DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
(Joint Ministerial Committee
of the
Boards of Governors of the Bank and the Fund
on the
Transfer of Real Resources to Developing Countries)

EIGHTY-NINTH MEETING
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Statement by
Rt. Hon. Justine Greening, MP
Secretary of State for International Development

and

Rt. Hon. George Osborne, MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

United Kingdom
Economic context and development

The global economy began 2014 with continuing signs of improvement but full recovery is not yet secure, and risks to economic recovery have not gone away. Sustained economic development is essential for sustainable poverty reduction and to enhance resilience to economic shocks. Such development requires both domestic reforms and stronger global integration and cooperation. The World Bank Group has a critical role in all of these, to promote economic development, generate jobs, and leverage private flows.

World Bank vision

The UK commends World Bank President Jim Kim’s reform efforts so far. The ongoing change process is positioning the World Bank well to improve effectiveness and remain relevant in a changing world. A flexible, efficient, country-focused and coherent World Bank Group that works effectively to deliver the twin goals of poverty reduction and shared prosperity is essential. As always, reprioritisation is needed in some areas. As we all know, a larger bank is not always the right option.

We are pleased to see the focus on the different parts of the World Bank Group working more effectively together. The proposals for the new structure, putting economic development and private sector engagement centre-stage, are welcome. Improving infrastructure and delivering economic development will be essential to delivering on our commitments to lift people from poverty.

Resilience, fragile States, conflict and crises

The progress that the Bank has made in improving its engagement in fragile contexts is important to meeting the new goals. The Bank’s emphasis must be on managing rather than avoiding risk. Humanitarian emergencies, conflict, and crisis require robust engagement from the World Bank Group and the global community. Managing the social and economic fallout is central to supporting timely recovery and minimising the human cost for countries in crisis. The World Bank must continue to challenge itself to improve results in difficult environments.

The on-going and recent crises in Syria, Ukraine, the Sahel, Sudan and other regions each have their specific challenges and need targeted intervention in the coming months. The Bank is rightly changing its
attitude to risk to an intelligent focus on taking and managing the right risks rather than excessive risk aversion, and has an important role to play in many of these regions.

*Gender and anti-discrimination*

The UK is strongly supportive of Jim Kim’s commitment to tackle discrimination and welcomes his openness in addressing the issue. This is a global problem, with an unacceptable cost. A consistent, yet sensitive, approach is needed across all countries to tackle discrimination in all its forms.

Significant progress has been made on enhancing the Bank’s support for women and girls. We are pleased to see the World Bank’s commitment to promoting gender concerns across the whole of the World Bank Group, including IFC and MIGA. Gender equality is a top priority for the UK; a new law has recently been passed that requires us to consider how any and all of our development assistance will contribute to reducing gender inequality. We look forward to working with the World Bank on this issue, including how changes made at the organisational level will bring positive change to women’s lives. We welcome the World Bank’s focus on issues with transformative impacts. We would like to see a strong focus on harmful social norms including Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and Child, Early and Forced Marriage.

*Post 2015*

We are entering into a crucial time for the post-2015 development agenda. It is essential that UN member states agree a clear, compelling and inspiring framework that builds on and goes beyond the Millennium Development Goals.

The Bank can play an important role by providing technical support and building the evidence and data sets that will be needed for a goals framework that leaves no one behind.