Open consultation - Bridging the Digital Gender Divide

– submission from Sweden

1. **What approaches and examples of good practices are available to increase Internet access and digital literacy of women and girls, including in decision-making processes on Internet public policy?**

On digital literacy: Initiatives that allow girls and women to increase their understanding of digitization are commendable and should be supported. The Swedish government recently launched a digital strategy for the educational system, which puts a strong focus on building and encouraging digital skills, including programming, for all students already from an early age. There are also a number of private and non-profit organizations that offer training in programming and which target students as well as graduated women. For seniors, courses in basic computer and Internet are offered in many libraries and by senior citizens groups.

1. **What approaches and examples of good practices are available to promote the access and use of ICTs by SMEs in developing and least-developed countries, particularly those owned/managed by women, in order to achieve greater participation in the digital economy?**

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1. **Which are the available sources and mechanisms for measuring women's participation in the digital economy with focus on SME's and micro-enterprises?**

Gathering gender disaggregated data in areas related to entrepreneurship is crucial for highlighting women entrepreneurs and women’s participation in business and for designing suitable and efficient policies.

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1. **What measures/policies could be envisioned in order to foster the role of women as entrepreneurs and managers of SMEs, specifically in developing and least-developed countries?**

Promoting female entrepreneurs and managers as role models makes women's entrepreneurship more visible and contributes to influencing attitudes and structures. Governments play an important part and can promote women’s entrepreneurship through, inter alia, eliminating regulatory obstacles, easing access to (micro) finance, encouraging entrepreneurship and fostering entrepreneurial skills from an early age and ensuring that information on starting and running a business is easily available. Promoting and supporting women’s leadership strengthens the resilience and overall competence of economies.

1. **What are the gaps in addressing these challenges? How can they be addressed and what is the role of governments?**

Women’s entrepreneurship needs to be fully recognized as a factor for economic growth. This insight is the first step in ensuring a business promotion system that also meets women entrepreneurs’ needs. Making use of women’s entrepreneurial potential and business ideas conduces to growth, sustainability, and competitiveness for the entire economy.

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