Women's Digital Inclusion: Global and Regional Strategic Efforts For Women Empowerment

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الاسكوا

ESCWA

Mirna El-Hajj Barbar, Ph.D

Programme Management Officer

Technology for Development Division

Topics to be covered

- ICT for inclusive development and women empowerment
- Women’s Digital Inclusion: Global Efforts
- Women’s Digital Inclusion: Regional perspectives
- ESCWA - ICT Policies Section Efforts

ICT for inclusive development and women empowerment

ICT for inclusive development and women empowerment

- The ability to access and **use the internet effectively is central to women's digital inclusion**.

- **When women gain meaningful access and participate in evolving knowledge societies, it is not only women that benefit, but the whole economy**.

- **Promoting internet access for women is much more than an issue of gender equality; it is an essential part of the economic, social and political development of the countries**.

ICT for inclusive development and women empowerment

- It is **vital to find ways to empower women** to participate in **designing, building and leading** our shared **digital future**.

- This **will require not only the decision of policy-makers**, but also the **understanding of societies**, and the **commitment of leaders** .

Where do we stand today

- As things stand **today**, many **women** are being still **left behind in digital development**, and the **gap can reach 33%. in LDCs**

- Reasons behind gender digital gap are **varied** and **complex**.
- **Structural inequalities** such as found in **income, education and opportunity**.
- Other inequalities based **on location**, **race, sex, class**.....

- **Policies** to achieve **gender digital inclusion**, **cannot be concerned with digital policies alone**, but **must be integrated across broader initiatives** related to all sectors of economy, society and culture.

Women's Digital Inclusion
Global Efforts

Digital Gender Inclusion at the United Nations

Recognition of the **potential of ICT**s as a tool for promoting:

- **gender equality**
- **women's empowerment**
- **Digital Gender Inclusion**

SDGs and ICTs : ICTs as an Enabler

- **ICT** is identified as critical **enabler** and mean to implement and achieve the **2030 Agenda** and its related SDGs.
- **ICT plays a crucial role** to make development activities more **transparen**t, more **efficient** and more **innovative,** and more **inclusive.**

SDGs and ICTs : Key Focus on ICTs

Goal 4 Quality Education target 4.b By 2030, substantially **increase support** for scholarships available to developing countries, in particular LDCs, SIDS and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and **information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes**, in developed countries and other developing countries.

Goal 5 **Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls** Target 5.b Enhance the **use of enabling technologies, in particular ICT, to promote women's empowerment.**

Goal 9 **Build resilient infrastructure**, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation Target 9.C Significantly **increase access to ICT** and strive to provide universal **and affordable access to the Internet** in least developed countries by 2020

Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable**. ICT is identified as critical for enabling implementation for the Agenda as a whole.**

WSIS SDGs Matrix

- Women's participation in digital society is integral to achieving Agenda 2030
- UN aims to support Women's digital inclusion

Action Plan to Close the Digital Gender Gap

- Launched at the “Women's Empowerment in the Digital Age High-Level Meeting” during the WSIS+10 , New York, 15 December 2015 .

- The Action Plan sets out a **framework** for critical **actions** to foster and accelerate **inclusive** and sustainable **development** by **closing the digital gender gap** and **harness** the transformative **potential of ICTs for women’s empowerment**.

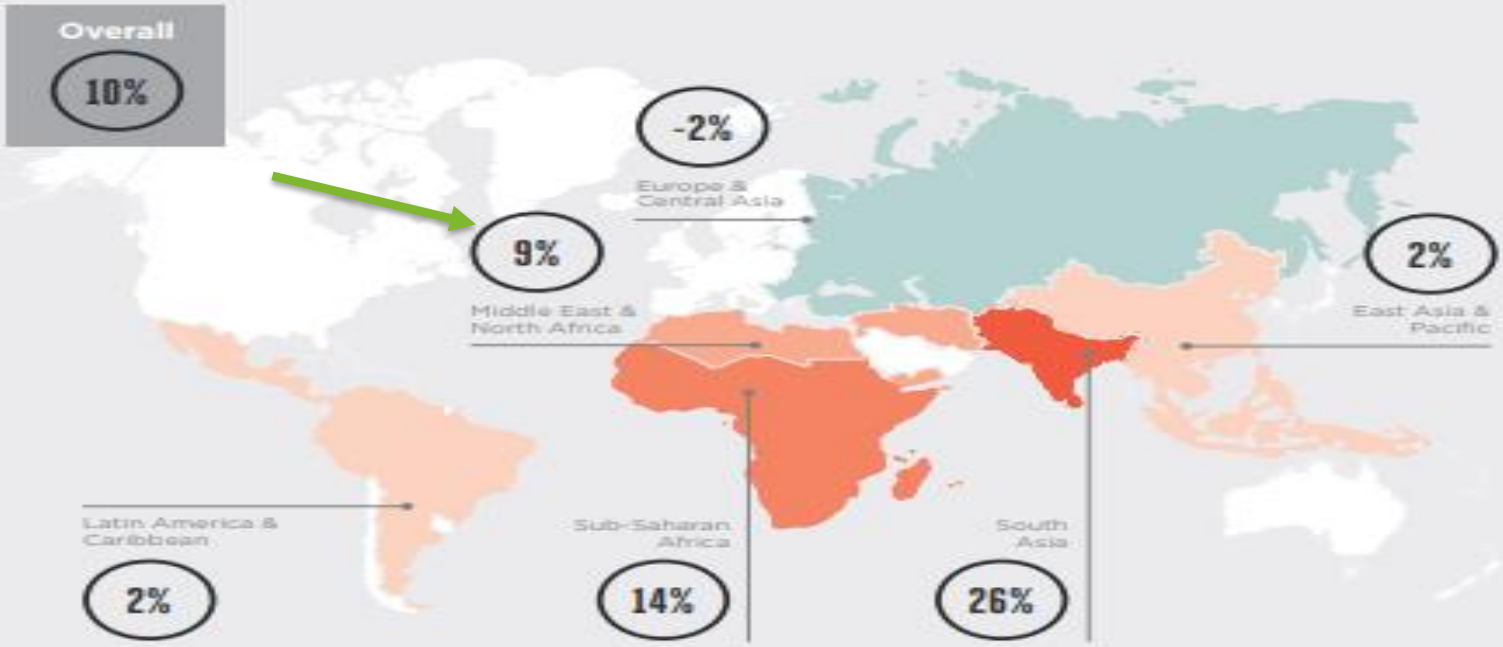
- The involved parties issue this Action Plan to **encourage stakeholders** involved in the post-2015 process, including **governments, the private sector, NGOs, civil society and IGOs**, to **unify efforts and build synergies** across international development processes and efforts **towards closing the digital gender gap** through converting shared commitments into action.

Action Plan to Close the Digital Gender Gap

Action Areas	*Commitments of the International Community*
1. Develop gender responsive strategies and policies	Integrate a gender perspective in ICT strategies, policies, plans, and budgets.at global, regional and national. This includes capacity building in using gender analysis, as well as the active involvement of women throughout the design, implementation and monitoring of strategies and policies. review of existing policies for gender responsiveness. Take holistic and cross-cutting approaches in addressing gender equality and ICT and mainstream gender and ICT linkages within sectoral strategies. Put in place data, monitoring and evaluation tools around gender equality and ICT, including for measurement of access and use, and also invest in research and analysis to assess the impact of ICT for gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. Ensure access to ICTs by women and girls and mitigating or responding the threats online that hinder women's access to and use of technology	Ensure women's and girls' affordable access to ICTs in line with global targets established and paying special attention to women in rural areas. This includes providing gender responsive models of public access and infrastructure, design and development of affordable technologies and services, Prevent, mitigate and respond to threats that arise from ICTs and address inequalities that hinder girls and women from fully participating in and benefiting from the information society. This includes developing comprehensive approaches – including but also going beyond addressing gaps in policy and regulations - around ethics, privacy, security and forms of cyber-related violence that pose significant risks for girls and women.
3. Build digital capacities of girls and women and support development of content, applications and services that meet women's needs	Ensure girls and women have the necessary skills and knowledge to understand, develop content, participate in and benefit fully from ICTs and their applications. This includes investing in targeted digital literacy, confidence, and skill development for women and girls. Support should also be provided to women's organizations so that they too can more effectively utilize ICTs. Support the development of relevant content, applications and services by and for women. This includes through government strategies, through user-driven approaches to technology development, development of e-governance policies that address gender gaps in access to government services, and prioritizing investments in applications – including those developed by women's organizations - such as e-learning and education for girls, women's expanded financial inclusion, employment and entrepreneurship through digital skills and in digital sectors, in preventing and responding to violence against women, for social mobilization and political participation, in women's and girls' health and for sharing knowledge on women's empowerment
4. Promoting women in the technology sector, including into positions of decision- making	Increase private and public investments for, and remove the gender barriers to, ICT education and training for women and girls. This includes supporting early intervention in formal education and informal settings, providing incentives and opportunities for women's higher education, vocational and life long learning in ICTs, developing related curricula that is gender sensitive and programmes that motivate and inspire girls and women, and undertake research and knowledge sharing on gaps and good practices Develop capacity building and other steps for promoting women's recruitment, retention and promotion to decision-making positions in the technology sector, in public and private spheres. This includes through investments in creating positive role models in technology and enlisting existing women in technology leadership, recognition of women's technology and innovation achievements and promoting positive images of women in tech in the media, and developing learning, networking and mentoring opportunities.
5. Establish multi-stakeholder partnerships	Pursue practical and joint measures to advance women's empowerment within the Information Society and strengthen international cooperation in the area of access and participation of women and girls in technology including through S-S, N-S and triangular cooperation, and creation of platforms for capturing and sharing good practices, lessons, role models and both within and between nations.

Women's Digital Inclusion
Regional perspectives

The gender gap in mobile ownership, by region, GSMA 2018

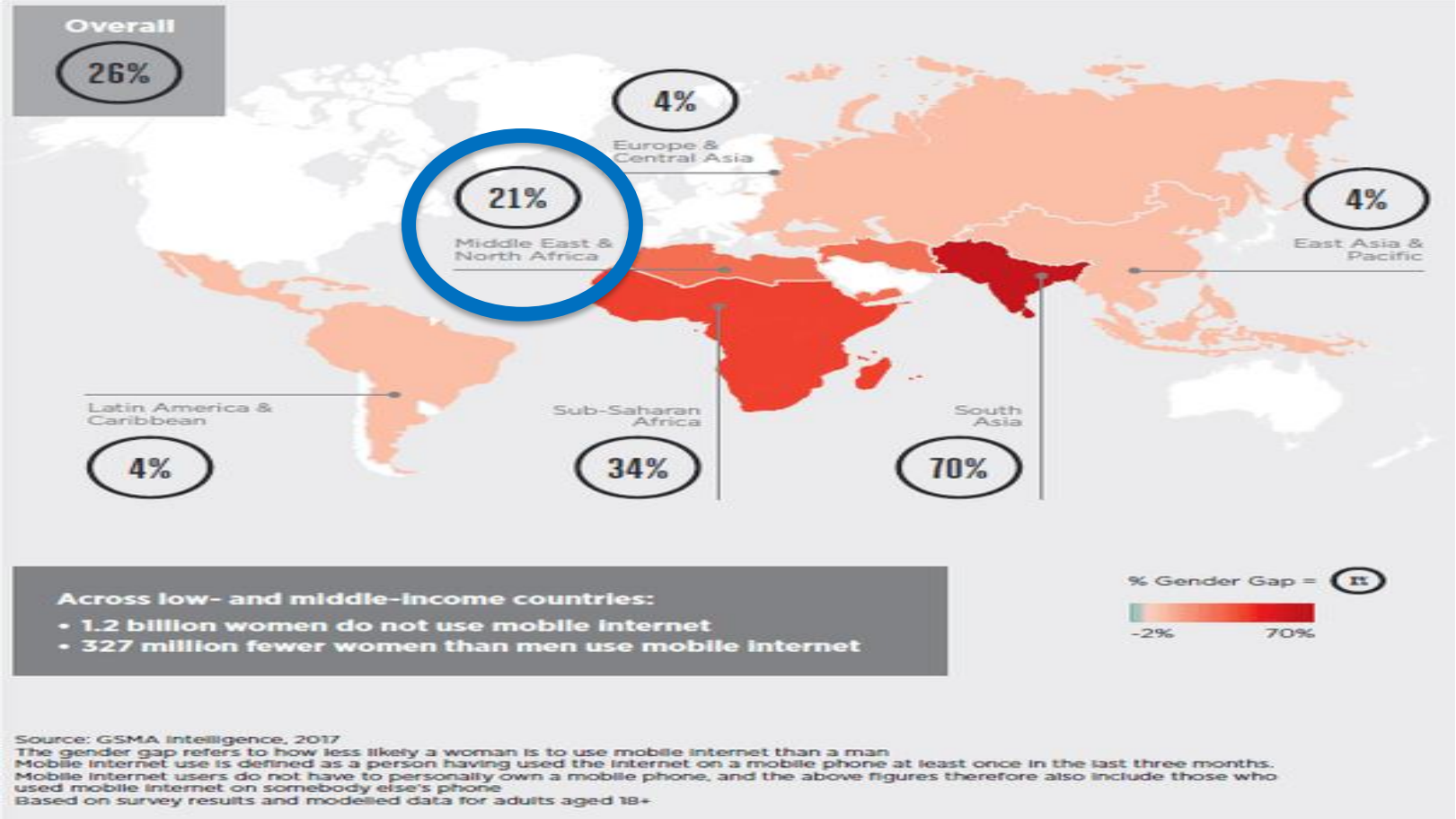


Across low- and middle-income countries:

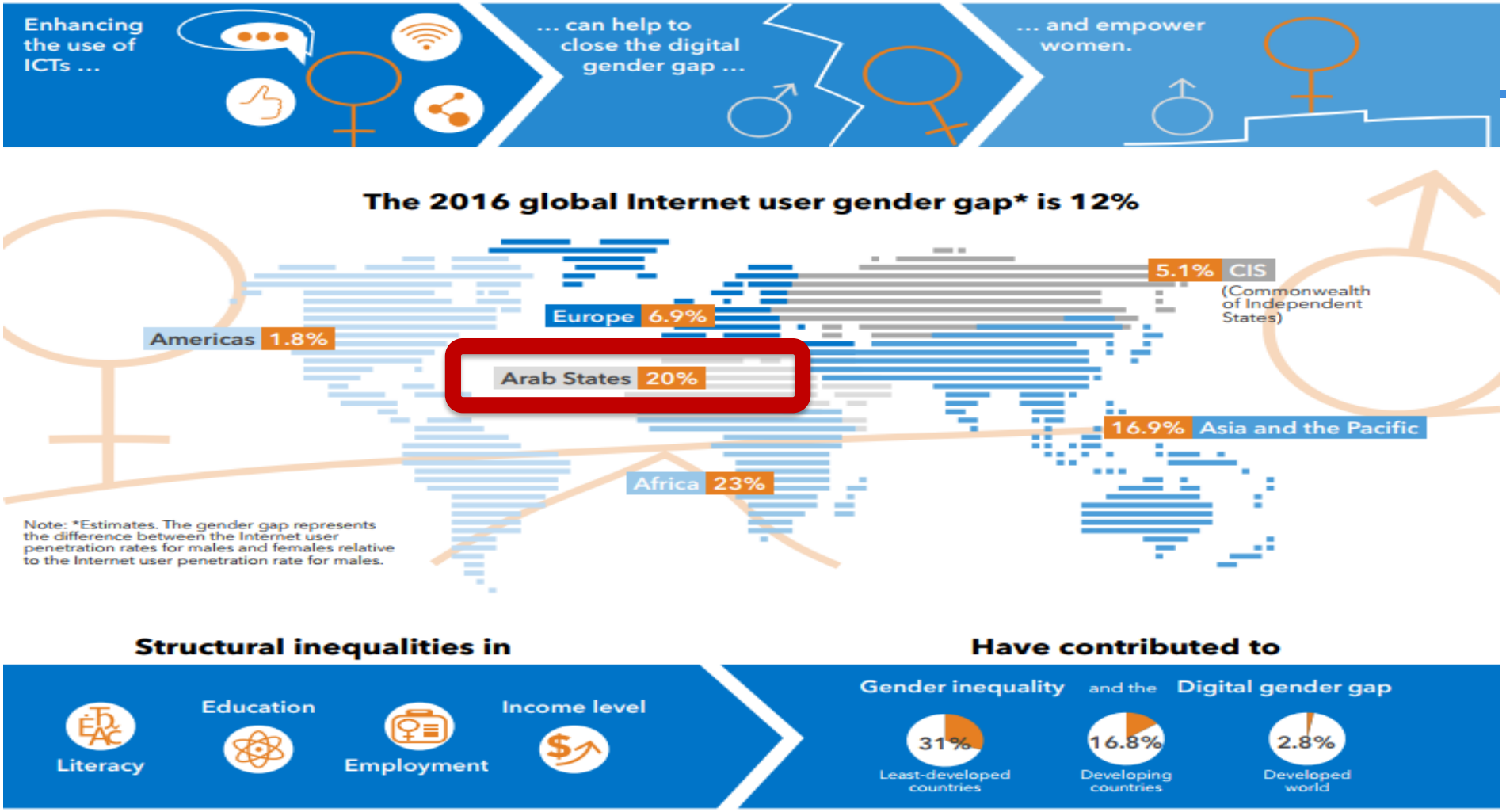
- **390 million women are unconnected**
- **184 million fewer women than men own a mobile**

Source: GSMA Intelligence, 2017
The gender gap refers to how less likely a woman is to own a mobile than a man
Mobile ownership is defined as a person having sole or main use of a SIM card (or a mobile phone that does not require a SIM), and using it at least once a month
Based on survey results and modelled data for adults aged 18+

The gender gap in **mobile internet use**, by region, GSMA 2018



Gender Gap in Internet Usage



- The **Arab world** is ranged between Asia and Pacific and Africa with **20%** of gap.
- **Only 9 Arab countries** provided gender disaggregated data.

ESCWA

ICT Policies Section Efforts

Our **Vision** towards Women's Digital Inclusion

- Cutting edge technology, mainly **Digital Technology are at the heart** of the ESCWA vision for a **new development paradigm** in the Arab region.

- We assist MCs in **building an inclusive (including women), people-centred (including women)** and development-oriented **information society and Digital economy** in accordance with regional priorities and the SDGs.

- We help MCs to **bridge the digital divide (including women),** benefit from ICT, enhance science, technology and innovation programmes, and promote transfer of productive technologies and know-how.

Our Role towards Women's Digital Inclusion

- Develop a common vision of the information society and Digital Economy and build capacity in MCs to measure progress in that regard (including gender dimension).

- Formulate and implement ICT development policies and strategies (integrating the gender dimension all over the cycle).

- Adopt new approaches and technologies for e-services, focusing on e-government and e-participation (with focus on women participation).

- Monitor implementation of the conclusions of the WSIS, and the global and Arab IGF Processes (including gender dimension).

- Build confidence in technology infrastructure, in particular with regard to privacy and cyber security (including gender dimension and women needs).

Our Approach towards Women's Digital Inclusion

8 Pillars

- Increase awareness of the digital gender divide and Importance of the full participation of women in the digital economy
- Develop sex-disaggregated data to enable evidence-based interventions
- Promote digital skills for women to help ensure women access and integration into the labor market
- Target women lagging in digital access and use (initiatives at the regional and local level that meet the specific needs)
- PPPs to promote women's participation in the ICT sector
- Address cyber-violence towards women to facilitate their online participation
- Use digital tools to provide new opportunities through e-services, solutions, apps…
- Lead Initiatives at regional level to empower women in the digital era.

Our Approach towards Women's Digital Inclusion

We encourage MCs to take action in the following areas:

Pillar 1 : Increase awareness of the digital gender divide and address gender stereotypes that hinder the full participation of women in the digital economy.

- Inclusion of awareness programs to close the digital gender divide in national digital strategies
- Research and share indicators, good practices, and recommendations on how to bridge the divide.
- Identify barriers to access, connectivity, and digital skill acquisition and develop policies that address them.

Our Approach towards Women's Digital Inclusion

Pillar 2 : Encourage gathering sex-disaggregated data to enable evidence-based interventions.

- Collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data to monitor key policy actions, identify priorities, track progress and promote the integration of a gender perspective into national strategies, policies, and budgets.
- Prioritize the collection of data related to access, use, participation, skills, leadership positions and pay gaps in the ICT/ high-tech Sector.

Pillar 3 : Promote digital skills for women to help ensure women access and integration into the labor market:

- Foster high-quality work and flexible work arrangements for everybody, by taking advantage of digital tools.
- Promote training in digital skills acquisition.

Our **Approach** towards Women's Digital Inclusion

Pillar 4 : Target women lagging in digital access and use.

- Coordinate initiatives at the regional and local level, in order to prioritize specific needs and opportunities including women in rural areas.
- Foster low-cost Internet service packages for low-income people, especially for women.

Pillar 5 : Encourage cooperation between the public and private sectors to strengthen women's participation in the ICT sectors

- Address discrimination in ICT jobs at all levels.
- Advocate female role models in high-technology sectors.

Our Approach towards Women's Digital Inclusion

Pillar 6 : Address cyber-violence towards women to facilitate their online participation.

- Encourage and support measures that identify, prevent, and counter the sexual and gender-based abuse, harassment and the threat of violence against women and girls in digital contexts.
- Increase awareness of cyber violence threats and intimidation, and encourage measures to condemn such instances of cyber violence when they occur.

Pillar 7 : Use digital tools that provide new opportunities to connect women to address the digital divide while ensuring quality jobs and a safer environment.

- Facilitate policies to seize the potential "leapfrog" opportunities offered by the Internet, digital platforms and services, mobile phones, electronic payments, and wallets, enabling women to earn (additional) income, increase employment opportunities, and access knowledge and information.

Our **Approach** towards Women's Digital Inclusion

Pillar 8: Launch and coordinate joint initiatives at regional level to empower women in the digital era.

- Coordinate among different initiatives to scale up, learn from successful — and unsuccessful — programs and build on lessons learned.

Selected Initiatives: Arab Digital Development Report (2019)

Central Research Question

What are the Efforts, Challenges, and Policy Reforms within Arab countries in the field of Digital Technologies, and how they Empower People and Ensure Inclusiveness while Digitally Transforming their Economies and Societies to attain the Digital Development Aspirations of the Arab Horizon 2030?

Primary Focus:

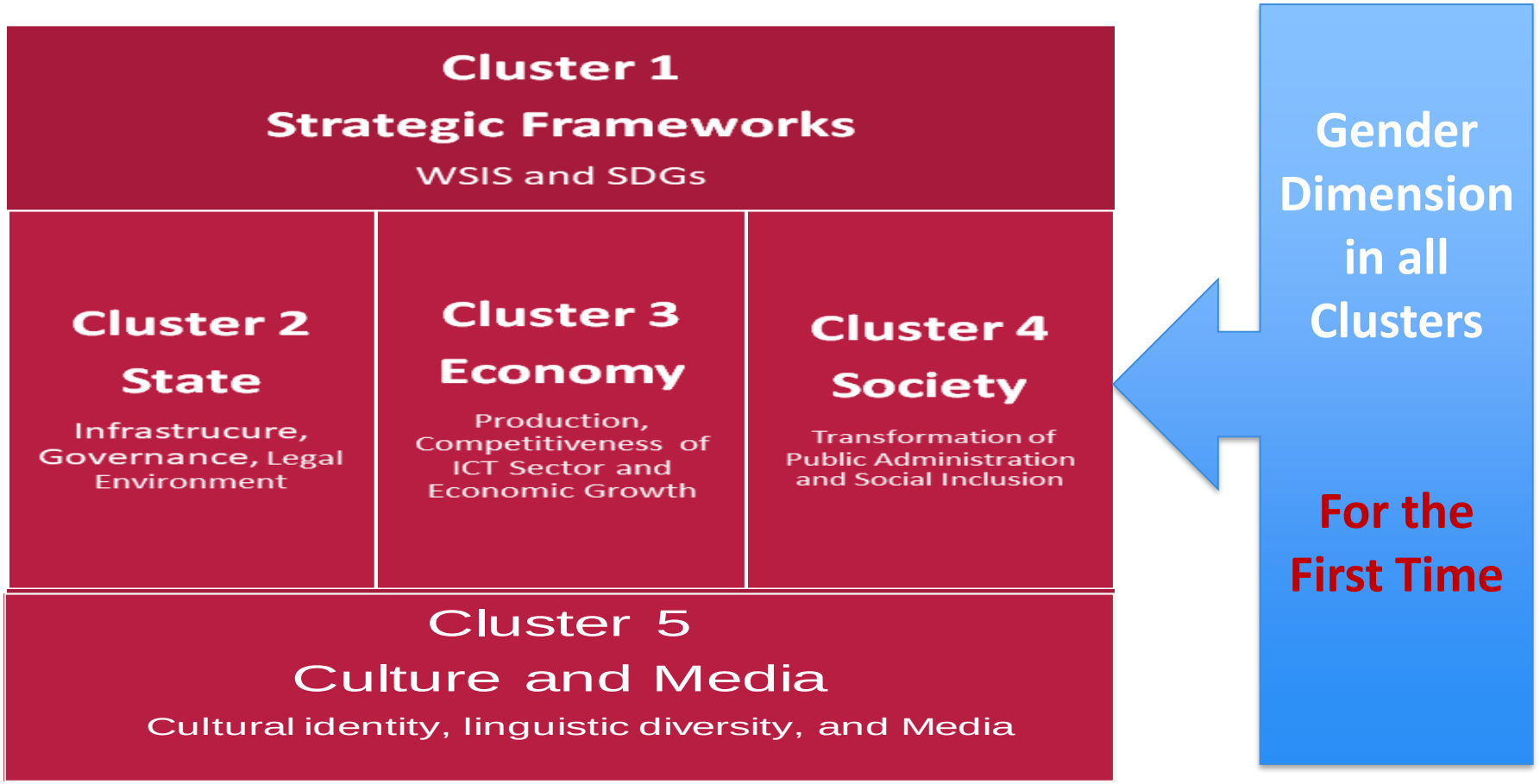
- Assess the progress in policy areas of digital technologies in the Arab region;
- Highlight existing gaps in the preparedness of countries to the future digital developments;
- Address an array of topics in digital transformation that support sustainable development in the Arab region through a situational analysis and future perspectives.

Secondary focus: Derived from the theme of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019, focusing on “Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness”.

Selected Initiatives: Arab Digital Development Report (2019)

Research Methodology

A region-wide survey based on a National Review Template structured into five clusters :



Selected Initiatives: Arab Digital Development Report (2019)

- ESCWA and the UN at large have earmarked this activity as one of the most important global activities for the year 2019.

- We are looking forward to launching the envisaged Arab Digital Development Report during the upcoming ECOSOC meeting **in New York, next July 2019 (**High Level Political Forum (HLPF), to which the main theme of the Arab report has been anchored, namely: “Inclusiveness and Empowerment”.

- The report is directly connected to ESCWA’s efforts pertaining to conducting the 2nd High-Level Forum on WSIS and 2030 Agenda for the year 2019, during the first trimester of 2019.

- For the first time, rich and detailed impact review will be performed on the non-ICT sector at national levels.

- We are currently forming national working-level taskforce, that will include sub-national focal points from impacted sectors, from entities such as ministries of administrative development, industrial development, trade, commerce, economy, labor, media, education, health, social development, youth, women…etc.

Selected Initiatives: Arab Roadmap for Internet Governance, 2018

7 Strategic Priorities

Ensure best intersection between global Internet governance issues and regional needs and include support for SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

- Meaningful access for inclusion
- Security and trust
- Institutional empowerment
- Internet innovations and emerging eco-systems
- Human development, (Gender, Diversity and Youth empowerment)
- Critical Internet resources and network infrastructure
- Cultural and linguistic diversity

Women and gender concerns are in most of them.
4 pillars with specific focus on Women

Selected Initiatives: Arab Roadmap for Internet Governance, 2018

Logframe for Human Development

Human development, (Gender, Diversity and Youth empowerment)

Objectives	Expected accomplishments	Stakeholders
To empower women online	1. Policies to encourage women presence online are developed, with special attention for women who live in unfavourable conditions. 2. Capacity building programs targeting women developed to empower women and increase opportunities provided by Internet.	All stakeholders
To improve, women youth participation in Internet governance processes	1. Policies developed to educate women and youth about the Internet and the opportunities it could present. 2. Capacity building initiatives are launched to bring women and young people to Internet governance processes.	All stakeholders
To meet the special needs of certain users	1. Special user needs identified and acknowledged, and appropriate measures to meet these needs are taken.	All stakeholders
To define users rights and obligations online.	1. Policies and developed to bring users rights and obligations offline to the online world. 2. Codes of ethics defined and promoted to face abuses and hate speeches.	All stakeholders
To extend children rights online	1. A charter for children rights online is developed. 2. Laws (including cyber laws) are updated to ensure that child's access to the Internet does not expose them to risks. 3. Laws and regulation to protect children online are developed and enforced. 4. Policies to disseminate digital literacy among children are developed. 5. Women and children are given opportunities for meaningful participation in and through digital platforms and services.	All stakeholders

Selected Initiatives: Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders in the ESCWA Region (AIGLE)

Objective

To impart the essential knowledge and expertise that will help civil servants, policymakers and Government leaders in the ESCWA region to more effectively plan and implement ICT initiatives, facilitating their transition towards knowledge-based economies.

Beneficiaries

Civil servants at the middle management level and above, Government leaders and policymakers, all public entities at national, provincial and local levels.

4 Modules

Selected Initiatives: Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders in the ESCWA Region (AIGLE)

Training of trainers workshops

24 out of 88 national trainers were women which represents **27% .**

Countries	Bahrain	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Morocco	Oman	Palestine	Saudi Arabia	Sudan	Syria	Tunisia	Yemen	UAE	Total
Nb of trainers	1	11	9	5	3	5	8	9	10	2	7	9	4		5	88
Nb of Female Trainers	-	5	3	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	2	4	-		-	24
% Female Trainers	0%	45%	33%	40%	67%	40%	25%	22%	0%	0%	29%	44%	0%		0%	27%

Training at National level

A total of 136 equivalent days with a total of 816 hours of training on AIGLE modules were delivered and addressed 1573 government officials, including more than 547 women (as numbers from Palestine are not gender disaggregated) representing more than 35%.

Countries	Bahrain	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Morocco	Oman	Palestine	Saudi Arabia	Sudan	Syria	Tunisia	Yemen	UAE	Total
Nb of trainees		388	72	272			111	160	100		355	65	50			1,573
Nb of female trainees		153	12	88			42	80			130	20	22			547
% Female Trainees		39%	17%	32%			38%	50%			37%	31%	44%			35%

Concluding remarks

- We believe that Policies will play an important role in enabling women to march forward in this uphill battle towards inclusion in the technology sector.
- Economic data proves that investing in women has positive effects on the economy.
- Yet garnering the support for policies that promote the necessary investment and legislation still lags behind.

- Inclusive Digital Agendas are key to building an inclusive digital world in which everyone can benefit from.
- Multistakehorlder approach in the implementation can help push Digital Agendas in a positive direction.

اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا

THANK YOU

barbarm@un.org

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