



Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

**Third Meeting of the Telecommunication
Development Advisory Group (TDAG)
Geneva, 2-3 March 2000**

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Note by the Director
Task Force on Gender Issues

Introduction

The recommendations of the 2nd Meeting of the Task Force on Gender Issues (TFGI) were endorsed by the TDAG meeting in September 1999 and submitted to the Director of the BDT for inclusion to the extent feasible in the Operational Plan 2000. The purpose of this document is to report on the activities and progress of the TFGI since the September 1999 meeting.

Main recommendations of the TFGI Working Groups presently under implementation

I. Working Group 1: Reform, legislation and regulation of telecommunications

- Develop, test, and evaluate a curriculum for a series of modules on gender perspectives in telecommunications policy which could be offered collectively or separately, as stand-alone sessions, as pre-sessions to other BDT activities, or as integrated additions to seminar and/or workshop curricula
- Develop gender awareness guidelines for use by licensing and regulatory bodies to mainstream gender awareness into licensing & regulatory functions of national agencies
- Status: An international expert has been recruited to carry out these recommendations.

II. Working Group 2. Technologies and global information infrastructure development and applications

- Prepare, disseminate and process questionnaire to telecommunication and sector members to identify barriers to women's involvement in rapid development of technologies, infrastructure and applications
- Liaise with BDT Study Groups I and 2 to ensure that a gender perspective is included in study questions
- Status: Questionnaire under preparation

III. Working Group 3: Rural development and universal service/access

- Undertake a feasibility study to create a pilot telecentre in a rural community, owned and operated by women.

Status: First phase of project to determine selected countries for pilot project is completed. The recruitment of an expert to undertake phase 2 and phase 3 of the feasibility study is in process.

IV Working Group 4: Finance and economics, and development of partnership with private sector and NGOs

- Devise specific activities to encourage private and public sectors to participate in Task Force on Gender Issues
- Status: Proposals under discussion.

V. Working Group 5: *Capacity building through human resources development and management*

- Integrate a gender perspective into activities and programmes of the Centres of Excellence and carry out training for trainers.
- Status: An international expert has been recruited to undertake this project.

Inclusion of a gender perspective in BDT/ITU activities

Contributions since the last TDAG report:

- Ms. Sylvia Moore, "Telecommunications making a difference for the next millennium" at the Eighth Interregional Human Resources and Training Meeting, Coventry 18-24 August 1999
- Telecom-99: Members of the Task Force participated in the Human Resources sessions
Ms. Walda Roseman moderated the session on "The corporate priority - building expertise for the next millennium"
Ms. Gillian Marcelle moderated and Ms. Alison Gillwald spoke at the session on "Empowering Women in the Developing World"
- Ms. Gillian Marcelle, "Securing Rural Access on an Equitable Basis" at the ITU/BDT Seminar on Partnerships and Rural Telecommunications Development, Kampala 3-5 November 1999
- Ms. Lynne Gallagher, "Increasing the participation of women as users, as providers, as intermediaries" at the Teletraffic Engineering ITU/ITC Regional Seminar, Damascus, 7-12 November 1999

Representation of the Task Force on Gender Issues in outside meetings during the 4th quarter of 1999.

- Capacity Building Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming, New York, 17 - 19 November 1999
A capacity building workshop on the Gender Dimensions of Telecommunications and Information Technology and Policy was organised in partnership with the Gender in Development Programme (GIDP) of UNDP. The workshop aimed to build knowledge and skills necessary in mainstreaming gender into multiple levels of policy and programmes of BDT and to develop strategies to achieve the main goals of the Task Force on Gender Issues. It also served as a forum for building collaboration and partnerships among TFGI Steering Committee members and gender focal points of other UN organisations.
- 6th African Regional Conference on Women, Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, Addis Ababa, 22-26 November 1999. The objective of the conference was to assess the progress made since the 1994 Dakar and 1995 Beijing conferences in terms of improving the situation of women in Africa.
- Ms. Patricia Faccin, BDT Focal Point on Gender Issues attended the Conference.

Recent developments:

Linkages with UN agencies, women associations and gender equality meetings are considered vital to the implementation of the mandate of the TFGI. Through partnerships, the Task Force will enhance the concrete deliverables as products of the TFGI, build capacity and competence and raise awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming in the context of ICTs.

To this end, contact has recently been made with UNIFEM with a view to establishing a partnership for collaboration on gender mainstreaming, with particular emphasis on linkages and coordination at the regional level. Also, in collaboration with UNIFEM, the TFGI will be represented as part of the Women's Forum at the upcoming Global Knowledge Conference II in Malaysia in March 2000.