

Inputs by IT for Change to:

Draft - Ministerial Declaration of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the ECOSOC High Level Segment

"Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world"

“Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges”

Addition to para 10

[SDG1] Acknowledge that while extreme poverty has fallen globally, progress has been uneven, and 1.6 billion people still live in multidimensional poverty. We are still far from implementing social protection measures for all – only one in five receive any kind of benefit in low income countries and two in three in upper-middle-income countries. There are poor people in every part of the world, but disproportionately concentrated in rural areas; and in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, in both LDCs and MICs. With many overlapping deprivations, children and young persons are especially at risk of being trapped in intergenerational cycles of poverty. We urge that countries, in the context of their own national plans and programmes, include measures that will amplify the poverty eradicating impact of actions taken to achieve other Sustainable Development Goals, identify populations most at risk of remaining in or falling back into poverty and place special focus on reaching them; and develop appropriate mechanisms to strengthen institutions serving those affected by conflict, fragility and forced displacement. We stress the importance of taking targeted measures to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, and of implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including social protection floors, based on national priorities, **and appropriate ICT infrastructure and universal access to ICTs for reaching social protection**, paying particular attention to women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

Rationale for suggested addition

The UN e-government Survey of 2016 (through the Online Service Index) confirms that digital technologies - the Internet, mobile phones, etc. that can collect and analyse data digitally - are increasingly being used in the public sector and for public service delivery. Countries across the income spectrum are looking to digitisation to provide innovative solutions to ease administrative

burden. The report also notes that while these advances are indeed positive, it can only be maximized if the disparity in access to Internet (specifically) and ICT technology is closed.¹

Addition to para 13

“...Recognize and are concerned that gender inequality persists worldwide, depriving women and girls of their basic rights and opportunities. Violence against women and girls in private and public spaces, is a persistent challenge that no country has managed to eliminate. **The increasing incidence the world over of gender-based violence online is a matter of serious concern for all.** Stepped up efforts are required to ensure women’s full, equal and effective participation and leadership at all levels, in all areas, and in all efforts aimed at the eradication of poverty and promoting prosperity. We reiterate the urgency of addressing structural barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, such as discriminatory laws and policies, gender stereotypes, harmful practices and negative social norms and attitudes. In this regard, we also recognize the special challenges of women and girls with disabilities who often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Action is needed to address gender pay gaps, which remain pervasive across regions and sectors. We also underscore that all other Sustainable Development Goals need to be implemented in a manner that delivers results for women and girls. We urge that countries fully integrate gender equality strategies into national sustainable development frameworks so as to promote greater policy coherence;”

Rationale for suggested addition

Technology-mediated VAW may be defined as “acts of gender-based violence that are committed, abetted or aggravated, in part or fully, by the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as phones, the Internet, social media platforms, and email”. Technology mediated violence can have multifarious impacts a women’s rights. Firstly, just as in offline cases, online violence can make women feel unwelcome to these spaces, silence her voice and therefore stop her from participating; secondly, surveillance enabled through technology can limit women’s mobility especially in cases of women wanting to escape from abusive relationships; and thirdly, acts like cyber-stalking, harassment and bullying online, non consensual distribution of intimate pictures can be traumatizing for women, and can result in psychological and emotional harm.² Narrowing the gender digital divide and developing meaningful use of technology among women and girls

¹United Nations E-Government Survey, 2016,

<https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2016-Survey/Executive%20Summary.pdf>

²Association of Progressive Communication’s statement to the 57th Session of the CSW Violence against women and information and communications technology

http://www.genderit.org/sites/default/upload/csw_apc_statement_final_version_0.pdf

requires a complementary process that removes impediments to such use.³ **The General Assembly (resolution 68/181) has noted with concern the pervasiveness of “information-technology-related violations, abuses, discrimination and violence against women”⁴, States must thus actively engage in combating such violence.⁵**

Addition to para 14:

[SDG9] Emphasize that infrastructure, industry, and innovation are strongly connected and share the common goal of achieving socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development and contribute to poverty eradication. We underline that poor access to and use of infrastructure, notably for transportation, electricity and energy more generally, ICTs, and marketing, remains a major impediment to development, diversification, and value addition in many parts of the world. Effective solutions to achieve resilient and accessible infrastructure development include stronger coordinated partnerships at all levels, as well as development of risk mitigation measures and expertise. We recognize that inclusive and sustainable industrialization is integral for the structural transformation of economies in order to create decent jobs, promote productivity growth, enhance incomes and achieve sustainable development. We highlight the importance of innovation-driven development, **creation of digital public goods and standards** and the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises so as to increase employment in all sectors;

Rationale for suggested addition

Markets have far from made access to these public utilities universal. Consider the case of access to Internet infrastructure. Vulnerable populations such as persons situated in remote and rural locations, and those who cannot afford access, still rely on the state to facilitate access. In areas that the market does not stand to make a profit, the access divide will continue to exist. For instance, in 48 of the world’s poorest countries, Internet growth rates are slowing down despite 90% of the population still being offline. Disappointingly though, the 2013 Broadband Commission Working Group on Gender Report observed that only a handful of countries – 10 out of 109 studied had a gender-focused approach to their policy development.⁶

3IT for Changes’s input to the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/GenderDigital/IT_for_Change.pdf

4Promotion of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: protecting women human rights defenders e,<http://www.gender.cawater-info.net/publications/pdf/n1345031.pdf>

5Promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet: ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective, [https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/111/81/PDF/G1711181.pdf?](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/111/81/PDF/G1711181.pdf?OpenElement)

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6Alliance for Affordable Internet, The 2015-16 Affordability Report,<http://a4ai.org/affordability-report/report/2015/>

*Under the European Union Universal Service Directive of 2002, the criteria for a service to be considered a universal service is that it must become critical for social inclusion. As indicated by the rationale for Para 10 states are looking at digitally enabled innovative solutions for service delivery; because ICTs have become enabler of social inclusion, it must be considered a public good, that should be delivered by states.*⁷

Addition to para 19

Emphasize that harnessing the potential of science, technology and innovation, closing technology gaps and scaling up capacity-building at all levels is essential to achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. We also emphasize that the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies, as does scientific and technological innovation across areas as diverse as medicine and energy. In this regard, we welcome the progress made in operationalizing the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and also welcome the progress made in operationalizing the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries and encourage continued support. We urge strengthened dialogue between stakeholders and Governments and the promotion of an environment conducive to sharing and exchanging ideas and success stories and catalysing new initiatives and partnerships. We recognize that the creation, development and diffusion of innovations and new technologies and associated know-how are powerful drivers of economic growth and sustainable development. **We understand that the digital divide between people, is not only about access, but also the ability to use, contribute and benefit from the use of the Internet and Information and Communication Technologies.** We acknowledge both the transformative and disruptive potential of new technologies, particularly advances in **digital intelligence and** automation, on our labour markets and on the jobs of the future and, in this regard, seek to prepare **to address these impacts in the best interests of sustainable future societies and economies;**

Rationale for suggested addition and change

*The digital divide is multifaceted, separating both countries and people within them, of the latter gender is an important axis of the divide. To fully harness the potential of ICTs, as with the other public utilities mentioned, mere access is insufficient. Transformative effect of technology requires meaningful use cultures- that is the ability use, contribute and benefit from their use of technology.*⁸

This can only be generated by specifically targeting marginalised communities such as women and

⁷Is the Internet a Public Good? <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/d4ofqmmepC6ziOKjsY8xrN/Is-the-Internet-a-public-good.html>

⁸ Promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet: ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/111/81/PDF/G1711181.pdf?OpenElement>

girls –by introducing affordable data regimes, setting up public access points; initiating digital skills and literacy programmes, generating content that is relevant (for example: for women, the ability to access all government schemes that they can avail at a single window is, in local languages, immensely useful).⁹It is thus imperative for all stakeholders to participate in closing the gender digital divide so as to further full and inclusive participation in the information society.¹⁰

Change to para 26

Stress the need for improved and coordinated collection, analysis, dissemination and use of statistics and high-quality, accessible, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. We acknowledge that the Voluntary National Reviews reflect this as a persistent challenge and we invite countries to further strengthen collaboration at bilateral, regional and global levels for capacity building and sharing of best practices in this regard. Additionally, we note the importance of ~~data-driven~~ **data-supported** decision making, innovation, and the need to build capacity for producing, analysing and using various forms of data, both quantitative and qualitative, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of the Global Indicator Framework that has been agreed by the Statistical Commission and look forward to its implementation and continual improvement in an inclusive manner;

Rationale for change

We need to recognise that while data driven technologies may assist in efficient governance, it is wrought with the risk of increasing disparities for those who do not leave a digital footprint. For example ITU statistics indicate that between 2013 and 2016, the global Internet user gender gap grew from 11% to 12%.¹¹ If women are not online, it means that they are not leaving behind a data trail which means that the digital data collected has major data black holes. The situation is identical for vulnerable populations such as migrants, refugees, older persons etc. Thus, the privileging of superficial correlation over deeper causation that comes with data-driven decision making will reinforce, or even amplifying existing inequalities.¹²

9 IT for Changes's input to the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective,

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/GenderDigital/IT_for_Change.pdf, Women's rights online -Report Cad: http://webfoundation.org/docs/2016/09/WF_GR_India.pdf

10 Outcome Document of the HighLevel Meeting of the General Assembly on the Overall Review of the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes, <http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN95707.pdf>

11ITU (2016), Facts and Figures, <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/facts/default.aspx>

12 Promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet: ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective, [https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/111/81/PDF/G1711181.pdf?](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/111/81/PDF/G1711181.pdf?OpenElement)

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