The WSIS Coalition represents major global ICT companies involved in many aspects of the Internet ecosystem. We are strong supporters of the multi-stakeholder model for policy development and seek to promote the goals of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). We are dedicated to the continued development of a global open, secure, and interoperable Internet to foster social and economic development for all people. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the ITU Council Working Group on Internet Public Policy’s public consultation.

We affirm our commitment to bridging the Digital Gender Divide and through effective cooperation with governments, the private sector, civil society and multilateral organizations, aim to convert this shared commitment into action.

We reiterate the critical actions laid out by the Action Plan to Close the Digital Gender Gap, which was launched by WSIS+10 in 2015:

1. Developing gender responsive strategies and policies: This requires the incorporation of a gender equality perspective in all decision-making processes including strategies, planning, policies and funding mechanisms.
2. Ensuring access to ICTs by women and girls and addressing the factors that hinder their use of technology: Data obtained from national census and findings issued by international agencies need to be studied from a gender perspective and used as foundations for identifying issues. Moreover, threats emerging from ICTs, most notably cyber-related violence must be mitigated, responded to and prevented. This can be done by introducing policies that counter traditional gender roles and providing safe and accountable channels for grievance redressal.
3. Building the digital capacities of women and girls: This includes investing in targeted skills development for women and girls, and supporting relevant content, applications and services by and for women. This also includes modifying and updating existing formal education curricula so that they provide women and girls with the necessary ICT skills and information.
4. Promoting women in the technology sector, particularly in positions of decision-making: Particularly in developing and least-developed countries, providing incentives and opportunities for women’s higher education, promoting women’s recruitment and promotion to decision-making positions in the technology sector are all important steps. Stakeholders, particularly those in the private sector can introduce internal policies which encourage participation of women in the Information Society.
5. Establish multi-stakeholder partnerships: governments, civil society, international organizations like the UN and the private sector must all pursue joint measures for the creation of new avenues, and facilitating policy discussions both within and among nations. Recognition of good practices through events like the ITU’s Equals in Tech Awards also help raise awareness about organizations and individuals contributing to the close of the gender divide.