

Governor's Intervention on Closing the Gender Gap in Financial Inclusion

It is always a pleasure to be a panel member at this discussion to push and close the gender gap using women through financial inclusion. We are fully aware of the importance of the role of women in families and in finance, as well as their influence on the welfare and developments of families in different societies and communities.

We see the value of these developments critical in the provision of much needed disaggregated baseline data to effectively devise and direct evidence based policies targeting certain genders to positively affect families.

- 1. How does women's financial inclusion contribute towards economic and social growth, poverty reduction and overall sustainable development?**
- 2. How can the AFI network that comprises financial policymakers and regulators leverage on Maya's commitments to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by advancing women's financial inclusion?**

The outcome of the baseline survey for Samoa has revealed an interesting and unique trend. Although consistent with the world trend that nearly half are unbanked (Samoa's unbanked population is **49.0 percent** of the adult population), **70.0 percent** of adults (15 to 20 years) are completely excluded from financial services and **52.0 percent** of youths (15 to 40 years) are either financially excluded or currently using informal financial sources. Contrary to the global trend, women (**40.0 percent**) slightly perform better than men (**38.0 percent**) in using financial services or products.

The key outcomes of the survey are that:

1. There are more adults in the urban area (**58.0 percent**) than the rural area (**35.0 percent**) that are banked;
2. There are more adults in the rural area (**17.0 percent**) than the urban area (**4.0 percent**) that use informal financial sources;
3. There are only (**2.6 percent**) adults with mobile wallets and (**3.0 percent**) that have mobile financial services with only (**0.5 percent**) of them having both.
4. Only (**0.7 percent**) adults have sent money through mobile financial services¹ for person to person transfer and bill pay in the past 12 months.

Although women are the targeted group in economic and social growth, we do recognise with utmost respect the different roles played by the various gender in these

¹ The percent of the amount that use mobile financial services is on the raise and it was 3.0 percent of total remittances to Samoa in financial year 2015/2016.

communities and their invaluable contributions to the social fabrics that have made our economy it is today. That said, any targeted policy should be cautiously applied to fit the context and nature of our environment.

3. Which policy measures have the most impact in advancing gender and women's financial inclusion?

4. How do we measure policy impact and why is this critical?

Based on the outcome of this survey, the policy measures that would have the most impact in advancing gender and women's financial inclusion has to be equally and fairly targeting both youthful men and women especially in the rural areas to understand how these youths could be more engaging in the use of available financial products and services. It could also trigger the creation of new financial products and services peculiar to the demand from youths in a small island developing state (SIDS). The policy measures should also look at how financial informal sources could be enhanced to cater more readily for the growing number of youths in economic development. This policy provides substantial evidence and significant support to the use of less sophisticated and simpler financial products such as the use of money transfer operators over mobile financial services to send and receive money. That said, the impact of these policies could be effectively measured with another survey to be undertaken after 5 years of operations to give a comparative situational analysis.

5. How do the AFI Network harness partnerships with financial inclusion's stakeholders to reach the bottom of the pyramid particularly poor, rural women?

For the AFI network to harness effective partnerships with financial inclusion's stakeholders, the design and implementation of these policies should be based on the needs and priorities as well as the absorptive capacities and capabilities of the respective countries. The countries should also show leadership and to streamline these developments consistent with their national priorities and needs. It is based on these efforts that sustainability and prosperity will come naturally.

Thank you for your attention.