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**Data for Development**

Statement by

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## **Gender and Data for Development**

Statement by Sophia Huyer, Member, Gender Advisory Board, CSTD  
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The CSTD Gender Advisory Board commented many years ago, in 1995, that science and technology design and development has been characterized by a lack of attention to women's priorities and activities (Gender Working Group, 1995), as well as a lack of analysis of gendered impacts of science and technology. This situation continues – and is also true for digital technology and AI.

In terms of basic access to mobile phones alone, while the digital gender gap has decreased a significant gap continues in access to smartphones and Internet. So women are not contributing to data for development and are not developing or contributing to the compilable data that AI is built on. This is not true for women only – a sizable proportion of the population in the Global South does not have reliable or ongoing access to mobile networks or smartphones. As a result AI and digital data for development pose the real threat of reversing the trends to inclusion in development by emphasizing the perspectives, interest and situations of younger males and – still predominantly – white males. Significant barriers exist for inclusive and diverse AI that need significant efforts to be addressed.

For example, research in the US found that digital recognition software has trouble identifying black men, and even more trouble in identifying black women. It works best with white men, and second-best with white women. Less than 15% of Wikipedia editors are female.

Recent questions posted on ChatGPT reflect these gaps. The answer to the question “ Who is the most famous woman in the world” returned 5 – 3 women from the US, one from the UK, and Malala Yousouf. When asked a question about women's role in food security in the Global South, the answer was made up of that was obviously taken from FAO webpages, consisting of a very general overview.

Some development implications:

- Women are not accessing agro-climatic information to support food production in the Global South; it also means they are not producing digital agriculture information. Women in rural areas in Kenya for example, were not aware of mobile agriculture services, did not understand how to use them, and did not have ability to own a mobile phone.
- The digital gap in smartphone use and Internet access in low- and middle- income countries affects public dissemination of health and early warning information; in turn having the potential to generate uneven health datasets that cause misinterpretation of digital biomarkers for disease, prevention and treatment

Some solutions:

- The CGIAR Ag-Data Hubs are integrating gender and inclusion into choice of data disseminated (i.e. data on women's crops and women's livestock); as well as how the information is formatted, presented and disseminated. – i.e. less text, more images, more verbal information, disseminated on a range of information technologies including SMS, voice lines, and radio/TV as well as digital.