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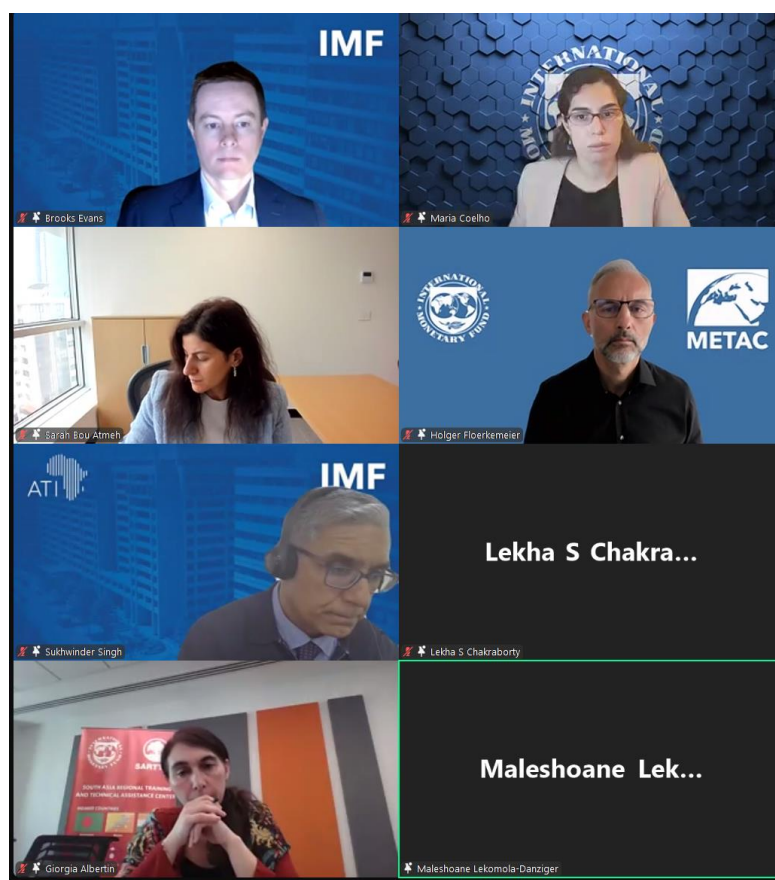
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Tax and Expenditure Policies to promote Women Economic Empowerment

11 June 2025



How do tax policies influence inequalities between men and women? What is the role of public expenditure in facilitating women's economic empowerment? In the second webinar of the joint gender series conducted by the Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Center (METAC), the African Training Institute (ATI), and South Asia Regional Training and Technical Assistance Center (SARTTAC), experts came together to address these pivotal questions. The webinar, titled "Tax and Expenditure Policies to Promote Women's Economic Empowerment," featured panelists Sarah Bou Atmeh, METAC's tax policy advisor; Lekha S. Chakraborty, an economist and Professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy in India; Maleshoane Lekomola-Danziger, Budget Controller in Lesotho's Ministry of Finance and Development Planning; and Brooks Evans, a senior economist at the IMF. Moderated by Maria Coelho, an economist working in the IMF's fiscal affairs department (FAD) tax policy division, the discussion provided valuable insights drawn from country examples and best practices, highlighting how fiscal policies can either perpetuate or mitigate gender disparities.

The panelists emphasized the importance of gender-responsive tax and expenditures policies and budgeting, which has proven effective in reducing inequalities in various countries and discussed the necessity for governments to lead on gender-responsive issues by ensuring gender-disaggregated data and indicators, as well as mobilizing communities to advocate for policy reforms. Key topics during the active Q&A session included the care economy and its implications, along with the proportion of public expenditures that should be allocated to cover costs associated with women's empowerment, emphasizing sectors such as education and healthcare. The evaluation of existing programs targeting women was also examined to learn from their successes and challenges. The session concluded with a summary of key takeaways, stressing that there is no one-size-fits-all approach and the importance of addressing broader fiscal constraints and social institutional challenges unique to each country.