My statement focuses primarily on the topics appearing on the agenda of our October 12, 2013 meeting, namely (i) the World Bank Group Strategy, and (ii) the Update on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Agenda at the World Bank Group.

World Bank Group Strategy

We welcome the WBG’s strategy and are pleased with the discussions we held with the President and senior management during the many meetings organized by the Executive Board for the preparation of this new framework.

We strongly endorse the proposals outlined in the strategy and its key elements, which are designed to strengthen the WBG’s capacity to achieve the two set goals. We believe that the two-pronged mission of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and promoting shared prosperity is an important contribution to the post-2015 development agenda with which WBG policies must be aligned.

It is our view that, if allocated substantial resources for its implementation and executed diligently, this strategy will enable the WBG to achieve the set goals and improve the living conditions of millions of poor people the world over in general, and in all the relevant regions, in particular. We also believe that the Bank should play a prominent role in supporting countries with their specific development challenges, in particular by helping them build resilience to future financial, economic, social, and environmental challenges.

We support the efforts of the WBG’s management and staff in this regard. The WBG’s shareholders will evaluate its success on the basis of its impact on the living conditions of the poor and a reduction in global inequality. This success is contingent on an effective, timely, and well-managed implementation of the strategy, the key components of which are the selectivity and coordination of WBG interventions; an evidence-based, country engagement model; the reform of the Group’s internal organization, systems and procedures; appropriate incentives in a context of clear accountability and culture change; and an effective monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress, adjust actions, and assess performance. We welcome the ongoing strategic discussions with senior management on progress made and look forward to similar discussions between the Bank and its partners.

The WBG’s financial package is a key aspect of the strategy, which must allow the Group to be effective and financially sustainable. We look forward to continued discussions on the issue of financial sustainability in the coming months. To that end, we ask that senior management provide us with more details on the financial options prior to the Development Committee meeting, in particular those that will
facilitate better leveraging of financial resources with other development partners, including the private sector, with a view to enhancing the World Bank Group’s capacity to achieve its objectives.

SECOND UPDATE (2012-2013) ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER EQUALITY AGENDA AT THE WORLD BANK GROUP (WBG)

We welcome this update on the implementation of the gender equality agenda. This annual exercise is extremely useful and should, in our view, be continued. We wholeheartedly endorse the commitment of the World Bank Group’s senior management to moving forward with this agenda.

Increased awareness and staff expertise at all levels are necessary for the effective implementation of the gender equality agenda. The benefits and importance of gender equality to ending poverty and promoting shared prosperity should also be communicated to the stakeholders. Adequate human and financial resources should be allocated to this agenda, and clear staff incentives to help foster a culture change and achieve tangible and sustainable outcomes would also need to be put in place.

The new World Bank Group strategy underscores the critical importance of gender equality to the promotion of growth and equity. However, gender equality must be mainstreamed into the overall WBG strategy in a more systematic manner. We welcome the fact that it was selected as one of the areas to leverage the World Bank Group’s expertise and collaboration. We would like the Bank to make rapid progress in the areas identified for this agenda, namely (i) gender-based violence; and (ii) inequality in work; and discrimination under the law; either through its own efforts and/or in collaboration with partners.

We note with great satisfaction the achievement at the institutional level of a number of the objectives related to gender equality. Gender-related objectives must, however, be strengthened in order to be credible. We are keen to receive more details on possible options. We expect the Bank to share with the countries in our Group the criteria and procedures for mainstreaming gender into project implementation completion reports, with a view to receiving, in return, concrete suggestions in order to strengthen implementation and outcomes.

We urge the Bank’s senior management to use the upcoming entry points in the “change and reform” process to further the “strategic efforts for the medium term” articulated in the update. Gender-related dimensions should also be integrated into the Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) and the new Country Partnership Framework (CPF), as well as into Performance Review Reports (PRRs). Efforts must be stepped up to generate gender equality data for mainstreaming into operations.

We welcome the Bank’s recognition that special attention must be paid to fragile States, where outcomes for women and girls are especially lagging. We encourage increased collaboration between the Center for Conflict, Security, and Development in Nairobi and the gender teams at the IBRD and IFC, and urge them to examine and address the critical link between gender issues and fragility in the Bank’s programs and projects.

Mainstreaming women’s voice and participation into Bank activities is crucial. This issue is critical to improving gender equality, and the report will bridge the knowledge gap in this area within the Bank. Lastly, it is our hope that this report will have operational relevance and will provide specific details on the way to accelerate the gender equality agenda.