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Priority theme 2 on Building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies with a special focus on gender and youth dimensions.

Statement submitted by

H.E. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason
Chair, Commission on the Status of Women

Tuesday, 15 May 2018

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Video

Twenty-first session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

H.E. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason
Chair, Commission on the Status of Women

15 May 2018
Draft Talking Points

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address the twenty-first session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, in my capacity as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women.

ECOSOC functional commissions have specific mandates and also share areas of common interest, especially in this era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Such commonalities were evident last July, when five commission chairs, including the Chair of CSTD, participated in a roundtable discussion on the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our interaction and information exchange last July came as a direct response to the Agenda's demand for the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in its implementation. Our discussion confirmed that the impact of our work will be greater if we can build synergies, aim for policy coherence and reinforce each other's key messages, across the entire 2030 Agenda.

As the principal policy-making body of the United Nations for gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Commission on the Status of Women grounds its work in the Beijing Platform for Action. CSW also exercises a catalytic role in support of gender mainstreaming in all areas of work of the United Nations. My comments today are in pursuit of this latter role of the Commission, through expansion of our cooperation across the ECOSOC system.

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development has made important contributions to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the areas covered by its mandate, including in the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society.

Technological change has broad implications for education and learning, access to services such as health care, and work and employment in fields such as commerce and finance. Skills ranging from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology are needed to take advantage of new opportunities. Governments increasingly recognize ICT, as well as STEM education as necessary for successful learning, as basis for active and informed citizenship, and as drivers for achieving the SDGs. This calls for addressing stereotypes and bias around girls and STEM and ICT. The integration of gender perspectives in national ICT strategies and policies should galvanize the new opportunities and actively respond to challenges that women and girls encounter in the digital age.

On its part, the Commission on the Status of Women has addressed ways for ensuring that women and girls can fully participate in, contribute to and benefit from science and technology. In an age of rapid innovation and technological change that transform many aspects of economic, social and political life, there is unprecedented urgency for accelerated action to close the gender digital divide, and to fully align action with the implementation of the SDGs. SDG 5, on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, also includes a target on enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

Among recent recommendations for action, CSW has urged Governments and other stakeholders to:

- address the persistence, or even widening, of the gender digital divide, including by expanding girls' and women's access to ICT and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and skills development, to support women's labour market entry, livelihoods, well-being and resilience.
- promote women's and girls' participation in and access to ICTs, including by increasing their digital literacy.
- expand the scope of ICT-enabled mobile learning and literacy training while promoting a safe and secure cyberspace for women and girls.

Mr. Chair,

The work of the CSTD is critical for the achievement of the SDGs in this technological age. Ensuring the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls across your entire mandate will accelerate their realization. The Commission on the Status of Women looks forward to continued collaboration with CSTD as we pursue the common goal of a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Let me conclude by wishing you and the Commission a successful twenty-first session.

I thank you.