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October 22, 2017

Re: NDB needs a Gender Policy, an external Gender Advisory Committee and an Internal Gender Unit

Dear Sirs:

BRICS Feminist Watch (BFW) and other civil society groups, at the 2nd New Development Bank (NDB) Annual meeting in Delhi in April, 2017 urged the Bank to set up a multi stakeholder task force and to develop a comprehensive policy geared to delivering a gender-responsive sustainable and inclusive development. The NDB policies and operations should be enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) principle "No one is left behind" in efforts at social including gender, economic and environmental transformation, as should the governance structures.

Following the Delhi meeting, NDB has been in positive engagement with BRICS Feminist Watch and other civil society organizations. One of the core principles of NDB's Environmental & Social Framework underlines gender equality: "NDB believes that gender equality is important to successful and sustainable economic development and accordingly considers it imperative to mainstream gender equality issues in all its operations".

We welcome this as a promising first step and would like to highlight these three key points to ensure gender equality is mainstreamed in all its structure and operations:

- 1) Set up an external multi stakeholder gender advisory committee¹**
- 2) Develop a comprehensive, mandatory gender policy to guide all NDB's structure, governance and operations**
- 3) Set up an internal gender unit with senior feminist experts within NDB to lead these processes.**

¹ Earlier referred as a task force



The international development world is increasingly realizing that gender equality is at the core of sustainable development and inclusive growth. The SDGs, adopted in 2015, acknowledge that gender equality is not only a fundamental right, but it is a prerequisite for a peaceful and prosperous world. Countries that ensure equal access for women and girls to education, health care, decent work, assets, and economic resources, promote their political participation and decision making power, and protect them from violence and gender based discrimination are best positioned to achieve sustainable development and economic growth. As a major development actor, NDB has important roles to play in both recognizing women as independent economic agents contributing to economic growth and development and promoting women and men's equal rights. By fulfilling these two complementary roles NDB would place women at the centre of all development policies and projects. Doing so will have far reaching implications for the Bank's governance, planning, resource allocation, and results measurement and accountability processes. It is also vital that not only does the Bank stringently uphold the do no harm principle, but actively promote women's and men's equal rights and investments which bring a transformational change in the lives of women and girls and ensure women's leadership development, women's collectives and organizations, decent jobs and livelihoods for women, reduce gender gaps, and tackle inequities in ownership of productive resources such as land, technology, energy infrastructure etc.

In reviewing recent NDB activities, it was noted that the concerns for gender equality and women's empowerment have been missed in both the NDB's General Strategy (2017 – 2021) and in key areas of its operations. It seems that the projects were approached without gender selection criteria. The Bank has not defined gender equality and gender issues are not integrated. The lack of explicit commitment to tackle gender inequalities and promote gender justice in the NDB's General Strategy conveys a message that gender is an area that has little relevance to big infrastructure or renewable energy projects despite the fact that women and men are impacted differently by all such projects.

Therefore, we recommend NDB to integrate gender into all aspects of the Bank. BFW along with endorsing organizations below call on the NDB to institutionalize gender responsiveness in all its operations and functions and formulate a mandatory gender policy. We further advice that a gender unit with feminist experts be set up within the Bank, with strong gender focal points in different units and teams. We also recommend that a multi-stakeholder gender advisory committee be constituted with the mandate to integrate gender concerns into Bank operations, infrastructure projects, and programmes to ensure inclusive, sustainable, and just development, and to help the NDB develop the gender policy.

We look forward to discussing these inputs with you further at the NDB-CSO meeting in Shanghai on 25-26 October, 2017.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Priti Darooka", with a small mark above the "i".

Priti Darooka
Coordinator, BRICS Feminist Watch



List of Endorsing Organisations and Individuals

PWESCR

Gender Action

FEMNET

Resurj

Oxfam Brazil