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RESOLUTION 55 (Rev. Kigali, 2022)

Mainstreaming a gender perspective in ITU to enhance women's empowerment through telecommunications/ICTs

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The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Kigali, 2022),

recalling

a) that Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) identifies the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a crucial contribution to progress across all the goals and targets and contains Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), which recognizes that gender equality is necessary to contribute to achieving a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world, and specifically SDG 5 target 5.b (Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communication technology (ICT), to promote the empowerment of women), as well as SDG 9 (Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation), which promotes subject areas that cut across other goals;

b) Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on mainstreaming a gender perspective[1] in ITU and promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women through telecommunications/ICTs, which resolves to continue the work being done at ITU, and particularly in the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), to promote gender equality in telecommunications/ICTs by recommending measures at the international, regional and national levels on policies and programmes for the economic and social empowerment of women and girls, helping to tackle disparities and facilitate the acquisition of life skills;

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[1] "Gender perspective": Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. (Source: Report of the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, third session, New York, 25-27 February 1998).

c)   Resolution 55 (Rev. Geneva, 2022) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, on promoting gender equality in ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) activities, which ensures gender mainstreaming in ITU-T activities,

noting

a)   UNGA Resolution 64/289, on system-wide coherence, adopted on 2 July 2010, establishing the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as "UN Women", with the mandate to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

b)   the United Nations Secretary-General's commitment to achieve full gender parity across the United Nations system through the launch of a strategy in 2017 as the start of a system-wide campaign to advance this priority, referenced in UNGA Resolution 72/234;

c)   Resolution 2012/24 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, which welcomed the development of the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNSWAP);

d)   that the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB), in April 2013, advocated the "Action Plan to measure gender equality and the empowerment of women across the United Nations system", under which ITU will participate in the dissemination, coordination, communication and networking activities forming part of the strategy, as well as the United Nations Secretary-General's launch of the System Wide Strategy on Gender Parity in September 2017;

e)   the United Nations HeForShe initiative (2014) to involve men and boys in the promotion of gender equality;

f)   the EQUALS Global Partnership, of which ITU is a founding member, which is made up of other United Nations agencies, governments, the private sector, academia and civil-society organizations, and which aims to reduce the gender digital divide in the world;

g)   the United Nations International Gender Champion initiative and the ITU Secretary-General's commitment to promote the Panel Parity Pledge;

h)   ITU's role as co-leader of the Technology and Innovation Action Coalition part of the Generation Equality Forum, a global five-year action journey and roadmap for gender equality to achieve the SDGs;

i)   the Network of Women (NoW) in the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), launched as a way to improve the number of women taking up leadership roles in the structures that make up ITU-D, such as chairing committees and working groups, and other key management roles related to the preparation of the next world telecommunication development conference (WTDC), and beyond,

noting further

a)   the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), namely the Geneva Declaration of Principles, the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, as well as the WSIS+10 review;

b)   the four-year rolling operational plans for the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R), ITU-T, ITU-D and the General Secretariat adopted by the ITU Council;

c)   the decision of the Council at its 2013 session to endorse the ITU Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy (GEM), with the aim of integrating a gender perspective throughout the Union and leveraging the power of telecommunications/ICTs to empower both women and men;

d)   the establishment (endorsed at Council 2013) of an internal Gender Task Force by the Secretary-General, with the aim of fulfilling the main objectives of ensuring coordinated implementation of Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), reporting progress to the governing bodies of ITU, preparing a Union-wide action plan to implement the ITU GEM Policy (Council 2013) and overseeing its implementation,

recognizing

that telecommunications/ICTs can help to create a world in which societies are free of discrimination, women and men enjoy the same opportunities, and the economic and social potential of women and girls is guaranteed in order to improve their conditions as individuals, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

considering

a)   the progress made by BDT in promoting the use of telecommunications/ICTs for the purpose of economic and social empowerment of women and girls, in particular the results of International Girls in ICT Day, within the framework of Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018);

b)   the contributions made by ITU's Gender Task Force, proposing ways of ensuring that gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women is underscored in policies and programmes and fully integrated in ITU's work and strategic plan,

resolves

1   that ITU-D, taking into account the above considerations, shall continue to support the development of activities, projects and events aimed at closing the gender digital divide;

2   that BDT should maintain close links and collaborate, as appropriate, with the Gender Task Force set up by the Secretary-General, to support gender mainstreaming in the Union's activities, with the aim of eliminating inequalities in access to and use of telecommunications/ICTs;

3   that BDT should continue to work to promote gender equality in the field of telecommunications/ICTs, recommending and supporting the implementation of actions on policies and programmes at the international, regional and national level in order to improve the socio-economic condition of women, with greater emphasis on developing countries[2], taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

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[2] These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

4   that inclusion of the gender perspective should be ensured in the implementation of all relevant BDT initiatives and projects and of the outcomes of this conference;

5   that high priority be accorded to the incorporation of gender equality-related goals, policies, and relevant guidelines in the management, staffing and operation of ITU-D, while taking into account geographical representation;

6   that BDT should contribute to the economic empowerment and high-level professional employment of women in decision-making posts, encouraging women's leadership in the sphere of telecommunications/ICTs, collaborating to promote a plural, inclusive and integrating information society;

7   that telecommunications/ICTs may contribute to preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in both public and private spaces, while also exposing women and girls to new risks that should be taken into account in initiatives dedicated to addressing the gender digital divide, including in enhancing digital literacy and skills;

8   to invite the Telecommunication Development (TDAG), Radiocommunication (RAG) and Telecommunication Standardization (TSAG) advisory groups to assist in the identification of subjects and mechanisms to foster the mainstreaming of a gender perspective, as well as matters of mutual interest in that regard;

9   that BDT should inform the ITU regional offices on, and ensure their participation in, progress and results achieved in implementing this resolution;

10   to encourage Member States to have gender parity in their delegations to ITU-D activities to solve the issue of underrepresentation of women,

further resolves

to endorse the following measures:

1   design, implement and support projects and programmes in developing countries, including countries with economies in transition, that are either specifically targeted to women and girls or are gender sensitive, for the purpose of tackling the barriers that women and girls encounter in access to and use of ICTs in terms of digital literacy and skills, training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, affordability, trust and confidence, at the international, regional and national levels, taking into account SDG 5 target 5.b;

2   support the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and the development of gender-sensitive indicators that will enable cross-country comparisons and highlight trends in the digital gender divide in the sector;

3   evaluate relevant projects and programmes to assess gender implications, in connection with Resolution 17 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of this conference;

4   provide gender mainstreaming training and/or capacity building to BDT staff responsible for the design and implementation of development projects and programmes and work with them to develop gender-sensitive projects as appropriate;

5   incorporate a gender perspective into study group Questions, as appropriate;

6   mobilize resources for gender-sensitive projects, including projects to ensure that women and girls can use ICTs for their own empowerment and in daily personal and professional activities, and create services and develop applications that contribute to the equality and empowerment of all women and girls;

7   develop partnerships with other United Nations agencies to promote the use of telecommunications/ICTs in projects aimed at women and girls in line with ITU's mandate, with the aim of encouraging women and girls to connect to the Internet, increasing training for women and girls, and monitoring the telecommunication/ICT gender divide, including actively participating in and promoting EQUALS – The Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age;

8   promote educational programmes to protect women and girls from online forms of abuse and harassment and to address their safety needs;

9   support International Girls in ICT Day and efforts of the ITU membership to undertake all-year-round activities to make girls aware of STEM studies and careers and job opportunities in the ICT sector and develop their ICT skills;

10   promote efforts to enhance educational opportunities for women and girls in STEM and telecommunication/ICT skills and careers across their lifespan, with particular attention to women and girls in rural and underserved areas;

11   continue to assist developing countries to close the gender digital divide, including enhancing women's and girls' access to reliable connectivity, digital literacy and digital skills;

12   support the continuation of the NoW advisory group, working on a voluntary basis, composed of two women representative coordinators per region designated in collaboration with the regional groups,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1   to report to TDAG and the Council annually on the results and the progress made on the inclusion of a gender perspective in the work of ITU-D, and on the implementation of this resolution;

2   to give high priority to gender mainstreaming in the management, financial assistance, staffing and operation of ITU-D;

3   to conduct an annual review on progress made in the Sector in advancing gender mainstreaming, including by circulating questionnaires and collecting and reviewing statistics on ITU-D development activities by gender and region, in order to identify challenges to women's participation, and subsequent solutions; and to share findings with TDAG and the next WTDC;

4   to continue the work of BDT in promoting the use of telecommunications/ICTs for the economic and social empowerment of women and girls, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Secretary-General's strategy on gender parity,

invites the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

to assist members:

1   to encourage the mainstreaming of a gender perspective through appropriate administrative and policy mechanisms and processes within regulatory agencies and ministries and to promote inter-organizational cooperation on this issue within the telecommunication sector, including with non-governmental stakeholders, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

2   to provide concrete advice, in the form of guidelines for gender-sensitive project development and evaluation in the telecommunication sector as well as guidelines for projects aimed at bridging the gender digital divide;

3   to increase awareness of gender issues among members through the collection and dissemination of information related to gender issues and telecommunications/ICTs and through best practices on gender-sensitive programming;

4   to assist Member States to review existing national ICT policies and regulations, assess their gender responsiveness and share best practices on how to fully integrate women's participation in the development of relevant policies, strategies, regulations and other plans related to the development of telecommunications/ICTs to support the digital economy;

5   to establish partnerships with Sector Members in order to develop and/or support specific telecommunication/ICT projects that target women and girls in developing countries, including countries with economies in transition;

6   to encourage Sector Members to promote gender equality in the telecommunication/ICT sector through financial commitments to specific projects involving women and girls, taking into account SDG 5 target 5.b;

7   to support active involvement of women delegates in ITU-D study groups and other ITU-D activities, including project implementation,

invites the Plenipotentiary Conference

1   to build on and consolidate past accomplishments, by providing the necessary financial and human resources for the effective and sustained integration of a gender perspective in the development activities of ITU-D;

2   to instruct the Secretary-General to bring this resolution to the attention of the United Nations Secretary-General in an effort to promote increased coordination and cooperation for development policies, programmes and projects that link access to and use and appropriation of telecommunications/ICTs and broadband for women and girls, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

3   to support the promotion of gender equality, empowerment and the social and economic development of women and girls, taking into account SDG 5 target 5.b,

invites Member States and Sector Members

1   to submit candidatures for chairman/vice-chairman posts in order to support the active involvement of women as well as men in development groups and activities and in their own administrations and delegations;

2   to actively support and participate in the work of BDT, and to nominate experts for the ITU-D NoW group;

3   to designate, in liaison with the regional coordinators of NoW, national representatives in order to encourage in each part of the world the participation of women and girls in ITU-D activities;

4   to encourage and actively support ICT education that promotes girls' and women's participation, and to support all measures that will help prepare them for a professional career in ICT;

5   to encourage greater participation of women in ICT development as delegates and foster their expertise;

6   to encourage the adoption of proven measures to increase globally the number of women pursuing academic degrees at all levels in STEM fields.