



May 2024

GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE EXECUTIVE BOARD – 2024 REPORT TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

IMF staff regularly produces papers proposing new IMF policies, exploring options for reform, or reviewing existing IMF policies and operations. The following document has been released and is included in this package:

- The **Report** prepared by the members of the Executive Board Working Group on Gender Diversity at the Executive Board, Elizabeth Shortino (Co-Chair), Daniel Palotai (Co-Chair), Abdullah BinZarah, Yati Kurniati, Reshma Mahabir, Anne Marcussen, Veda Poon, Krishnamurthy Subramanian, Vuyelwa Vumendlini, and IMF staff Elena Michaels, Emelie Mannefred, and Erica Anderson completed on April 5, 2024.

Informal Session to Brief:

The report prepared by the Executive Board Working Group on Gender Diversity and IMF staff was presented to the Executive Board in an informal session on March 28, 2024. The report was transmitted to the IMF Board of Governors on April 11, 2024. Such informal sessions are used to brief Executive Directors on policy issues. No decisions are taken at these informal sessions.

The IMF's transparency policy allows for the deletion of market-sensitive information and premature disclosure of the authorities' policy intentions in published staff reports and other documents.

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**International Monetary Fund
Washington, D.C.**

Gender Diversity in the Executive Board—2024 Report to the Board of Governors

The benefits of gender diversity are well known – it increases effectiveness and efficiency and strengthens decision-making. Yet, the IMF Executive Board continues to fall short of reaching gender balance, with women constituting a small minority of the Executive Directors and Alternate Executive Directors. There is a clear need for change. The IMFC has called on the membership to take action, including by introducing voluntary medium-term objectives to raise the number of women holding leadership positions at the Board. This report summarizes the Executive Board’s recommendations for these targets and lays out proposals for concerted actions that can be taken by individual countries and constituencies.

A Mandate from the IMFC

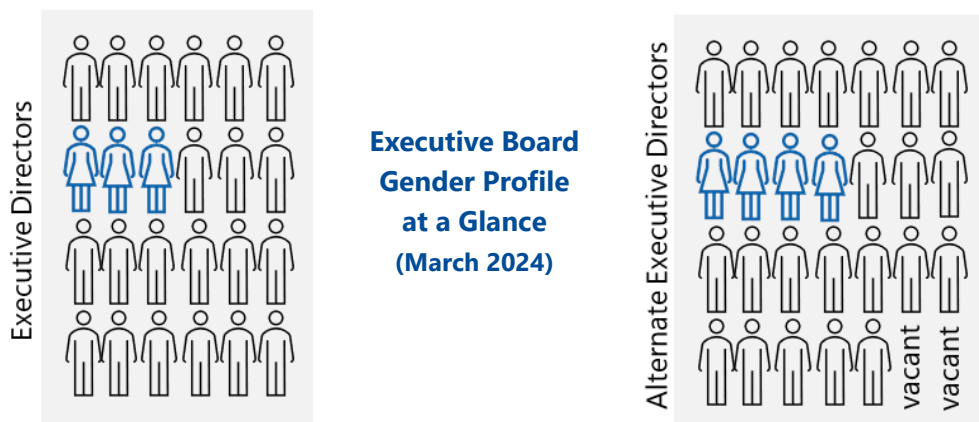
1. Following repeated calls from the IMFC to improve the gender diversity profile of the IMF Executive Board, there is a pressing need for action to increase the number of women holding the position of Executive Director or Alternate Executive Director on the Board. The dearth of women at the Executive Board is particularly striking given the IMF’s good progress in strengthening the diversity of its leadership at the level of Managing Director, First Deputy Managing Director, Deputy Managing Director and Department Director.

2. To achieve progress by increasing the number of women at the Board, the Executive Board should move swiftly to take forward the mandate given by the IMFC through the Fall 2023 Chair’s Statement where it called for voluntary objectives to increase the representation of women at the IMF Executive Board.



“We stress the importance of members putting in place the means to effectively increase gender diversity in the Executive Board, including by developing medium-term voluntary objectives.”—October 2023 IMFC Chair’s Statement

3. The current share of women holding the position of Executive Director (3 out of 24) and Alternate Executive Director (4 out of 31) on the IMF Executive Board is low. A recent working paper by the Center for Global Development shows that the gender diversity of the IMF Executive Board is also below that of several comparator international financial institutions (IFIs), including the World Bank, OECD, WTO, EBRD, EIB, and AfDB (see Figure 1). Some of them have made more progress on improving gender diversity than the IMF, although women are not yet equally represented on their executive boards.



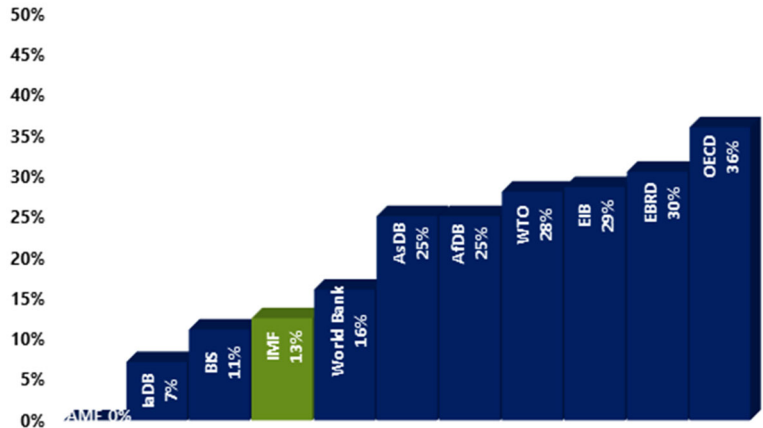
Source: IMF Staff
Note: Data as of March 2024

4. The stronger performance of other IFIs in appointing women to leadership positions suggests that focused commitment to the increased representation of women in senior roles in government and public sector yields results. The Board places high priority on matching the progress made by other comparators institutions.

5. Many member countries have already engaged within their central banks and ministries to work on improving gender diversity. While change takes time, the number of women in leadership positions in G20 central bank bodies responsible for monetary policy indicates strong progress is being made in many countries.

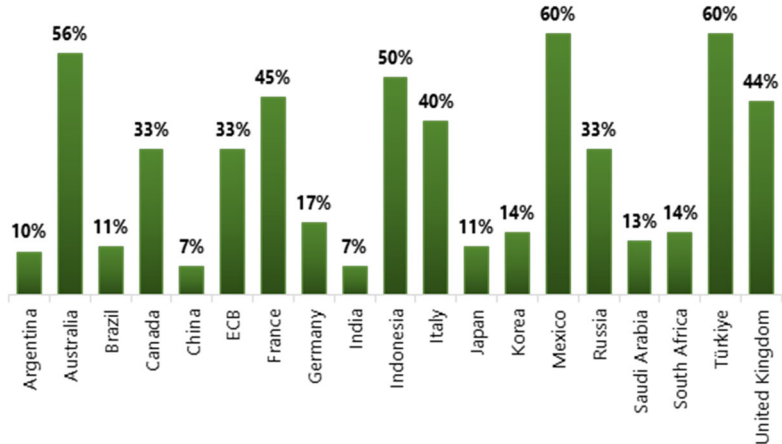
6. It is particularly striking that the Fund continues to lag behind its closest comparator organization, the World Bank. The Bank continues to have more women in these positions, especially at the Alternate Executive Director level. The Bank also continues to demonstrate higher percentages of women appointed to Senior Advisor and Advisor positions, for which voluntary collective employment targets have been established.

Figure 1. Gender Diversity in International Financial Institutions Boards (percent women)



Source: IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organization staff, and IFI websites.
 Note: EIB data as of April 2024. IMF and World Trade Organization data as of March 2024, and World Bank data as of February 2024. Other IFI data as of March 2024.

Figure 2. G20 Central Banks: Monetary Policy Decision Making Bodies (percent women)



Source: G20 member countries central bank websites for body responsible for monetary policy. The ECB is also included for Euro Area members who are also G20 members.
 Notes: Data as of March 2024. Vacancies to note: Bank of Russia two vacant positions; Bundesbank three vacant positions; SAMA one vacant position.



Source: IMF and World Bank Staff
 Note: IMF data as of March 2024 and World Bank data as of February 2024

Proposal for Collective Voluntary Objectives

7. The Executive Board is taking forward the direction provided by the IMFC to define collective voluntary objectives for increasing the number of women Executive Directors and Alternate Executive Directors on the Board and to advocate for their achievement. When developing the proposed objectives, due consideration has been given to different processes among member countries and constituencies for appointing Executive Directors and Alternate Executive Directors.

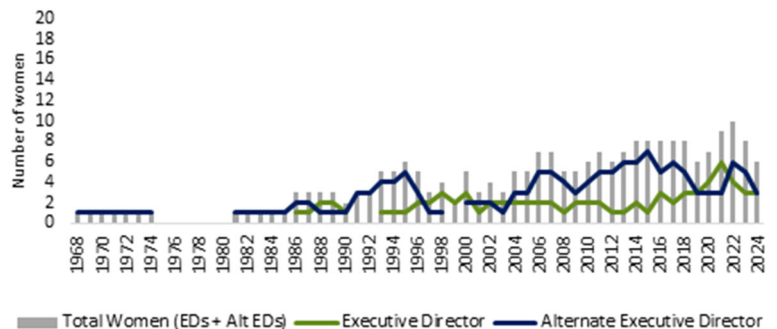
8. **The Executive Board agrees that voluntary collective objectives should be ambitious yet realistic. Given the low number of women represented at the Board throughout the Fund's history and the slow progress made in recent years, an ambitious objective is important to signal the critical need to make progress. The different selection processes for Executive Director and Alternate Executive Director in each country or constituency will, however, require bespoke methods for achieving the objectives.**

9. The Executive Board has agreed to establish collective voluntary medium-term objectives for the appointment of women as Executive Director and Alternate Executive Director combined of at least 30-40 percent over three election cycles, starting with the 2024 regular election of Executive Directors. This is a concrete first step towards the aspiration to reach parity.

10. A combined target of 30-40 percent women as Executive Director or Alternate Executive Director would imply 16-22 women in these positions. Currently, the Board comprises 7 women in these positions. A strong push will be required.

11. Given the turnover of Board members, which also takes place outside of the regular election cycles, it is inevitable that the share of women at Executive Director and/or Alternate Executive Director will vary from year to year, even month to month. Of the 24 Offices of Executive Directors, six have never had a woman appointed in the position of Executive Director or Alternate Executive Director. It is encouraging that one of these constituencies has advised its commitment to elect its first women Executive Director in the next rotation. Recently one constituency has selected a woman to serve as its next Alternate Executive Director, which will increase the number of women at the Board in the position of Executive Director or Alternate Executive Director to 8 women, or 15 percent. These are very positive developments. The aim with the voluntary objective is to ensure a steady and sustainable upward trend in the representation of women in leadership positions at the Board.

Figure 3. Offices of Executive Directors History of Women's Employment: Executive Directors and Alternate Executive Directors (number of women)



Source: IMF Staff.

Note: Data for 1968-2023 as of December 31 of each year, 2024 as of March 2024.

Actions to Help Move the Needle

12. Gender diversity objectives can be helpful to maintain progress, but they need to go hand in hand with intentional action, including during merit-based recruitment and appointment processes, to be effective. While a lack of pipeline can be an issue to differing extent in different countries, there is also evidence that setting targets can be effective in reducing gender biases in merit-based appointments, generating different outcomes in recruitment from the same talent pool.

13. Building on the different experiences of countries' and constituencies' selection processes, the Executive Board will work with authorities to leverage an array of ways to gain the support of decision-makers in reaching the objectives, including:

- **Outreach.** Recognizing the importance of up-to-date and easy-to-digest information and data, the Executive Board will continue to provide updated statistics – most notably the factsheet “Gender Diversity in the IMF Executive Board” –with country authorities ahead of the IMF Spring and Annual Meetings. Other options for Executive Board members to conduct outreach include: leveraging IMF management’s stature and visibility and access to key-decision makers, including through written communication to Governors; as well as written communication from Executive Directors/Alternate Executive Directors to their constituencies.
- **Gender champions.** Executive Directors and other Board members play a key role in raising awareness with their authorities, advocating for change, and acting as champions for gender diversity. Continuous communication, including during missions, on the need to improve the IMF Executive Board gender diversity will be helpful. Raising the issue at the highest level will also be important to ensure that the information reaches those with direct influence over appointments to the Board, which varies across countries and constituencies.
- **Influencing recruitment processes.** Setting gender targets/objectives has become a common practice in several member country government authorities. Extending such gender objectives to appointments in international organizations should be encouraged. Constituencies could also incorporate gender objectives and expectations formally in their agreements on rotation arrangements; for example, some constituencies have adopted regular rotations of male and female candidates at the Executive Director and Alternate Executive Director level to ensure at least one member of the country’s/constituency’s leadership is a woman at all times. While this example showcases an effective approach, it is recognized that it may not be applicable to all.
- **Strengthen pipelines.** Executive Board members should work with authorities to help develop strategies to build pipelines of women in senior positions that could be considered for leadership positions at the IMF Executive Board, including through mentoring, proactive identification and recruitment, and by highlighting the work of the IMF Executive Board.
- **Recognition of positive progress.** Acknowledging the importance of positive recognition, the WGGD will, in addition to highlighting countries/constituencies with current female representation at the highest level, consider further ways to shine light on the progress being made, including in the progress reports to the Board of Governors.

Accountability and Measuring Progress

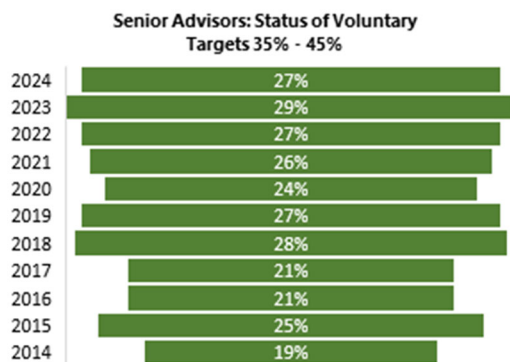
14. The proposed objective is a collective goal to increase the number of women on the Board, while the decisions to select candidates for the roles of Executive Director and Alternate Executive Director rests with individual member country authorities. These individual decisions should, however, pursue the shared goal of improving the governance of the Fund through greater gender diversity on the Executive Board.

15. Reporting and accountability is important for enacting change and monitoring progress through time. In addition to its regular reporting to the Board of Governors on the gender diversity profile of the Executive Board, data on each chair's/constituency's representation of women in leadership positions over the last ten years with the Executive Board will be published on IMFCConnect on a regular basis. Selected data on the gender composition of Offices of Executive Director will also be shared with the Board of Governors and included in the Fund's Annual Report.

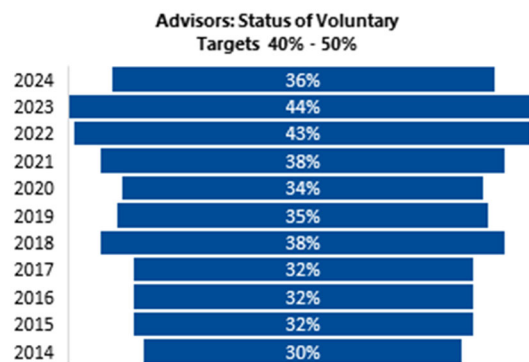
Next Steps

16. The WGGD will continue its work to raise awareness about the need for improved gender diversity in the Executive Board at all levels and garner support for the need for action, including through the following actions:

- i) Consider ways to support the implementation of the collective voluntary objectives for the appointment of women as Executive Director and Alternate Executive Director as well as regular reporting on the progress made in the determined timeframe.
- ii) Continue to report on the progress made towards meeting the voluntary targets introduced in 2016 for Senior Advisor (35% - 45%) and Advisor (40% - 50%) level over time.



Source: IMF Staff
Note: Data as of March 2024



Source: IMF Staff
Note: Data as of March 2024

- iii) Share best practices to help members to develop a pipeline of candidates for Executive Director and Alternative Executive Director positions to help meet the voluntary objectives.
- iv) Consider other ways to engage member country authorities and ensure their support and participation towards reaching the objectives, to be reviewed and agreed by the Executive Board.

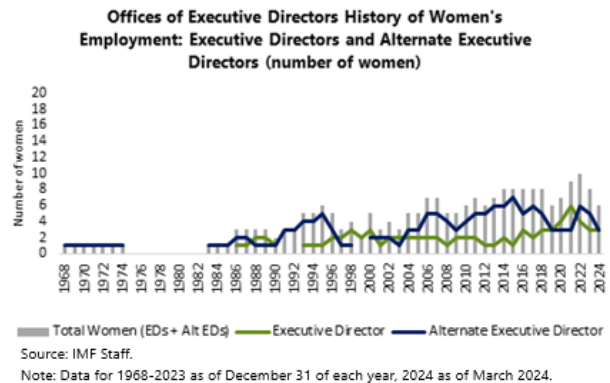
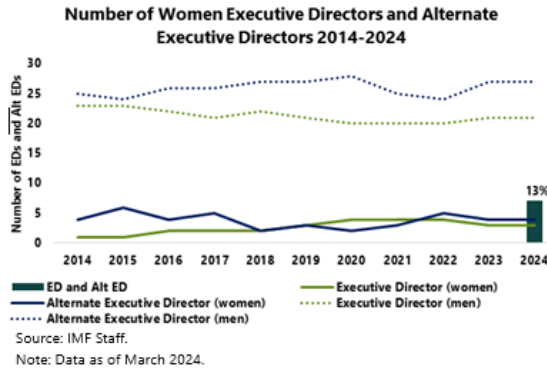
- v) Continue to support activities to build a supportive work environment for women working in the Executive Board, including through the OED Women's Network, and continue engaging with other IFIs to exchange experiences and best practices on how to improve Board gender diversity.

17. To support this initiative and ongoing conversation, the Executive Board commits to raise this issue with relevant decision makers to garner their support and participation towards reaching the objectives. To this end, Executive Directors will share the attached fact sheet with their authorities.

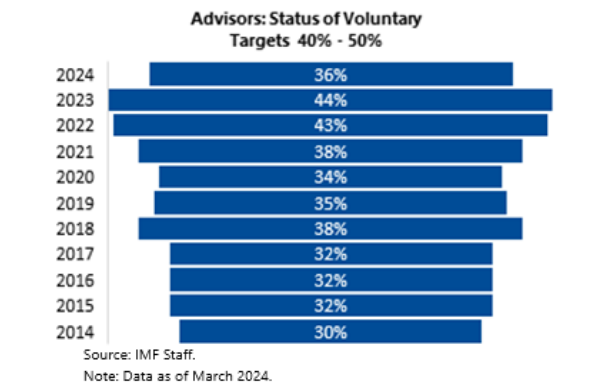
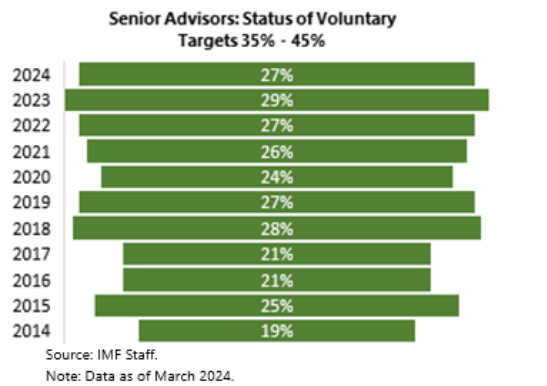
Annex I. Spring 2024 Factsheet

GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE IMF EXECUTIVE BOARD—SPRING 2024

Only 13 percent of the total number of IMF Executive Directors and Alternate Executive Directors are women (3 Executive Directors out of 24 chairs, and 4 out of 31 Alternate Executive Directors). Decisive action is needed to close the historical gap in women's representation on the Board: a collective goal of increasing the total from 13 to 30 percent over three election cycles is proposed.



The number of women appointed as Senior Advisors and Advisors to Executive Directors has increased. Target ranges were established for these positions in 2016. The upwards trend demonstrates that setting clear, shared goals can influence positive change.



Stronger progress by comparator organizations shows that a concerted effort must be made to ensure the IMF's Executive Board keeps pace. With efforts to grow the pipeline, the number of women could see more sustained progress going forward.

