



Mapping Gender in the Information Society: From Reality to Discourse

WSIS Gender Caucus, UNDP and IT for Change

In partnership with IDRC and UNIFEM, South Asia

Date: 31st October 2005

Venue: Yontara Room, Menam Riverside Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

8:15 am – 8:45 am

Registration

8:45 am – 9:10 am

Welcome by UNDP, WSIS GC and IT for Change

9:10 am – 10:20 am

Session 1: Assessing Women's Empowerment in the Information Society – presentation of research

Presentation of findings of an Asia Pacific regional research supported by WSIS-GC and IDRC and coordinated by IT for Change. This research project looks at gender in the information society (IS) through an analytical framework that maps issues of identity, control over technology, collective action and institutional transformation.

Presenters:

- Deborah Wheeler, United States Naval Academy Nimitz Library, (West Asia perspective)
- Angela Kuga Thas, APC WNSP, (East Asia perspective)
- Mridula Swamy, IT for Change, (South Asia perspective)
- Vanessa Griffin, University of Wellington, (Pacific perspective, on behalf of Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, FemLink Pacific)

Chair: Eun-Ju Kim, Senior Advisor for Asia and the Pacific, ITU.

10:20 am – 10:50 am - TEA

10:50 am – 11:50 am

Session 2: Response to the Research Findings presented in Session 1

Discussants will respond to the research findings presented in Session 1 and also present their perspectives on issues of identity, control over technology, collective action and institutional transformation with respect to gender in the IS.

Discussants:

- Cecilia Ng, Women's Development Collective, Malaysia
- Yvonne Underhill-Sem, The University of Auckland, New Zealand
- Kalyani Menon Sen, Jagori, India

Chair: Govind Kelkar, UNIFEM, South Asia

11:50 am – 12:30 am

Open discussion

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm LUNCH

1:30 pm – 2:45 pm

Session 3: From Alternate to New Paradigms: What do voices from the grassroots say?

This session will be a discussion that brings together the successes and struggles of initiatives that have explored and deployed new media and information and communication technologies for women's advancement and social change.

Presenters:

- Raijeli Nicole, ISIS International, Philippines – "*Media Initiatives From the Asia-Pacific*"
- Shoba Arun, Manchester Metropolitan University – "*Mapping the enabling conditions for women to appropriate the ICT opportunity for livelihoods*"
- Aruna Sundararajan, Global E-schools and Communities Initiative – "*How the community and the state have combined synergies for new paradigms in the information society*"

Chair: Fatima Almana, Gender Affairs Officer, Centre for Women, UNESCWA

2:45 pm – 3:45 pm

Session 4: Mapping the Information Society Discourse – What does WSIS mean for gender?

This session will flag issues that have been central to the WSIS negotiations and examine them from a gender perspective. It will link issues like Internet governance, financing and WSIS follow-up with "older" debates in women's rights and sustainable development. The session will link global geo-politics with the gender and development discourse with particular reference to WSIS and information society issues.

Presenters:

- Gigi Francesco, DAWN, Philippines
- Anita Gurusurthy, WSIS-GC and IT for Change, India
- Muthoni Wanyeki, FEMNET, Kenya

Chair: Farida Shaheed, Shirkat Gah, Pakistan

3:45 pm – 4:15 pm - TEA

4:15 pm – 5:00 pm

Open discussion on session 4 and reflections about the day

5:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Session 5: Articulating gender concerns in the information society

This session will be a reflection by two commentators of the day's proceedings and what the discussions signal for women's empowerment in the Information Society, flagging key mandates for different actors, with a focus on the shape that the information society is taking in the Asia Pacific region, and the challenges and opportunities it contains for gender equality.

Commentators:

- Shireen Huq, DANIDA, Bangladesh
- Vivienne Wee, City University of Hong Kong