

**COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT
(CSTD)**

**Twenty-third session
Geneva, 23 to 27 March 2020**

**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international
organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2019 to
implement the outcomes of the WSIS**

Submission by

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 23rd session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

2019 Annual WSIS reporting

For background:

- Explanation of action lines and themes
- <https://publicadministration.un.org/wsis10/WSIS-Action-Lines-and-Facilitators>
- Progress report of 2018 (I don't see UN Women mentioned)
- https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/a74d62_en.pdf

[Part 1: Executive summary]

UN Women identified three priorities in leveraging innovation to advance gender equality. The programme, policy and partnership work were developed around: 1) Tackling the under-representation of women as innovators 2) Promoting gender-responsive innovation 3) Increasing investment in innovation and technology work better for women and girls.

UN Women continues to work with its partners under the [EQUALS](#) initiative, with the goal to achieve equal access and use of digital technologies by 2030; and empower women and girls in acquiring skills that will help them become both ICT users and creators in the digital world as well as in broader STEM fields by 2030.

The Commission on the Status of Women in 2017 focused on women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, including [recommendations](#) on strengthening of science and technology education policies and curricula to ensure their relevance, and to enable entrepreneurial women to leverage science and technology for economic gain, including those in the informal sector.

UN Women is engaging with the private sector to help close the skills gap, for example through the [Women's Empowerment Principles](#) (WEPs). Endorsed by intergovernmental fora such the UN General Assembly, the G7 and the G20, the seven Principles holistically address key issues such as work-life balance and gender-responsive supply chain practices, and tackle the gender pay gap and sexual harassment in the workplace. There are currently more than 2,700 CEOs, including 495 tech-related companies that have committed to implement the Women's Empowerment Principles through putting in place and reporting on gender-responsive policies and practices.

To prepare women and girls for both current job market shifts and the changes yet to come, it is essential to promote inclusivity in innovation and the future of work. This is

going to take close cooperation and dialogue among policymakers, social partners, the private sector, education and training providers, innovation analysts and other relevant actors. These are priorities that were identified during the G7 meeting of Ministers of Labour and Employment in Turin in September 2017. Canada's 2018 G7 Presidency has identified three key priority themes related to this agenda: investing in growth that works for everyone, preparing for jobs of the future, and advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. France's G7 Presidency continued the work under the overarching theme the "fight against inequalities" which has been reflected in all G7 work streams: inequality of income and opportunities, gender inequalities, digital inequalities, inequalities related to environmental degradation, security and development issues. UN Women, together with the EU and ILO, has just kicked off the [WE EMPOWER](#) programme in G7 countries that supports the agenda's implementation.

[Part 2: Analytical overview of trends and experiences in implementation at the national, regional and international levels, highlighting achievements and obstacles]

1. One of the most pernicious aspects of the global digital divide is the digital gender gap.

Despite an increase in access, there remains a significant gender gap in ownership and the use of technology products. For example, women who own mobile phones report using phones less frequently and intensively than men, especially for transformative services such as mobile internet. The imbalance correlates with the structural problems that hindering gender equality in other economic and social aspects, e.g., education and income levels, which should be addressed systematically.

2. The growing need to apply a gender-responsive approach to the development and deployment of ICT applications.

Men and women may benefit from technologies disproportionately. The design and development of solutions should acknowledge the gender differences in needs and vulnerabilities. The [UNSG's Strategy on New Technologies](#) also stressed that the potential risk technology brings with more inequality and violence. For example, blockchain-based cash transfer may grant women more authority in managing and spending money, but this may increase the risk of domestic violence as men are losing control power over financials. The ethics of AI is another increasing concern as the data collection and algorithms may open the door to reinforcing the bias and unintended discrimination for women.

The G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council released their Call to Action to G7 and world leaders in advance of the 45th annual Group of Seven (G7) leaders' Summit:

“It calls on the G7 to prioritize the inclusion and economic empowerment of women in development assistance by increasing support for girls’ and women’s health, learning, and inclusion in the financial system. This will take more than words – it will take a commitment to work with all governments and citizens, to design laws, remove barriers and deliver programmes designed with girls’ and women’s access in mind.”

“The Council calls on the G7 members to accelerate girls’ and women’s access to STEM education, training, research, and employment, especially in digital technology and artificial intelligence.”

[Part 3: brief description of 1) innovative policies, programmes and projects 2) future actions or initiatives]

Per WSIS Action Line

- **CI. The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of information and communications technologies for development**

Case 1: As a member of UNSG's Digital Financing Task Force of the SDGs, UN Women launched a policy paper "[Leveraging digital finance for gender equality and women's empowerment](#)," outlining the specific barriers and risks faced by women. The paper provides resources and recommendations for all stakeholders, including investors, service providers, governments, development partners and civil societies, to jointly mainstream gender in new products and investing in new services or structure.

Case 2: UN Women identified the digital revolution as an emerging issue for gender equality and women's rights during the [25-year review](#) on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. UN Women also conducted an assessment on how to advance gender quality and women's rights in the digital age.

Case 3: UN Women works with women in rural Kyrgyzstan bring change through water, technology and better infrastructure. [Through a livelihoods project](#) funded by the Government of Finland, UN Women has facilitated the establishment of 14 women’s self-help groups in southern Kyrgyzstan that now have 170 members. The project provided skills training to boost women’s income and connected them with Water User Associations and local-self-governments so that women could have a voice in water management decisions that impacted their daily lives, livelihoods and safety.

- **C7. ICT Applications / E-business**

UN Women and WFP co-piloted an inter-agency blockchain-based cash transfer, with which women from UN Women's Oasis center cash-for-work programmes could access their income directly via digital supermarket credit.

UN Women together with its partners [launched WeLearn](#) virtual skills platform in Indonesia. UN Women and its partners started the offline an online activity which will lead to increase the digital and entrepreneurship skills of our stakeholders in Indonesia. Other launches are expected in 2020.

- **C7. ICT Applications /E-agriculture**

UN Women's Buy from Women Digital Initiative is piloted in three countries (Rwanda, Haiti, Mali) and expanding to new locations in 2020 (ex. Liberia, Malawi, Senegal, DR Congo). The mobile and web-based platform will help smallholder women farmers access pertinent information (prices, inputs, financing), and establish legitimate commercial identities with records.

- **C9. Media**

UN Women is conducting a big data analysis on the global #metoo movement. UN Women has completed the preliminary data analysis for twenty+ hashtags covering 10 languages. The research anticipates to reveal the relations among conversations driven by social media individuals and public institutions.

- **C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society**

UN Women kept promoting [Gender Innovation Principles](#) and [Women's Empowerment Principles](#) and to guide private sector, academic and non-profit institutions to ensure that women play a vital role throughout the technological and innovation cycle. Signatories are encouraged to share tools to make sure women's and men's concerns and experiences are equally integrated into the design of ICT and STEM solutions.

[In her message](#) for International Women's Day on 8 March 2019, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka calls for gender-sensitive technology and innovations to advance gender equality.

Joint message from Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women and Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO for the International Day for Women and Girls in Science 11 February [here](#).

On 25 April, UN Women is joining girls around the world to mark International Girls in ICT Day, drawing attention to the critical need for more girls and women in the ICT sector. With technology playing a role in all kinds of careers, from art and history to law, primary teaching and graphic design, learning tech skills at a young age will set

girls up for economic independence. And, the ICT sector needs more girls and women. Stories from the field to include as a reference [here](#).