
Working Group 6

ITU - TASK FORCE ON GENDER ISSUES

Final Report of TFGI On Line Conference

March 22 – August 28 2001

Submitted by Moderator: Susan Bazilli

Membership: as at June 18, 2001 - there are 192 subscribers to the list

Format: initially set up as a web based conference in March 2001, most members preferred the use of the email list serve. Consequently, the list serve was set up and became functional as of May 15, 2001.¹ Working group summaries were posted for each conference so that members would be reminded of the full summary report, and could highlight the issues pertinent to each group.

Objectives of the on-line discussion:

- to increase awareness in the telecommunication sector
- to share experiences from Members
- to identify areas of interest, ideas and suggestions for future TFGI projects and programmes.
- to gather information from TFGI members on their projects and activities in their respective countries

Report on Working Groups 1 - 4:

Introductions: A total of 15 introductions were posted to the conference.

WG1 summary: Reform, Legislation and Regulation of Telecommunications

A total of 5 messages were posted to the web conference. These were all introductions about the areas of work on policy and regulations from Francophone Africa, the SADC region, Turkey and Europe. All were keen to continue the discussions but posted no

¹ It is interesting to note that other than the moderator, no one has posted to the on line web conference subsequent to the beginning of the list serve. All documents are posted there, however, as a form of clearinghouse. Note that 40 messages were posted to the list serve in the first 3 weeks, as compared to the web conference.

questions for the group to answer. But clearly the issues of legislation and regulation are threaded throughout all the topics.

WG2 summary: Technologies and Global Information Infrastructure Development and Applications

A total of 5 messages were posted to this conference. The Curriculum for gender analysis was posted to this conference. The comments mainly referred to the area covered by the previous conference on policy and regulation - but serves as an example of the artificial separation of these topics, as they are so integrally linked. Comments on the various modules were invited re the curriculum.

WG3 summary: Rural Development and Universal Service/ Access

A total of 7 messages were posted to this conference. It is clear that many of the members of the TFGI conference list work on this area. There was discussion about telecentres, and many of the documents posted to the conference refer to women and telecentres. Further discussion on telecentres, sites for them to be located, and sources for capital and financing were also discussed in other groups. This is a good example of how all of the issues intersect.

WG4 summary: Finance and Economics Development Partnership with Private Sector

This working group is the weakest in terms of membership and yet a critically important area. Much effort was made to have participants respond to the many of the points raised in the Working Group Summary. One of the challenges identified is to find and encourage private sector to participate in the work of the TFGI. Questions were raised as to how to characterize gender issues in negotiation with private sector – is it about gender or is it about business? And how do we develop partnerships that will result in capital for women, and a gender perspective on the investments of private sector.

WG5 summary: Capacity Building through Human Resource Development and Management

The key issue here is the resolution I187 passed by the ITU in June 2001, Gender Perspective in ITU Human Resource Management, Policy and Practice, approved at the 17th plenary meeting. The full text of this resolution was posted to the conference, and is on the agenda to discuss at the TFGI meeting.

WG6 summary: Information Dissemination, Content Development and Networking

Anne Walker reported on initiatives using local language training tools in Uganda as a model to be replicated in other African countries, on a project done in partnership between the IDRC and the IWTC. Further discussion was had during this working group report on the need for input into WSIS, and there is much NGO activity being organized to ensure civil society representation at the WSIS. Concern has been expressed on the list that there is a lack of gender perspective, and that there needs to be some high level representation from UNIFEM and women's NGOs in the planning, executive and activities of the WSIS meeting. This too will be on the agenda for the TFGI meeting.

Conclusion:

It has been very difficult to generate discussion on the list. Other than some introductions, and few comments, and many postings of papers and resources, there has been little ongoing discussion. In fact, several members of the Steering Committee never posted nor answered the email requests to do so. The conclusion is that members are too busy with their own work to post to the list – such discussions are more likely to happen at face to face meetings. The major concern of the moderator, however, is the assumption that very few of the TFGI recommendations have been acted on in the intervening months since the October 2000 meeting. This is a critical issue of capacity – as the ITU has not committed a budget to the TFGI in order for it to be able to act on its agenda and recommendations. This fact needs to be raised at the next meeting – and be put square on the agenda for the March 2002 conference.

Recommendations:

All of the above issues will be discussed at the TFGI meeting. The sole recommendation for this list is that it be continued as the TFGI discussion list. The expansion of the membership, the urgent issues under discussion with regard to the WSIS and the ITU gender unit, and the need for an ongoing sense of ownership by the members of TFGI are all reasons why the TFGI should maintain the discussion list. Whether the list needs to be moderated or facilitated in the future could be another agenda item for the TFGI meeting.

Appendix: Documents posted to the TFGI conference:

- Reports of all the working groups.
- Report of Working Group 1 – Gender Perspectives in Telecommunications Policy: A Curriculum Proposal. Sonia Jorge.
- Working Group 6 - The Task Force on Gender Issues - A Catalyst for women's advancement in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)
- Bridging the Digital Divide - ITU Proposed Actions for the Dot Force Report
- Digital Opportunities for All: Meeting the Challenge - Report of the Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force) including a proposal for a Genoa Plan of Action
- ITU Launches a Multi-million Dollar Project to Bridge the Global Digital Divide [Press Release] Morocco in the global information and knowledge society Preparations for the next Meeting of the Task Force on Gender Issues, 27-28 September 2001 and the World Telecommunication Development Conference, 18-27 March 2002 from Natasa Gospic, Chair TFGI
- Women and Telecommunications – Panel discussion sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Telecommunications University of Belgrad Faculty of Electrical Engineering

- Questionnaire on Gender Equality Policies and Practices/ Questionnaire sur les Politiques et les Pratiques de parité Hommes/Femmes
- Gender Perspectives on Telecenters, Sonia N. Jorge
- Securing Rural Access on an Equitable Basis: Elements of an Agenda for Change, Dr. Gillian Marcelle
- Telecommunications making a difference for the next millennium, Dr Sylvia Moore
- Women and Telecenters, Dr. Janice Z. Brodman , with assistance from Ambika Kapur
- Priority List of Study Group Questions for the TFGI
- Gender Perspective in ITU Human Resource Management, Policy and Practice, ITU resolution June 2001 [English, Spanish, French]
- Invitation, Fellowship applications, and Registration forms for the TFGI 4th meeting, September 27/28 2001 [English, Spanish, French]
- Suggestions and recommendations for agenda for September TFGI meeting.

- To do list proposed to list:

1. Writing articles on capacity building initiatives for ITU's *Human Resources Development (HRD) Quarterly*
2. Writing articles, reports and case studies on successful projects involving women and ICTs to be used as TFGI Case Studies for the Annual Meeting and WTDC
3. Writing articles, reports and case studies on the impact of TFGI at the regional, sub-regional and national level to highlight successes for TFGI Case Studies for the Annual Meeting and WTDC, and to identify obstacles/limitations for future TFGI projects
4. Encouraging their contacts to join TFGI with a special emphasis on attracting members from Asia, South America, Eastern Europe, the private sector and telecommunication administrations
5. Brainstorming and proposing ways that gender issues, NGO's and civil society can be incorporated into all themes of the World Information Society Summit.