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Decision 631

(adopted at the fourth Plenary meeting)

Decision on the implementation of Resolution 70 on “Mainstreaming a gender perspective in ITU and promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls through telecommunications/information and communication technologies”

The ITU Council,

Considering

*a)* Resolution 70 on “Mainstreaming a gender perspective in ITU and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through telecommunications/information and communication technologies”;

*b)* Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”;

*c)* Resolution 7 (Valletta, 1998) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) by the Plenipotentiary Conference in its Resolution 70 (Minneapolis, 1998), in which the conference resolved, inter alia, to incorporate a gender perspective in the implementation of all programmes and plans of ITU;

*d)* Resolution 55 (Rev, Geneva, 2022) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, which encourages mainstreaming a gender perspective in the activities of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T);

*e)* Resolution 55 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of WTDC, resolving that the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) should maintain close links and collaborate, as appropriate, with the ITU 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/information and communication technologies (ICTs);

*f)* Resolution 1327 adopted by the ITU Council at its 2011 session, on ITU's role in ICTs and the empowerment of women and girls;

*g)* Resolution 1187 adopted by the ITU Council at its 2001 session on Gender Perspective in ITU Human Resource Management, Policy and Practice;

*h)* the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Agreed Conclusions 1997-2, and ECOSOC Resolution 2012/24, on incorporating and mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, which welcomed the development of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP);

*i)* UNGA Resolution 70/125, on the outcome document of the UNGA high level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), as well as the preamble to the WSIS+10 Statement on the implementation of WSIS outcomes, which reaffirmed the importance of promoting and maintaining gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and guaranteeing the inclusion of women in the emerging global ICT society, taking into account the mandate of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women);

*j)* the Declaration on Promoting Gender Equality, Equity and Parity in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector, approved at the World Radiocommunication Conference (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2019);

*k)* the Report of the Secretary-General “Our Common Agenda”, on taking measures of serious and urgent social and regulatory questions with respect to the “exacerbation of gender bias and male default thinking when women do not have an equal role in designing digital technologies, as well as digital harassment that has particularly targeted women and girls and pushed many women out of the public conversation”;

*l)* the Road map for Digital Cooperation: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation (A/74/821), on the call upon the private sector, civil society, national Governments, multilateral banks and the United Nations to adopt specific policies to support full digital inclusion and digital equality;

*m)* the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-seventh session, on innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,

Taking into account

that the Plenipotentiary Conference (Bucharest, 2022) adopted Resolution 70 (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”, which instructs the Council:

1. “to accord high priority to monitoring the implementation of Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy (GEM), so that ITU can integrate a gender perspective throughout the organization and leverage the power of telecommunications/ICTs to empower women, girls, men and boys”;

2. “to continue and expand existing initiatives, and to accelerate the gender mainstreaming process, including through affirmative measures when necessary, in ITU as a whole, within existing budgetary resources, so as to ensure capacity building, skills development and the appointment of women to senior-level positions, including ITU elected positions, and also in recruitment for internships”;

3. “to allocate resources within ITU's budget to facilitate the implementation of this resolution to the fullest extent possible”;

4. “to examine the possibility for ITU, in close collaboration with relevant regional organizations, to take appropriate measures to establish a regional platform for women, devoted to using ICTs in order to promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls”,

recalling

*a)* that ITU has already set up an internal task force on gender issues in 1998 (Resolution 7 adopted in the WTDC in La Valetta) that was tasked, amongst other things, with “ensuring that the benefits of telecommunications and the emerging information society are made available to all women, girls, men and boys in developing countries on a fair and equitable basis”, “encouraging the recruitment, employment, training and advancement of women and girls;”

*b)* that ITU also created the position of Senior Gender Affairs Officer (SGAO) and adopted in 2013 a Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy (GEM) that provides for a framework architecture in the organization,

acknowledging the need

*a)* for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women’s full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and decision-making in the context of innovation and technological change in the digital age and freedom from violence against women and girls in the digital contexts as essential to achieve sustainable development;

*b)* for strengthening the gender architecture (Under Resolution 70 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) the Council is tasked with “monitoring the implementation of GEM, so that ITU can integrate a gender perspective throughout the organization and leverage the power of telecommunications / ICTs to empower women, girls, men and boys”. It also requests the ITU Council to “continue and expand existing initiatives, and to accelerate the gender mainstreaming process, including through affirmative measures when necessary”;

*c)* for a leadership that promotes gender equality and women and girl’s empowerment as an integral part of their appointment and performance assessment, and reinforcement of an institutional ‘gender equality culture’ that fosters a safe and welcoming environment for all employees and partners;

*d)* for increasing senior management accountability to the Council and demonstrate a One-ITU approach to both external and internal gender related activities;

*e)* for improving the accessibility of data and statistics disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status disability geographic location and other characteristics as described in SDG 17.18 through a new data policy guideline that will allow for a better monitoring and evaluation of the situation of all women across their lifecycles and on the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination as obstacles to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age;

*f)* to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women in the digital and technology sectors and the development and implementation of policies to support of women led enterprises to reduce the gender digital divide;

*g)* for adopting gender-responsive age- and disability-inclusive approaches for technology design, development of infrastructure, products and services based on accessibility, safety, sustainability, inclusivity, affordability and availability and catering to the needs of all women and girls throughout course of their lives,

recalling

*a)* the importance of ensuring the mainstreaming a gender perspective within the budgetary matters, in particular of increasing the budget for the support of GEM and the SGAO;

*b)* that in the process of gender mainstreaming, it is important to address the issue of harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment, bearing in mind that it impedes the achievement of gender parity in the United Nations system and in the ITU and can have a negative impact on the achievement of gender equality;

*c)* that disaggregation of data by social and economic factors including but not limited to income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographical location and other relevant characteristics in order to facilitate better understanding of the impact of telecommunications/ICTs on the achievement of gender equality and be able to identify the root causes of gender disparities in ICT access and digital participation;

*d)* that gender-inclusive language was encouraged by the PP-22 in the work of the Union, to the extent practicable,

decides

1 to request ITU to elaborate a Gender Action Plan to be presented to the Member States taking into account best practices in the United Nations system, that will include a reporting and coordination mechanism on all three sectors within ITU on gender related activities to the Member States;

2 to create a functional unit on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General using existing resources, working in collaboration with the other Bureaux staff and competencies, and by inviting Member States to make voluntary contributions through existing programs, with the goal of supporting the Secretary-General on gender equality and social inclusion in the institution, institutional capacity for gender based analysis, analysis of key emerging ICT related gender issues, and gender mainstreaming, the implementation of a gender perspective in ITU and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in, within, and through telecommunications / information and communication technologies;

recommends

1 to use gender mainstreaming through the ITU project cycle and that the next WTDC studies this question in more detail including how ITU programming can address the digital gender gaps in, within and through STEAMD (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics and Design) education, careers and entrepreneurship; strengthen women’s leadership development in the governance of international telecommunications, and prevent and address all forms of misuse of digital technologies and the spectrum, whether on land in the air on the sea or in space, in any way that leads to sexual and gender based violence, abuse and harassment, discrimination or violation of the rights of all women and girls, as these act as an impediment to leadership, participation and access for women and girls in ICTs and in all spheres of the digital age; developing targeted capacity-building programs that address the specific knowledge and skills needs and challenges faced by women in the ICT sector, particularly in developing countries;

2 to encourage, to the extent practicable, the adoption of gender-inclusive language in the work of the Union,

invites the Secretary-General

1 to coordinate the development of a new Gender Action Plan for the organization based on prior consultation with Council Member States, and taking into account best practices in the UN system, build on prior strategic documents and focus on key issues, and provide a detailed set of policies within ITU including capacity building, skills development and human resources;

2 to include in the Gender Action Plan procedures to address immediately and urgently the lack of gender-balanced representation in ITU staff, especially in the professional and senior categories, and to submit the said Gender Action Plan and procedures, together with information on their implementation, to Council 2024 to evaluate effectiveness, provide comments and further instructions;

3 to put in place a reporting and coordination mechanism with detailed information and reports to be submitted back to the Council in order for Member States to be able to evaluate performance.

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