

ITfC's Approach to the Debate

Tunis, we believe is only incidental. We feel that the multiple stakeholders involved in social transformation – be they multilateral agencies or local labour unions, academics or student movements, grassroots organisations or the women's movements– must find points of convergence with the information society debate and that the WSIS agenda itself must be re-contoured in political terms. We are not suggesting the absence of involvement of these actors. But we submit that the direct engagement of feminists who have stayed away from the WSIS agenda thus far, and the rethinking or elaboration of some fundamentals, which have been accepted by the global community as home truths for an equitable information society, along feminist lines is an important political project.

Nowhere do the trajectories of the new economy intersect with potent ramifications than in South Asia. Be it the devastating impact of the Multifibre Agreement on the garment industry in Bangladesh or the mushrooming call centres in India, the domain of women's work and life is rapidly undergoing changes. Along with the economic opportunism that the new economy brings in, traditional forms of subjugation are reinventing in new forms like fundamentalism. This emergent interplay between economic opportunities and socio cultural hierarchies need to be interrogated through a feminist lens to provide meaningful and empowering insights to help women in South Asia define the parameters of the development and rights debates.