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Documentation of the Work of the Commission on the Status of Women

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PEACE

Conference B

Commission on the Staff of Women

Committee Staff

Director	David Godoy
Assistant Director	Katie Conti
Chair	Nils Heißenberg
Rapporteur	Salma Fishier

Agenda

    I.   Promoting Women's Access to Information and Communication Technologies

    II.   Advancing Economic Parity for Rural Women

    III.   Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality

Resolutions adopted by the Committee

Code	Topic	Vote
CSW/1/1	Promoting Women's Access to Information and Communication Technologies	Adopted by Acclamation

Summary Report for the Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women held its annual session to consider the following agenda items:

I.   Promoting Women's Access to Information and Communication Technologies
II.   Advancing Economic Parity for Rural Women
III.   Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality

The session was attended by representatives of 33 Member States.

During the first session on Sunday, the committee adopted the agenda of I, II, III, beginning discussion on "Promoting Women's Access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)." By Tuesday, the Dais received a total of 7 proposals covering a wide range of sub-topics including increasing accessibility to digital financial services, public-private partnerships to increase access to ICT, enhancing educational opportunities for women to access ICT, and promoting careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields for women. The general attitude among delegates during the conference was one of cooperation, as many delegates cooperated across multiple working groups. Four proposals were submitted by Monday evening, showing commitment and cooperation to combine the efforts of the body. By Tuesday, several working groups began merging efforts in a diplomatic manner to consolidate the work of the body.

On Wednesday, all working groups came together and 1 draft resolution was approved by the Dais with no amendments. The committee adopted 1 resolution following voting procedure, which received unanimous support by the body. The resolution represented a wide range of issues, including methods for improving ICT education and infrastructure, inclusive community engagement programming for rural women, and promoting financial independence using digital systems. Throughout the conference, delegations progressed using increased levels of cooperation and problem-solving.

Code: CSW/1/1
Committee: Commission on the Status of Women
Topic: Promoting Women's Access to Information and Communication Technologies

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1   *The Commission on the Status of Women,*
2
3   *Taking into account* Article 7 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948), which states
4   that all should be protected against any discrimination and are equal under the law and Article 26, which
5   declares that education should be directed to the full development for human rights and fundamental
6   freedoms,
7
8   *Declaring* as a guiding force, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*
9   (2030 Agenda) (2015) with an emphasis on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.B, which targets the
10   enhancement of the use of enabling technology, to highlight gender equality, specifically emphasizing the
11   importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the pledge for women's equality and
12   empowerment, promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment,
13   and decent work for all, SDG 8 on "Decent work and economic growth," and SDG 17, which emphasizes
14   "Partnerships for the goals" in the achievement of gender equality, empowerment of women, and the
15   strengthening of financial inclusion, as they highlight the importance of ICTs and the improvement of ICTs
16   access for women in all regions,
17
18   *Emphasizing* the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BDPfA) of The Fourth World Conference on
19   Women of 1995, which asserts that Member States have an obligation to ensure women's equal access
20   to economic resources, including land, credit, science, and technology, vocational training, information,
21   communication, and markets,
22
23   *Further emphasizing* Paragraph 313 of *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the BDPfA and the*
24   *outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (*E/CN.6/2015/3*)* (2015), which
25   highlights increased state investment and financial incentives in gender equality measures for the sectors
26   of the media and technologies, as detailed in its strategic objective F.3,
27
28   *Reaffirming* the *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) of
29   1978, particularly Articles 11 and 14, which urge Member States to provide equal conditions for men and
30   women in career and vocational guidance, accompanied by increased access to education and
31   opportunity to earn academic credentials,
32
33   *Referring* to the Agreed Conclusions of the Sixty-First Session of the Commission on the Status of
34   Women (CSW) on "Women's Empowerment in the Changing World of Work" (2017), which emphasizes
35   women's economic empowerment through ICTs and recognizes that new technologies change the
36   structure of labor markets, requiring women to develop both digital and technical skills in Science,
37   Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and ICTs,
38
39   *Recalling* paragraph 39 of the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on*
40   *Financing for Development* (AAAA) (2015), which recognizes women's lack of access to financial services
41   and encourages the use of digital financial services, including mobile banking, payment platforms, and
42   digitalized payments, especially through peer learning and experience-sharing among countries and
43   regions and aims to provide business services, training, and access to markets, information, and
44   technology, as well as the lack of economic networks and independence for women, which is highlighted
45   by the strategic objective F.1, particularly for women with lower income,
46
47   *Appreciating* the previous and ongoing collaborative and coordinated work between the CSW and its'
48   secretariat, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women),
49   unceasingly fostering reflective and concrete initiatives aimed toward gender equality,

50
51 *Highlighting* the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 of UN-Women, which builds on recommendations from the 20-
52 year review of the BDPfA and encourages the comprehensive structure of policy standards for economic
53 autonomy and income security,
54
55 *Reiterating* the importance of promoting and maintaining gender equality, as stated in the *Report on the*
56 *sixty-second session* of CSW on "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the
57 empowerment of rural women and girls" (2018) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
58 resolution 200 on "Connect 2020 Agenda for global telecommunication/information and communication
59 technology development" (Connect 2020 Agenda) (2014), especially for encouraging women's
60 empowerment and guaranteeing the inclusion of women in the emerging global ICTs society, which
61 acknowledges the use of ICTs as a tool through which gender equality and women's empowerment can
62 be advanced, and are integral to the creation of societies in which both women and men can substantially
63 contribute,
64
65 *Observing* the Agreed Conclusions of the sixty-third session of CSW (2019) which recognize the potential
66 benefits and challenges of new forms of information and communication technology on women and girls,
67 particularly clause 51, which calls upon UN-Women to consider the recommendations put forth by this
68 body, and maintaining awareness of the pursuit of an Inter-Agency Task Force, which looks to emphasize
69 important economic gaps and need for women's involvement in the public-private technology and
70 financial banking sectors,
71
72 *Bearing in mind* that equitable gender access to ICTs education is hindered by infrastructural, financial,
73 and cultural barriers as stated in the Agreed Conclusions of the sixty-third session of CSW on "Social
74 Protection systems, access to public services, and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the
75 empowerment of women and girls" (2019), reiterating the many challenges faced by rural and indigenous
76 women due to the lack of accessible and sustainable infrastructure which prevents their engagement in
77 ICTs programs,
78
79 *Endorsing* the General Assembly Resolution 71/177 on "Rights of the Child" (2017), which guarantees the
80 right to education for all children,
81
82 *Echoing* the statutes laid out in the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women of the Organization of
83 Islamic Countries (OPAAW) (2016), which states in a manner representative of Arab Member States, that
84 previously established ICTs infrastructure ought to ensure equal opportunity for women at all levels of
85 education and increases economic empowerment through education,
86
87 *Recognizing* the importance of early education for young girls in the STEM and ICTs sectors, particularly
88 those in rural areas, as accomplished by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) program "School-
89 in-a-Box," which delivers educational materials to rural communities—including teaching manuals and
90 school supplies, and fosters an environment of classroom learning,
91
92 *Guided by* the success of grassroots ICTs training initiatives such as the three-tier ICTs education,
93 training, and placement program created by a non-profit organization called "La Labratoria" in Latin
94 America which assisted more than 800 women in becoming employed in the technology industry from
95 2014 to 2018,
96
97 *Commending* the Look@World Foundation's program titled "Come Along!" in Estonia, in which training
98 buses transport ICTs specialists to rural areas in order to educate and train on multiple topics, including
99 the usage of ICTs,
100
101 *Viewing with appreciation,* the success met in Kenya, as expressed by the World Bank report *Digital*
102 *Access: The Future of Financial Inclusion in Africa* (2018), where projects aiming toward the provision of
103 access to mobile banking services enabled women-headed households to increase their savings by 20%,
104

105   *Mindful of* the substantive development of ICTs into a major contributor to the global economy and the
106   potential for ICTs to increase opportunities, equality, and workforce participation,

108   *Realizing* that funding may be required from both Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as
109   Intergovernmental Organizations,

111   *Confident in the potential* of the Universal Service and Access Funds (USAFs), which are national funds
112   that are financed through required contributions by telecommunications providers, to be employed to
113   increase internet connectivity among disconnected women,

115   *Noting with deep concern* the current disadvantages and misconceptions about women and girls,
116   especially those in rural communities, when it comes to studying and pursuing STEM or ICT-related
117   sectors,

119   *Taking into account* the digital gender gap that women face, the integrated roots in inequality of financial
120   services, and the educational disadvantage as seen in a 2015 report of United Nations Educational,
121   Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Education for All 2000-2015: achievements and*
122   *challenges; EFA global monitoring report* which states that over half of global children not enrolled in
123   primary schools globally are girls,

125   *Guided* by this Commission's ministerial round table on the theme of "Technology Changing the World of
126   Work," which suggests the improvement of the economic empowerment of women through the leveraging
127   of digital financial services and noting the progress made in Member States concerning the promotion of
128   women's access to financial resources through digital financial services and the connection of rural
129   women to markets by the use of mobile device-based services,

131   *Deeply appreciative* of the ongoing work of UNESCO regarding application-driven software and projects
132   which deals with the development of technological skills for young generations, as well as the past
133   benefits of programs using a for-and-by strategy, which is articulated by marginalized groups teaching
134   their own community, as stated by the report *Gender Issues in the Information Society* (2003) lead by
135   UNESCO, permitting a safe environment, exposure to successful female role models, and the tackling of
136   linked gender-based stereotypes,

138   *Conscious of* traditional gender roles impeding women's access to employment and financial means, as
139   men are customarily given providing roles which limit women to care and domestic work, anchoring them
140   in financially dependent dynamics with their male family members,

142   *Recalling* a research report completed by Intel on "Women and the Web," which stated that if 600 million
143   women worldwide were connected to the internet in three years, global gross domestic product (GDP)
144   would rise between $13 billion and $18 billion,

146   *Acknowledging* the National Girls Collaborative Initiative's analysis of available data that reports a 1:4
147   ratio of women to men in STEM-related workplaces,

149   *Recognizing* that according to data from the ITU and UNESCO Broadband Commission for Sustainable
150   Development, there are currently 200 million fewer women online than men, and the potential of this gap
151   could grow to 350 million if action is not taken,

153   *Deeply conscious of* the colonial history of the disempowerment of many women in many States, and
154   being cognizant that, as reported by the ITU, the implementation of the following recommendations may
155   be more effective if local women are encouraged to take leadership positions in their own communities
156   rather than outside leaders from other Member States or foreign Non-Governmental or Intergovernmental
157   Organizations,

159   *Observing* that the usage of native languages and vernacular in the educational system are more
160   inclusive to women living in rural areas so that the ICTs programs are sustainable,

161
162 *Bearing in mind* the difficulties of developing and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to establish efficient
163 infrastructure for the usage of ICTs, internet connection, and digital financial services which may be
164 exacerbated for some Member States through the use of sanctions placed upon such nations,
165
166 *Acknowledging* the existence of the International Girls in ICTs Day as noted in resolution 70 of the 2014
167 Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union on "Mainstreaming a gender
168 perspective in ITU and promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women through information
169 and communication technologies,"
170
171 1. *Invites* UN-Women to encourage sustainable ICTs infrastructures, specifically electricity, mobile
172   broadband technologies, and implementation of wireless networks in disconnected areas, through the
173   suggested participation of private-public partnerships created through tenders and monetary
174   incentives in rural areas using existing funds such as those in the ICTs Development Fund in order to
175   better establish initiatives congruent with an international expert group specializing in women's
176   access to ICTs, for close cooperation with Member States, NGOs engaged in development aid, as
177   well as private and public corporations, for the purpose of*:*
178
179   a. Increasing the availability of ICTs for women in Developing Countries, especially in LDCs and
180   rural areas where ICTs are not prevalent;
181
182   b. Having a comprehensive understanding of women's access to ICTs, by studying the
183   effectiveness through quantitative tests to discover supply-and-demand scales on
184   interventions for the constraints on female entrepreneurs' access to mobile savings;
185
186   c. Welcoming the aid of private organizations in providing microloans to women especially in
187   developing nations for the purpose of female entrepreneurship and increased income through
188   self-created jobs;
189
190   d. Raising awareness of the problem of the gender disparity in ICTs fields;
191
192 2. *Empowers* Member States to continue to support the full utilization of mechanisms such as USAFs
193   among governments in order to provide internet access and connection opportunities in rural areas by
194   expanding the internet connection programs that are funded by USAFs to explicitly connect women
195   and disseminate information to the UN and the public via annual reports about the disbursement,
196   funding, and programming of USAFs;
197
198 3. *Invites* Member States to take effective action toward ending the existence of misconceptions and
199   cultural/social barriers that are undermining the representation of women in STEM fields by:
200
201   a. Promoting international convenings modeling previous efforts such as the "Accelerating
202   Women's Economic Empowerment to Achieve the 2030 Agenda" held during the UN
203   Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment (2017) at the in
204   order to bring women's economic empowerment to the forefront of all SDG targets;
205
206   b. Developing and implementing workshops catering to both men and women regarding the
207   potential political, social, and economic gains from the use of ICTs could bring to women and
208   potentially help overcome barrier-inducing narratives about traditional gender roles;
209
210   c. Respecting local customs and working with local ambassadors in cross-cultural
211   implementations of culturally-based ICTs initiatives;
212
213 4. *Emphasizes* the need to recruit and educate volunteering women chosen by the CSW and UN-
214   Women from within their communities to become leaders in the construction, implementation, and
215   maintenance of these sustainable ICTs in rural communities, referring to these leaders as "ICTs
216   Ambassadors," who would then take this acquired knowledge and further educate their communities

217   and with construction covering responsibility for electricity and mobile broadband technologies and
218   the operation of needed equipment;
219
220 5. *Suggests* that the ICTs Ambassadors could educate their communities on the use of ICTs and their
221   maintenance to other women within their own communities, creating a safe environment free of fear
222   of sexual harassment and discrimination as referenced in clause 40.k of the Agreed Conclusions of
223   the sixty-third session of CSW for women to learn, participate, and lead ICTs initiatives, empowering
224   local women by promoting the placement of women in leadership roles, speak in native languages
225   and vernacular during classes and training of women in ICTs education:
226
227   a. Teaching women and girls about the Internet, computers and other types of technologies;
228
229   b. Raising awareness of women and girls' potential to study and have careers in ICTs and
230   STEM-related fields;
231
232   c. Expanding educational projects focused on digital financial services and computer skills, such
233   as application-driven software, to be further implemented by bringing in technological
234   knowledge to primary education so as to allow the development of targeted skills for young
235   girls;
236
237 6. *Advises* the use of a similar program to Look@World Foundation's "Come Along!" which used mobile
238   buses that traveled through rural and urban communities to educate potential ICTs ambassadors in
239   subjects such as ICTs use, basic mechanical engineering regarding the construction and
240   maintenance of electrical apparatuses, coding, and teaching skills pertaining to the ability to integrate
241   ICTs within the local community;
242
243 7. *Further recommends* the creation of temporary working groups within UN-Women toward local ICTs
244   Ambassadors to monitor and assess the continuation of the education and implementation of local
245   ICTs responsibilities implemented by ICTs Ambassadors, through assessment twice a year,
246   reassessment after five years, convening to provide guidance in the use of ICTs and their possible
247   creative applications in rural settings of participating countries, while also providing incentives to
248   share the knowledge gained in respective home countries;
249
250 8. *Encourages* the digital empowerment of all women, especially women in rural or lesser developed
251   areas by enforcing a special international program facilitated by a three-tier approach:
252
253   a. Testing programs for women in ICTs that require no previous qualifications or accreditation
254   that place them into training programs based on their skill level, which would include
255   interviews and oral/written assessments;
256
257   b. Detailed training initiatives, such as an ICTs Ambassador Program that teaches women basic
258   IT literacy, intermediate software skills, and provides a better understanding of digital
259   financial services that teach women how to create their own bank accounts, manage their
260   finances, and build credit;
261
262   c. Talent placement for women's employment in the ICTs industry on local, national, and
263   international levels, which would encourage ICTs companies to provide internships and hiring
264   opportunities to trained women;
265
266 9. *Suggests* that current community institutions such as, but not limited to, schools, libraries, and
267   community centers, to establish free access to ICTs such as laptops, tablets, radios, and telephones
268   and that they be made available to both genders;
269
270 10. *Supports* partnerships between all relevant stakeholders in the field of promoting gender
271   inclusiveness such as UN-Women, local governments, partners from the UN Global Compact and

272 other technology companies to develop need-based community institutions in rural areas in order to
273 improve ICTs and professional literacy among rural women and girls through:

274
275   a. Increasing broadband internet through satellites to community institutions in rural areas;

276
277   b. Implementing training programs led by ICTs Ambassadors;

278
279   c. Enabling women to participate in training by offering incentives such as child care services;

280
281   d. Ensuring transportation networks incorporate safety measures to prevent violence in transit;

282
283   e. Potentially establishing funding in collaboration with the World Bank and partners from the
284   UN Global Compact;

285
286   f. Encouraging dialogue between UN-Women through invested stakeholders and local
287   governments meeting regularly in order to monitor and assess ICTs activities in local
288   communities and solve potential problems;

289
290 11. *Encourages* private and public sectors to promote women's financial independence by educating
291   women in ICTs, supporting employment opportunities to accelerate the mitigation of the gender divide
292   in unemployment and wage inequality through local ICTs workshops for women and public-private
293   partnerships, including, but not limited to, technology-based startup corporations, large businesses
294   and governments partnering for vocational training to women who demonstrate interest in developing
295   proficiency in STEM fields and encourage these women to continue on to work in ICT-related
296   industries;

297
298 12. *Promotes* the acquisition of basic digital skills through programming initiatives, such as, but not
299   limited to:

300
301   a. The recommendation of incubation centers that would act as convening spaces that allow for
302   mentorship, to support and mentor female entrepreneurs, help them develop their start-ups
303   and/or private companies;

304
305   b. The creation of ICTs education centers using a "for-and-by women" strategy, administered
306   and used by women, notably from local communities to provide women with adequate
307   training on ICTs;

308
309 13. *Further invites* Member States to incorporate measures within national and local educational systems
310   that aim to include women and girls in STEM-related courses in primary and secondary education,
311   such as:

312
313   a. Teaching women and girls about the internet, computers, and other types of technologies
314   from an early age;

315
316   b. Raising teachers' awareness of the available opportunities that women and girls have to
317   study and seek careers in ICTs and STEM-related fields;

318
319 14. *Promotes* gender parity in tertiary education, to attract women and girls especially but not limited to
320   the fields of STEM by:

321
322   a. Encouraging willing and able Member States and private companies to create programs and
323   grants to provide women and girls with funds, books, and school supplies;

324
325   b. Gathering strategies to encourage women's participation in the public sector, especially in
326   political and economic spheres that fosters women's pursuit of a variety of careers;

327

15. *Promotes* full inclusivity of women and girls of all ages in ICTs, STEM, and advocacy efforts such as changing the name of the International Girls in ICTs Day to become International Day of Women and Girls in ICTs and STEM, and encouraging job fairs on this day to invite women from communities to join ICT-related fields;

16. *Suggests* Member States work domestically to alleviate the financial burden for women in STEM-related fields by:

   a. Working continually toward the cost reduction in tuition expenses for women pursuing academic placement in STEM-related fields;

   b. Developing detailed measures to decrease the digital gender gap that women in STEM face by establishing gender discrimination safeguards such as gender employment quotas or wage equality requirements and targeting progress toward the creation of workplace equality for women in the ICTs sector;

   c. Supporting a campaign made by UN-Women aiming to showcase women's positive contributions to the national economic development and the fields of ICTs and STEM;

17. *Recommends* Member States and UN-Women to work toward the coordination and development of international funds and scholarships that strategically allocate a substantial percentage of available capital to provide adequate financial means to women who are interested in pursuing secondary or higher education in fields related to STEM;

18. *Invites* the implementation of business training aimed at teaching and motivating women to set business goals, identify business opportunities, and mobile finance explicitly adapted to the entrepreneurial endeavors of women;

19. *Encourages* Member States to promote women's financial independence by supporting employment opportunities both in public and private sectors to target the gender divide in unemployment and wage inequality using methods such as:

   a. Inviting the ICTs private sector to maintain an established minimum percentage of women employed;

   b. Establishing reward-based incentives for companies that take action against the gender wage gap;

20. *Calls for* the promotion of digital financial services, including mobile banking, payment platforms and digitized payments, in order to empower women to take control over their own finances and to be geared toward entrepreneurship by encouraging the opening of their own independent bank accounts, notably through mobile banking solutions and partnerships with local micro-financing associations;

21. *Recommends* the use of ICTs knowledge and technologies for programs containing, for example, micro-financing or mobile banking to create direct links between suppliers, sellers, and buyers, easing the transaction process that helps women to engage in entrepreneurship.