**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
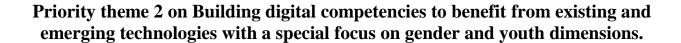FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-first session**
Geneva, 14-18 May 2018

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

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

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21st Session of the CSTD - Panel on Priority Theme 2:

Building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies, with a special focus on gender and youth dimensions

Geneva, 15 May 2018

Christine Löw, Director, UN Women Liaison Office

- Thank you, Chair.

  Thank you to the panelists of for their insightful presentation

- Bridging the **gender digital divide is essential** if we are to achieve gender equality and sustainable development in the 21st century.

- And we know that **women and girls all over the world must have equal rights and equal access** to opportunities to shape the global knowledge society.

- To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), **we need both**: digital inclusion *and* digital equality. Digital skills are **vital** for both individuals and economies. It is about having the right access, skills, motivation, opportunities to go online.

- The international community and public and private entities **need to strengthen partnerships** to help women and girls to benefit from all the advantages the internet can offer.

- We have heard it: an estimated 90% of future jobs will require ICTs.

Shirley Malcolm, Chair
Gender Advisory Board

- These changes create **significant opportunities for women to thrive** – but only if we reverse current trends. For instance:

  - ✓ In upper secondary education globally only 10 per cent of women, compared to 60 per cent of men, are STEM graduates.

  - ✓ Right now, fewer than 17% of computer science degrees go to women students.

  - ✓ Over 1.7 billion women do not own a mobile phone.

- **Thus a growing gender digital divide prevents women from accessing the innovations and technologies that enable education, health care and jobs.**

- At the heart of the SDGs is a commitment to ensure that **'no one is left behind'**.

- But women and girls in developing countries are at **higher risk of being left behin**d, given the fast-changing nature of digital assets and services, and their relevance for future employment and income.

- Women and girls must have access to ICTs and be empowered to create and use technology.

- How we move forward? Let's start with **strengthening the relevance and quality of girls' education through appropriate and innovative technology.**

- We need to **focus especially on**:
  1. **Skills:** i.e. equipping women with the skills – **digital skills** - they need to thrive in today's economy
  2. **Access:** i.e. women's and girls' connectivity and access to mobile devices and frontier technologies;
  3. **Leadership:** changing gender stereotypes about women in tech industries;

- UN Women is proud to be one of the co-founders of the **Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age**, or the <u>EQUALS initiative</u>, along with
  - the International Telecommunication Union
  - GSMA
  - the International Trade Center, and
  - the United Nations University.
- **EQUALS is addresses these 3 priorities** to bridge the digital gender divide – through <u>3 Coalitions:</u> the Skills Coalition, Access Coalition and the Leadership Coalition.

- Technology can spark innovation and entrepreneurship and create new forms of public engagement and economic activity. Now more than ever, **we need targeted efforts and partnerships** to accelerate global progress in bridging the gender digital divide. Let's make sure we deliver!