**Session Outcome Document**

(*2 pages max*)

 **Driving meaningful participation of women in cybersecurity workforce through policy and practical action**

**Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance & Association for Progressive Communication**

**10/07/2025 16:30-17:30**

[**Session 261— Driving meaningful participation of women in cyber through policy and practical… | WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025**](https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/261)

**Key Issues discussed: Looking Beyond 2025**

* **Digital Divide**: As of 2024, around 70% of men and 65% of women globally use the internet—leaving a gap of approximately 189 million more men than women online. To close this divide, gender considerations must be integrated into digital policy-making, and global gender commitments should be translated into actionable national strategies and plans.
* **Defining “Meaningful Participation” in Practice**: Participants emphasized that women’s mere presence in cybersecurity spaces is not sufficient. True participation means being heard, promoted, and influential in decision-making. According to UN Women’s framework, meaningful participation includes presence, influence, and self-efficacy—women must not only be at the table but also have the confidence and platform to shape agendas, especially those related to their own security needs.
* **Gender-Responsive Leadership & Representation:** The gender gap persists not only in workforce numbers but also in leadership and technical design. Cybersecurity continues to be shaped predominantly by male perspectives. The session highlighted the urgent need for more women in senior decision-making positions and for technology that is inclusive by design.
* **Cultural and Institutional Change:** While cultural barriers remain, progress is being made. Institutions are increasingly recognizing the value of inclusive policies, and shifts in internal culture are starting to take root.
* **Local Networks & Public-Private Partnerships:** Strengthening local networks and building partnerships between governments, civil society, and the private sector is essential for building a sustainable pipeline of women in cybersecurity.
* **Cyber Diplomacy as a Success Story**: A notable achievement discussed was the increase in women’s visibility in cyber diplomacy. For example, at the final sessions of the UN Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), women delivered over 50% of interventions—an outcome driven by sustained mentorship and advocacy efforts.

**Tangible Outcomes of the session**

 The session catalysed dialogue across sectors on advancing gender equality in cybersecurity and contributed concrete examples of how inclusion is being translated into practice.

* **Promoted Women’s Role in International Cyber Diplomacy**: The increase in women’s interventions at high-level diplomatic forums such as the OEWG was recognized as a milestone, highlighting the impact of long-term support and targeted efforts to equip women for global representation.
* **Mentorship and Support for Young Women and Girls**: Participants reaffirmed the importance of mentorship programs, peer networks, and targeted training to build confidence, knowledge, and career pathways for women and girls at the national and local levels.
* **Institutional Transformation**: Recognizing that changing organizational culture often requires a top-down approach, the session encouraged governments and companies to review internal policies, implement gender-responsive leadership models, and hold leadership accountable for progress.

**Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Action Plan for the WSIS+20 Review and Beyond** (2–5 bullet points presenting concrete actions and guidance to inform the WSIS+20 Review by UNGA and build the multistakeholder vision of WSIS beyond 2025)

* **Support Local Networks and Partnerships**: Continue to invest in and expand local women-led networks and public-private partnerships to foster community-based capacity-building and policy influence.
* **Mainstream Gender in National Cybersecurity Strategies**: Governments must ensure that gender-responsive leadership is embedded across cybersecurity policies, from threat analysis to incident response planning.
* **Advance Women’s Role in Cyber Diplomacy**: Maintain and strengthen efforts to equip women with the necessary skills, confidence, and networks to influence international cybersecurity negotiations and multilateral forums.
* **Promote Inclusive Technology Design**: Foster collaboration between technical experts and gender specialists to ensure that cybersecurity tools, platforms, and strategies reflect diverse user needs and experiences.
* **Track and Evaluate Progress**: Develop and use gender-sensitive indicators to measure inclusion and progress in cybersecurity sectors, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.