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| **Agenda item: PL2** | **Document C23/76-E** |
| **27 June 2023** |
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| Contribution from Algeria (People's Democratic Republic of), Saudi Arabia (Kingdom of), Bahrain (Kingdom of), Egypt (Arab Republic of), United Arab Emirates, Kuwait (State of), Morocco (Kingdom of), and Tunisia |
| Proposal for the empowerment and inclusion of women in the activities of the International Telecommunication Union |
| **Purpose**This contribution is to enhance and unify ITU efforts to empower women and ensure their inclusion and active engagement in all ITU sectors activities.**Action required by the Council**Consider the proposal for approval and take the appropriate action.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References**ITU-R Declaration on “Promoting Gender Equality, Equity, and Parity in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector”[ITU-T Resolution 55](https://www.itu.int/pub/T-RES-T.55-2022) on “Promoting gender equality in ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector activities”[ITU-D Resolution 55](https://www.itu.int/en/publications/ITU-D/pages/publications.aspx?parent=D-TDC-WTDC-2022&media=electronic) (Rev. Kigali, 2022) on “Mainstreaming a gender perspective in ITU to enhance women’s empowerment through telecommunications/ICTs”[PP-22 Resolution 70](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-070-E.pdf) (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) on “Mainstreaming a gender perspective in ITU and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through telecommunications/information and communication technologies”[PP-22 Resolution 191](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-191-E.pdf) (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) on “Strategy for the coordination of efforts among the three Sectors of the Union” |

**Introduction**

The ITU pays a lot of attention to empowering women and girls in ICTs field, that it has launched several initiatives to serve this purpose, in support of which, a number of resolutions were adopted, as well.

In 2016, during the World Radiocommunication Seminar (WRS-16), the Radiocommunication Sector launched the Network of Women (NoW) initiative, to encourage gender balance in decision-making bodies, panels, statutory committees and radiocommunication study groups at ITU Radiocommunication Sector events. The aim of this Network, now known as the Network of Women for WRC (NoW4WRC) is building capacity in the WRC process to encourage a larger participation of women in key roles for radiocommunications conferences and events, and to grow the ITU women's community capacity and contribution. Additionally, it aims to providing a forum for sharing knowledge, networking and mentoring.

In the same year, the ITU Women in Standardization Expert Group (WISE) was created at the TSAG session, with the aim to encourage active participation of women in ITU-T activities and ITU-T leadership roles, in alignment with [ITU-T Resolution 55](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Documents/Resolutions/Resolution55_Hammamet_16.pdf) (Rev. Dubai, 2012).

In 2021, a Network of Women for WTDC (NoW4WTDC, now known as NoW in ITU-D) has been established in each of the ITU six regions to encourage gender balance in the activities leading up to the World Telecommunication Development Conference, WTDC. The objectives of these chapters are to: *a) build a community where female delegates support each other, expand their network, advocate and share experience and knowledge; b) promote the active participation of women in the activities of ITU and the sector in general;* *c) give visibility to women and empower them for larger responsibilities in their respective delegations, at WTDC and in future similar platforms; d) encourage experienced female delegates to mentor ICT professionals in order to create a stronger base for women in the digital space.* Then, an Advisory Board for the Network was established, comprising members from all the six ITU regions, to provide strategic guidance to the BDT Director, facilitate close collaboration of the regional chapters of the network and promote synergies among the respective activities.

Also, it’s worth noting that an ITU-D Women in Cyber Programme was first launched in 2021, with the aim to tackle the cultural and systemic barriers that prevent broader inclusion of women in cybersecurity, while working to equip them with the necessary skill-set to enter and thrive in the field. The goal of the programme is to foster community building, guidance, and senior-junior solidarity among women in the sector.

Four initiatives established in the three ITU sectors, with the same objectives. However, to achieve the One ITU concept, and to save effort and leverage resources, there should be close coordination between all initiatives under one ITU overarching body that organizes and manages their relevant activities. In fact, the majority of these initiatives’ activities are unspecialized activities common between the four of them, besides training on soft skills. It’s strongly believed that unifying efforts and close collaboration would better achieve the objective of ITU to empower women and girls and encourage their active participation in its activities, and promoting their engagement in leadership roles.

**Proposal**

Considering the above referred to resolutions and ITU-R declaration, and being aware of the importance of women and girls’ empowerment in ICT field, besides willing to maintain and enhance all ITU initiatives and activities that targets the encouragement of active participation of women and girls in ITU activities and events, the Council is invited to:

* request the Secretary-General to take necessary steps to establish one unified overarching body that encompasses all ITU initiatives for Women in the three sectors to ensure their collaboration and coordination of their activities and operation, while saving and leveraging resources, and to provide feedback about this matter in the upcoming Council session.

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