinskiene, Minister of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania

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The issue of gender equality needs to be placed on empowering women with disabilities or belonging to social minorities.

Firms and institutions need to go back to the drawing board and see how diversity sits within their entire strategic approach.

Mr. Peter Urwin, Professor, Westminster Business School, United Kingdom
Conclusion 5: Tackling stereotypes and addressing social and legal norms that discriminate against women require a society-wide approach.


Conscious discrimination still represents an important barrier. While it may not be taking place on a large scale, women may still be held to employment criteria that are not applicable to men, such as the requirement to balance career and family life, or different expectations when applying for positions or promotions.

Legal barriers, such as family laws, are still often detrimental to women in many countries. Legal frameworks determine women’s life and career choices, including participation in public life, so reforming them can provide a big step forward.

“Gender norms have an enormous impact on men and women’s behaviour in ways that are often harmful, frequently to women and also sometimes to men as well: [...] Inequitable gender norms are, thankfully, not inevitable and not unchangeable.”

Mr. Sandy Rustom, MindEngage Kampai, United Kingdom

Modern societies around the world continue to be riddled with stereotypes that may prevent women’s access to opportunities in public and economic life. Conflating GDP with gender equality was seen as another stereotype. The SGI classification shows that there is no relation between them: ten of the 20 best performers in SIGI are not the countries with highest GDP levels, with Argentina and Cuba ranked at the top (although the indicator does not account for the right to abortion, which would dramatically change results).

Another stereotype is to perceive women as victims, whereas legal frameworks determine women’s life’s choices, including social institutions and norms. Gaps that can be measured can be closed, so working together to identify these gaps can help address these challenges.

It is critical to begin with legal norms to eliminate gender-based discrimination and combat stereotyping. Sound laws advancing equality are one step toward change, yet they are not sufficient. The application of a law is as important as its formulation. It is also crucial to change mentalities, so that stereotypes and prejudice against women can be eradicated. In the case of gender equality, constant effort is needed to make sure that inputs are transformed into the desired outputs.

“Gender norms have an enormous impact on men and women’s behaviour in ways that are often harmful, frequently to women and also sometimes to men as well: [...] Inequitable gender norms are, thankfully, not inevitable and not unchangeable.”

Mr. Mario Pezzoni, Director, OECD Development Centre

Attaining gender equality requires efforts on two fronts: establishing legal and socio-economic frameworks that promote gender equality, and analysing factors that affect women’s life choices, including social institutions and norms. Gaps that can be measured can be closed, so working together to identify these gaps can help address these challenges.

Since the Arab Spring, which gave an extraordinary freedom of expression to women, youth and men, there are risks of legal regression. Stereotypes and norms may turn into laws.”

Ms. Souadma Bouraoui, Deputy Prime Minister of Tunisia

Men play a critical role in advancing equality and reducing stereotypes. Male-dominated societies generally establish rules that are favourable to men, as is still very much the case in Arab countries (e.g. genital mutilation, which is a highly subjective interpretation of a religious custom). Stereotypes of male or female behaviour make dialogue between genders more difficult. A lack of dialogue and a belief in infinite progress is a way of promoting stereotypes and enabling rollbacks, a dangerous tendency that is now being seen in several countries, including in the MENA region. Possible measures for tackling such stereotypes include bolstering men’s family roles, encouraging parental leave and making sure that they are more involved in family life. Addressing gender roles in education and combating gender-based violence were also identified as important ways to change men’s perception, not only of women, but also of themselves in relation to women.

“Men and women have different ways of seeing [a problem], different priorities, and if that’s not taken into account at the beginning of the policy process, then it’s unlikely that you’re going to get ownership of what happens, and unlikely that you’re going to get good outcomes.”

Ms. Meredith Edwards, Emeritus Professor, University of Canberra, Australia

“Men and women have different ways of seeing [a problem], different priorities, and if that’s not taken into account at the beginning of the policy process, then it’s unlikely that you’re going to get ownership of what happens, and unlikely that you’re going to get good outcomes.”

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To this end, promoting dialogue and exchange is an important step. Helping women to network better is also important, as networks provide access to information and opportunities that they may not have known about otherwise and allow them to meet role models. A greater involvement of civil society at all levels of policy-making can help here.

“We can use our collective voting power. Women can vote ourselves into office. We can vote out the people who are not supporting women’s programmes.”

Women can vote ourselves into office.

We can vote out the people who are not supporting women’s programmes.

Ms. Betsy McKeown, Founder, The Founding family, Chair of Women United for the Women’s Donors Network, United States

The media is a very powerful tool for perpetuating or countering gender stereotypes. While there are no ways to control the media, it is important to think of ways to use the media more productively and advantageously.

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Societies cannot be changed overnight by decree. Policy-making needs to address social norms by decodifying, clarifying and demystifying them. Discussion should be promoted and encouraged whenever possible, as well as speaking out against discrimination as it is encountered.

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Conclusion 5: Tackling stereotypes and addressing social and legal norms that discriminate against women require a society-wide approach.

“The image of women [in advertising] is extremely important. Society should not promote images that lead to stereotyping or promote violence.”

Ms. Carmen Plaza, General Director for Equal Opportunities and Director of the Women’s Institute, Spain

“...women’s empowerment in a sense of how they can support themselves to, first of all, believe that they can do something different, that they can assume roles, that it’s not because somebody else tells them that they can, but actually because they need to in order to resolve practical problems from their everyday lives.”

Ms. Carolina Piñheiro, The Huairou Commission, United States

The role of dialogue in identifying common points of experience between genders and societies is also crucially important. Creating a link between the national, regional and local levels is another way to eradicate stereotypes, as it allows for a two-way influence between national and local policies, enabling each to adapt to the other more smoothly and to take specific local conditions into account in national policies. Moreover, horizontal dialogue is as important as vertical dialogue, both between communities and genders within a society (the importance of co-ed schools was brought up), but also between cultures and countries. Grassroots organisations can play a vital role in empowering women in communities in their everyday lives in terms of access to services and other practical issues. Bringing men into the dialogue can help not only to defuse tensions that can be created by promoting gender equality, but also to dispel certain stereotypes on both sides that are counterproductive to dialogue. This is where the role of the OECD is crucial, as it allows the exchange of not only good practices, but also of what went wrong, so that countries can learn from each other’s successes as well as mistakes.

“We think about women’s leadership and women’s empowerment in a sense of how they can support themselves to, first of all, believe...”

Ms. Huguette Labelle, Chair, Transparency International

Gender mainstreaming and whole-of-government approaches were identified as critical by all participants. Gender equality considerations have to be taken into account from the outset of every reform. Yet in order to be effective, gender mainstreaming should be supported by implementation processes, such as robust accountability, oversight and regular reporting. Mechanisms that allow women to express their views and influence policy-making, training for gender-sensitivity for officials and information on gender-equality measures for women were seen as important components of a whole-of-government approach. It is crucial that all government agencies are involved in addressing gender inequality, as, for example, with the Equality Units that are part of each ministry in Spain and ensure that the principle of equality is fully applied within them. It is also just as essential to have monitoring mechanisms and adequate indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of gender equality measures and to correctly assess the situation.

“The early involvement of our societies, through civil society and directly, is so very important, to give us the reality, the relevance and the responsiveness.”

Ms. Vered Pear-Saidi, Head of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women, Prime Minister’s Office, Israel

Political will and dialogues are also important for the development of gender-sensitive developmental strategies for countries which inform the policy of a country as a whole for the years to come.

“We want to advance the effectiveness of national strategies for gender equality and mainstreaming by developing clear action plans, timelines and actionable outcomes.”

Ms. Carmen Plaza, General Director for Equal Opportunities and Director of the Women’s Institute, Spain

Institutions such as equality commissions can play a crucial role in promoting and assessing gender equality. Whether they are internal to the government, autonomous or a meeting ground for representatives of both government and civil society, for example, the Governmental Commission for Equality Policy in Spain, chaired by the Vice-President, promotes and oversees the implementation of gender initiatives and works to embed gender mainstreaming in every public policy. Spain’s Inter-Ministerial Commission for Equality ensures that all ministries work together in gender mainstreaming. Each type of organisation has its strengths and role to play in promoting gender equality in policy-making. These institutions can also help ensure the effective implementation of gender equality legislation. For example, in Estonia the aim of the Equality Commission is to inform the policy of a country as a whole for the years to come.
Conclusion 6: A whole-of-government approach, supported by effective institutions and robust accountability, is needed to ensure that gender equality efforts are sustainable.

“Gender mainstreaming means that this is not something we can go about with a project-based approach; it has to be systematic, regular; there have to be supporting mechanisms in place.”

Ms. Mari-Lise Sæper, Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner, Estonia

In Spain, the Women’s Institute develops programmes and initiatives to promote gender equality in economic, social and public life. In Canada, the Auditor General has a role in assessing whether the government is meeting its commitments to gender equality and the application of gender-based analysis. Finally, parliaments and parliamentary equality committees help monitor gender mainstreaming by public bodies (e.g. Spain, Israel).

Only a progressive and permanent approach by stakeholders and government institutions will be able to identify and formulate policies to reduce the gender gap and promote gender equality reforms.

Mr. Luis Alberto dos Santos, Deputy Minister for Analysis and Follow-up of Government Policies, Presidency of the Republic, Civil House, Brazil

Effective cooperation with civil society is also important, as it fosters better social integration of policies and enables governments to develop a better understanding of local conditions, especially for disadvantaged communities. Working with civil society can also help address persistent cultural biases and stereotypes, which are still a major stumbling block on the road to gender equality. For example, Spain established an advisory council for women’s participation that brings together state-level women’s associations and organisations, central, regional and local governments and other stakeholders, to work towards effective gender equality.

“I think the real challenge for us isn’t so much adopting good laws, it’s implementing them.”

Ms. Rabha Zerdgui, Professor, École Nationale d’Administration, Morocco

Spain has also created a network of companies for gender equality to enhance public/private partnerships to promote a new equality corporate culture. These companies participate in initiatives to employ gender violence victims and to ensure a balanced presence of women in decision-making positions.

“Closing the persistent gaps in gender equality in public life and mainstreaming gender considerations into all public policies has been high on the agenda of OECD governments.”

Mr. Joe WME, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Machinery of Government Secretariat, Privy Council Office, Canada

These tools need institutional support mechanisms to be properly implemented, as it can be a rather technical process. For example, Canada has put in place champions for gender-based analysis in every department, who network with each other to ensure consistent application of the analysis. The role of the Auditor General is also critical in ensuring accountability and transparency in the use of gender-based analysis. Adequate monitoring of policy results is also necessary, via reports, audits and, most importantly, appropriate indicators and regular reporting to foster continuous improvement. Spain’s gender equality plans, such as the recently approved Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2014-2016, are an example of tools for gender mainstreaming that are based on a holistic view of addressing gender gaps.

“Gender mainstreaming means that it’s implementing them.”

Ms. Mari-Lise Sæper, Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner, Estonia

isn’t so much adopting good laws, (e.g. Spain, Israel).

Inclusive policies require mainstreaming gender considerations at all stages of the policy cycle. Effective gender mainstreaming requires strong, committed institutional frameworks, resources, tools and leadership. Government tools for gender mainstreaming range from gender-responsive budgeting to gender impact assessments, which should be applied for all policies (e.g. tax credits vs. cash disbursements, parental leave, and access to the internet). In Canada, all ministerial policies, programmes and budgets that are submitted to Cabinet have to undergo a gender-based analysis. In fact, Canada is now considering introducing “gender-based analysis plus” to include such factors as age, demographics, cultural background, income and geographical location to ensure that policies take into account all these factors.

“If the employment rate of Norwegian women was reduced to the OECD average, this would, all other things remaining equal, reduce our national wealth by an equivalent of our total petroleum wealth. That means that women are more profitable than oil.”

Ms. Hadia Tajik, Member of Parliament, Former Minister of Culture, Norway

Many countries have the necessary legal and constitutional framework to promote gender equality, but the greatest challenge lies in its effective implementation. Many leaders also commit to gender equality during electoral campaigns, but do not always deliver on their promises once in power.

“I have been first in many positions, but I’ve also made sure that I haven’t been [...] the only [woman] [...]. One of the things that I have spent a lot of time and effort on is making sure there is a second, a third, that the new normal is no longer to recognise that there’s a first, that this is a recurring pattern, that the merit principle applies and that you do not have to consider that the first is a huge breakthrough.”

Ms. Michelle de Kuyper, Deputy Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Canada

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Inclusive policies require mainstreaming gender considerations at all stages of the policy cycle. Effective gender mainstreaming requires strong, committed institutional frameworks, resources, tools and leadership. Government tools for gender mainstreaming range from gender-responsive budgeting to
Conclusion 7: Inclusive and gender-responsive policies, programmes and budgets are essential to achieving gender equality across the whole of government.

“Gender is an integrating concept: we cannot, for example, on access to the right to education by having gender-sensitive policies only in the Ministry of Education; we need energy, water, sanitation; we need roads – and so for economic and social transformation we need an integrated vision.”

Mr. Mohamed Chekki, Director of Studies and Financial Planning, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Morocco.

Gender-responsive budgeting can be used to embed gender issues into the mainstream budget process and ensure that they get attention. Morocco has been practicing gender-responsive budgeting since 2002 and has established a centre of excellence in the Ministry of Finance to undertake research in gender-based budgeting. In Morocco, gender-based budgeting started with the Ministry of Finance to undertake research in gender-based budgeting. In Morocco, gender-based budgeting started with the Ministry of Finance to undertake research in gender-based budgeting.

In the closing session, President Catherine Samba-Panza of the Central African Republic underlined the importance of public governance for achieving gender equality. It was good governance that helped OECD countries attain their level of political and economic development and that helped establish a more balanced relationship between men and women of different origins. The President noted that we are now able to measure the benefits of women’s participation in all sectors of professional and public life. Although much remains to be done, progress is visible and measurable. The glass ceiling remains a reality in many countries, and the OECD should continue to draw attention to this phenomenon. The President also underlined the impact of the crisis in the Central African Republic on the country’s administration and social structures as well as on gender equality. Ms. Samba-Panza pledged her commitment to the Central African Republic and to the women of the world to ensure a democratic transition.

“In the way we can work with countries to establish standards for advancing equality in public life, identifying good practices and promoting dialogue on this topic. This can contribute to the worldwide effort towards gender equality by encouraging public debate. The OECD can also support countries in assessing the impact of initiatives such as gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting and their contribution to the advancement of the gender equality agenda. The OECD should maintain this global dialogue and work more closely with countries on a regional basis, such as in Latin America and South East Asia.

The OECD, its members and partners will continue to work together on these different fronts to foster gender diversity in public life.

Policy dialogue is an important tool, and the OECD is an ideal platform for this purpose. The OECD should include a gender perspective in all its work, and gender-disaggregated data needs to become a norm to enable gender mainstreaming at all levels of policy-making.

“The OECD is well placed to support governments in mainstreaming gender equality in all government departments and policies, given its strong ties with core government departments.

“Policy dialogue is a very crucial issue, and we need to create conditions to make it fruitful.”

Ms. Carmen Moreno Toscano, Ambassador, Executive Secretary, Inter-American Commission of Women in the Organisation of American States.

In this way, the OECD can work with countries to establish standards for advancing equality in public life, identifying good practices and promoting dialogue on this topic. This can contribute to the worldwide effort towards gender equality by encouraging public debate.”

The OECD was called upon to monitor the progress in closing gender gaps in public life, not only in OECD countries but more globally, by taking regular stock of the situation, and identifying policies that do work by generating evidence and promoting policy benchmarks.

Conclusion 8: OECD should play a leadership role in advancing the dialogue on gender equality in public life

“Leadership is not only about reaching positions of power, but also doing that with a purpose.”

Mr. Mario Marcel, Deputy Director, OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate.

Effective implementation of gender mainstreaming requires the right strategy and the right information, as well as monitoring and evaluation. Countries need to remain vigilant for signs of backsliding, as it can happen very quickly and has already occurred in some countries. A strong civil society and dialogue with men are important for creating the political will for change. Social media was mentioned by participants as a powerful, cross-sectoral tool that can reach all levels of society and could be used to promote gender equality. The convening power of the OECD is also important for continuing dialogue and bringing together different experiences for the benefit of all participants.

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“If I had the misfortune of not succeeding in bringing my country out of this crisis […] I bet that you would hear ‘she was not up to the job because she is a woman’. I will simply point out that […] after 54 years of governing the Central African Republic, men have never been accused of governing badly because of their maleness.”

Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, Interim President of the Central African Republic.

Inclusive and gender-responsive policies, programmes and budgets are essential to achieving gender equality across the whole of government.
### Agenda

#### Wednesday, 2 April 2014

- **18:00-20:00** Welcoming remarks
  - Ms. Gabriela Ramos, OECD Chief of Staff and G20 Sherpa
  - Cocktail

#### Thursday, 3 April 2014

- **9:30-10:30** Fostering Gender Diversity in Public Decision-Making for Inclusive Growth
  - Chair: Mr. Joe Wild, Chair, OECD Public Governance Committee, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Machinery of Government, Privy Council Office, Canada
  - Special video address: Ms. Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor of Germany
  - Mr. Rolf Alter, Director, OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate
  - Ms. Lulama Xingwana, Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, South Africa
  - Ms. Annemie Turtelboom, Minister of Justice, Belgium
  - Mr. Mohamed Moubdi, Minister for Civil Service and Modernisation of Administration, Morocco, Chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Initiative

- **10:30-11:00** Coffee break

- **11:00-12:45** Plenary session: Women’s Access to Positions of Power: Lessons from Experience in Political Life
  - Chair: Mr. Ricardo Diez-Hochleitner, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Spain to the OECD
  - Special video address: Ms. Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile
  - Ms. Marylise Lebranchu, Minister of Reform of the State and Decentralisation, France
  - Mr. Yves Leterme, Deputy Secretary General, OECD, Former Prime Minister of Belgium
  - Ms. Olga Sotnik, Member of Parliament, Estonia
  - Ms. Diva Gastélum Bajo, President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas
  - Ms. Lindiwe Maseko, Member of Parliament, Speaker of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature, Johannesburg, South Africa

- **12:45-14:15** Lunch

- **14:15-16:00** Parallel session 1A: Achieving Gender Balance in Public Sector Leadership
  - Chair: Mr. Robert Cloarec, Chair, OECD Public Employment and Management Network, Swedish Agency For Government Employers
  - Special video address: Ms. Laura Chinchilla, President of Costa Rica
  - Ms. Geraldine Byrne-Nason, Second Secretary General, EU Affairs and Co-ordination Division, Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Ireland
  - Mr. Areepong Bhoocha-oom, Secretary-General, Office of the Public Sector Development Commission, Thailand
  - Ms. Helen Silver, Chief General Manager, Allianz Australia; former Secretary of the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Head of the Victorian State Public Service, Australia
  - Ms. Nathalie Loiseau, Director, École nationale d’administration (ENA), France
  - Ms. Uschi Schreiber, Global Leader, Ernst and Young, United States

- **14:15-16:00** Parallel session 2A: Women in the Judiciary and the Legal Profession
  - Chair: Ms. Joan D. Winship, Executive Director of the International Association of Women Judges, United States
  - Special video address: Ms. Viviane Reding, Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Commissioner, European Commission
  - Ms. Alison McKenna, Judge, Judicial Appointments Commission, United Kingdom
  - Ms. Lilian Hofmeister, Substitute Justice of the Constitutional Court, former Justice of the Vienna Commercial Court, Austria
  - Ms. Laurel Belfows, Immediate Past President, American Bar Association, United States
  - Ms. Arlette Freissiat, Counselor Judge at the court of Cassation, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Lebanon

- **16:00-16:30** Coffee break
16:30-18:15 Parallel session 1B: CC1
Towards Equal Access to Opportunities in Public Life
In many areas, barriers - such as access to education, healthcare, resources, networks and childcare - still limit women's options to be active in public life, including public employment, running for office or heading an NGO. What policy responses are needed to overcome these barriers?  
Chair: Ms. Monika Queisser, Head of Social Policy, OECD  
Special video address: Ms. Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, Deputy Prime Minister, Spain  
• Ms. Algimanta Pabedinskiene, Minister of Social Security and Labour, Lithuania  
• Ms. Fumiko Hayashi, Mayor of Yokohama, Japan  
• Ms. Laura Tyson, Professor, Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, co-Author of The Global Gender Gap Report, United States  
• Ms. Monika Queisser  
Auditorium

16:30-18:15 Parallel Session 2B:  
Tackling Stereotypes and Social and Legal Norms that Discriminate against Women
Women continue to face legal discrimination, discriminatory social norms and stereotypes that limit their access to institutions, property, employment, etc. and inhibit their participation in the public sphere. What actions can governments take?  
Chair: Ms. Victoria A. Hudson, Executive Director of the Women and Public Policy Program, Harvard University  
Special video address: Ms. Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, Deputy Prime Minister, Spain  
• Ms. Soukeina Bouraoui, Directrice générale adjointe de la Caisse des Dépôts, France  
• Mr. Sandy Ruxton, MenEngage Europe, United Kingdom  
• Ms. Carmen Plaza, Director, OECD Development Centre  
• Ms. Carolina Pinheiro, Adjunct Professor of the Women and Public Policy Program, Harvard University  
• Ms. Betsy McKinney, Founder, The Founding Women Donors Network, United States  
Auditorium

9:00-10:30 Plenary session: CC1  
Towards Inclusive and Gender-Responsive Policies, Programmes and Budgets
Seemingly gender-neutral policy and programme reforms have been successful?  
Chair: Ms. Carmen Plaza, Director of the OECD-MENA Women in Governance Platform  
Universities  
• Ms. Carmen Plaza, Director of the OECD-MENA Women in Governance Platform  
• Ms. Vered Pear Swid, Head of The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women at the Prime Minister Office of Israel  
• Ms. Hadia Tajik, Member of Parliament, former Minister of Culture, Norway  
• Ms. Michelle D'Azuray, Deputy Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Canada  
• Mr. Mohamed Chahidi, Director of financial studies and planning, Ministry of Finance, Morocco  
• Ms. Meredith Edwards, Emeritus Professor, University of Canberra, Australia  
• Ms. Rosemary Puliafito, Former Secretary, Inter-African Union Advisory Committee to the OECD  
• Ms. Charmaine McMillan, Interim President of the Central African Republic  
• Ms. Michelle Hadjiantoniou, Secretary-General of the OECD  
Auditorium

10:30-10:45 Coffee break
10:45-12:15 Plenary session:  
Towards Inclusive and Gender-Responsive Policies, Programmes and Budgets
Seemingly gender-neutral policy and programme decisions can have detrimental effects, intentional or not, on women’s ability to participate equally in society. How to design and deliver inclusive, gender-responsive policies?  
Chair: Ms. Huguette Labelle, Chair, Transparency International  
• Ms. Carmen de la Soledad Moreno Toscano, Deputy Minister for Analysis and Follow-up of Government Policies, Presidency of Republic, Civil House, Brazil  
• Ms. Hadia Tajik, Member of Parliament, former Minister of Culture, Norway  
• Ms. Michelle D'Azuray, Deputy Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Canada  
• Ms. Mohamed Chahidi, Director of financial studies and planning, Ministry of Finance, Morocco  
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Forum participants will be invited to share their views on next steps and priority actions.