

Speaking notes Helene Reardon Bond

1. Guidance Questions

- What are the cross-cutting challenges for achieving gender equality and how can we turn them into drivers for change?
- **What are the roles of institutions (state, private sector, science, civil society organisations, other)? What is the role of boys and men? – (focused on this)**
- How can we improve investment in gender equality – financial and human resources, education and knowledge?
- How can we improve monitoring and accountability frameworks, including availability and accessibility of sex-disaggregated data and gender indicators?
- How can we make sure that gender equality will be adequately integrated in the post-2015 development agenda?

1) Increasing women's economic empowerment, by working with private sector organisations, as a way of reducing poverty

- A key focus of the post-2015 agenda is eradicating extreme poverty.
 - To make that a reality we must ensure that the post-2015 goals address women's economic empowerment and participation, at all levels, in the workplace.
 - The UK Government firmly believes that increasing women's economic participation is the best route out of poverty
 - We recognised that Government on its own will only ever make limited progress in this policy area.
 - Discuss three voluntary business led initiatives:
 - A) Women's Business Council
 - B) Think Act Report
 - C) Lord Davies and Women On Boards
- A) We set up the Women's Business Council (WBC), a council of business leaders from across sectors (advertising, social media, enterprise, retail, legal, financial, utilities, pharmaceutical, recruitment).
- In their report **Maximising women's contribution to future economic growth** in June 2013, the WBC made a series of recommendations for both government and business in four areas:
 - Starting out: supporting the choices of girls and young women
 - Getting on: supporting women in the middle phase of their working lives
 - Staying on: supporting women's continuing development and contribution in the third phase of their working lives
 - Enterprise: helping women gain the necessary skills to set up and run their own business

B) Think, Act, Report a voluntary initiative to get organisations to think about gender equality, act where action is required, and report any information on their equality initiatives as required. TAR is now supported by over 250 organisations, collectively covering over two and a half million employees, or nearly 22% of the entire UK workforce in medium-sized and large organisations.

C) Lord Davies voluntary approach to Women On Boards

- The voluntary, business led approach to getting more women on boards that Lord Davies has been working tirelessly to promote has been **hugely successful**.
- And as today's women on boards report demonstrates we are increasingly seeing that companies are taking action; recognising that diverse boards bring with them fresh perspectives, innovative ideas and outstanding experience.
- Now almost 23% women on boards in the FTSE 100 – up from 12.5% in 2011 and 17.5% on the boards of the FTSE 250 – up from 7.8% in 2011.
- We now have 0 all male boards in the FTSE 100!

Progress to date

- More women working than ever before
- The gender pay gap is narrowing
- Women now account for 22.8% of FTSE 100 Directors . 0 all-male boards in the FTSE 100 down from 21 in 2011.
- Support for women starting businesses

2) Engaging men and boys in the campaign for gender equality.

- This is an issue that has received much media attention in the past few weeks, particularly around Emma Watson's HEforShe speech.
- The challenge for us is how do we engage men and boys to work towards gender equality, whilst ensuring that women's voices remain at the heart of this discussion.

UK work on men as agents of change

- Government is working with business, academics and practitioners to engage with men on gender equality
- We work with men to help them to understand that equality for women benefits all: more involvement for fathers in childcare, shared parental leave, improved economy