International Woman’s Day Event: Award of Prize for Best Short Documentary on Implementation of the Law Against Domestic Violence

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World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim
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As Prepared for Delivery

Congresswoman Barbalho, your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen...

It is a great honor to be here to celebrate the courageous stories of Brazilian women who have faced and overcome domestic violence. Their stories represent those of nearly 30 percent of Brazilian women who are victims of partner violence.

It is also an honor to share this podium with such distinguished officials and, especially with Congresswoman and the Special Attorney General for Women, Elcione Barbalho, who is our partner and co-producer on this National Competition of Short Documentaries on the Law Against Domestic Violence. Allow me to thank you Congresswoman, your team of collaborators, TV Camara, and this House for joining forces with the World Bank on this important development agenda. The enactment of the *Lei de Maria da Penha* is recognition of the widespread impacts of domestic violence for all Brazilians. As I told President Dilma earlier today, Brazil is leading the way with such progressive legislation to address a pervasive issue worldwide.

President Dilma herself is a great example of a leader who fought for freedom and democracy when times in Brazil were very different than they are today. Her leadership is
proof that determination, commitment to a purpose and to a vision, can overcome the most difficult obstacles you can imagine to achieve the goal of providing prosperity and opportunities for not just a few but for all Brazilians.

We know from our groundbreaking 2012 World Development Report on Gender that women's opportunities and abilities to make choices have profound implications not only for our generation, but for the next generations, too. A host of studies show that when women are given economic opportunity, the benefits extend beyond them, to their children, their communities and to economies at large.

But beyond numbers, gender equality is first and foremost a human right and a matter of dignity. It is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do.

Improving gender equality can be a catalyst for poverty reduction and growth. For example, an increase in women's income accounted for a 30 percent reduction of poverty and 28 percent reduction in inequality in Latin America between 2000 and 2010. Gender equality is at the center of the development agenda in Brazil. The current administration clearly is placing a strong emphasis on reducing women's vulnerability and promoting gender equality as an engine for sustained economic growth.

Brazilian women have experienced significant improvements in their health and educational outcomes. Skilled birth attendance exceeds regional average (97 percent in 2006). On average, Brazilian women now receive more schooling than men.

Economic opportunities have also improved, but challenges remain. Female labor force participation has been steadily increasing and now is higher than in almost all countries in the region -- 65 percent in Brazil, relative to 57.8 percent for Latin America as a whole in 2010. However, Brazil continues to register one of the widest gender wage gaps in Latin America and the Caribbean, with female workers earning 85 percent as much as male workers. The world average wage gap is estimated at 80 percent.

But the least progress has been made in the realm of the ability to make choices to achieve desired outcomes. Various manifestations of this -- such as teenage pregnancy, political participation, as well as domestic violence -- suggest that women do not have a low ability to determine the outcome of major issues in their lives. For example, teen pregnancy remains much higher than in other upper middle income countries. For young women
between the ages of 15 and 19, there are 76 births per 1000, compared to 43.4 for other same-income level countries.

Brazil’s policies to help women are among the most advanced in the world. But taking them forward means dealing with the details of implementation.

This means understanding what works, how and why. This requires more and better information.

A recent World Bank study seeks to fill some of these gaps to understand how the structures built to support the implementation of the *Lei Maria da Penha*, such as the women’s police stations and women’s centers, are affecting domestic violence.

The results reveal different impacts in urban and rural areas. In urban areas, services are taken up more readily due to both proximity and social norms. This tells us that different approaches may be needed to effectively implement the law in urban and rural areas.

Equal rights for women is also about boys and men. In surveys of male attitudes toward women’s rights in Brazil and other countries, adult men overwhelmingly express the view that “men do not lose out when women’s rights are promoted”. Instead they say that positive gender relationships are good for women, men and families.

Brazil is a focal point for innovation and the World Bank is contributing to these efforts. We are using all of our tools to promote gender equity: From clear diagnosis and analysis of what works; to technical assistance on gender issues; to building gender considerations into all of our activities and projects in Brazil.

In Bahia and Pernambuco, we have supported the first loans in the World Bank to underpin policy actions to establish permanent Women’ Secretariats at the state level.

We are exploring ways to include gender considerations in non-traditional sectors, such as energy and transportation, through specialized services for and to women.

Here in Congress, we are supporting the institutional strengthening of our partner, the “*Procuradoria Especial da Mulher*” in their efforts to promote gender-sensitive legislation and its monitoring. We are certain that its example and leadership has played a key role in the ongoing initiative to establish a similar body in the Senate.
One of the perennial difficulties of addressing gender issues globally is the lack of adequate data.

In June, I was pleased to launch with former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton a new Gender Data Portal. This is a quantum step forward, and a much needed “fix” for the multiplicity of sources of data on gender, often buried in different sections of hard to access websites.

It is a one-stop shop on gender equality data, with statistics, tools and reference materials covering: girls’ and women’s employment, access to productive activities, education, health, public life and decision making, human rights, and demographic outcomes. Visitors can access data from the World Development Indicators, national statistics agencies, UN databases and World Bank-conducted or funded surveys and analytical work in frontier areas such as women’s access to finance and country regulations and institutions that differentiate between women and men in the economic sphere.

So at the global level and in our wonderful partnership with Brazil, we will continue to be inspired by the courageous stories we have heard today and to share in this journey with Brazil to transform positive outcomes for women into widespread returns for development.

Dear Members of Congress and friends:

The stories of the women we saw in the documentaries remind us not only of the deep personal suffering of each one of them, but also the damage to families and to society as a whole. But just as their struggles are shared, so also are their triumphs and forward looking spirit.

Congratulations for your fantastic efforts and achievements. We look forward to learning and sharing your lessons with the rest of the world.

Thank you very much.