

**Tentative Agenda of the South Asian Regional
Consultations on 'Gender in Information Society' in
preparation of the WSIS-2003-2005
New Delhi
November 17th & 18th 2003**

I.

Introduction and Significance of the WSIS:

The first World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) will be held in Geneva, in December 2003, organized by the United Nations. Previous United Nations World Summits include the 1992 World Summit on Environment and Development (also known as the Rio Earth Summit), and the World Conference on Women in Beijing during 1995.

The WSIS will address the broad range of themes concerning the Information Society and adopt a Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, addressing the whole range of issues related to the Information Society. Preparations for the Summit are currently taking place, and the viewpoints of various groups and sections are being formulated for inclusion in the deliberations.

World leaders from governments, the private sector and civil society will discuss in Geneva from 10th to 12th December, 2003 at the WSIS the global framework for taking forward the opportunities provided by the emergence of the Information Society, as well as meet the challenges posed by it. As with the earlier UN summits (Rio Summit on Environment and Beijing Summit on Women), the outcome from this Summit will have a major impact on policy, activity and attitudes of governments, multi-lateral organizations, civil society bodies and other key -- stakeholders in the transformation towards an Information Society. The Summit is also likely to affect the private sector and developments in the market and the economy.

There is an urgent need for articulating gender issues in this emerging global framework and the WSIS provides this opportunity to promote gender equality and women's rights in the World Information Society. On the initiative of UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), a group of representatives from governments, civil society, private sector and the UN system got together and formed the WSIS- Gender Caucus (WSIS-GC) to ensure that gender equality and women's rights issues find their rightful place in the WSIS processes and outcomes.

II. South Asian Regional Consultations on "Gender in Information Age"

The WSIS-GC and Datamation Foundation-an Indian Civil Society Organization in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MC&IT), Govt. of India; Department of Administrative Reforms & Personnel Grievances (AR&PG), Ministry of Human Resources Development, Govt. of India; Department of Women and Child Development (WCD), Govt. of India; Planning Commission, Govt. of India; Ministry of Family Welfare & Health, Govt. of India; apart from a large number of State Governments; UNESCO; UNIFEM; ILO; Centre for Women Development Studies (CWDS), S.N.D.T Women's University are sponsoring the South-Asian Regional and Indian Consultations on "Gender in Information Age". These Consultations will take place on 17 and 18 November 2003 at

Windsor
Le Meridien Hotel

Windsor Place, New Delhi-110 001 (India)
Phone# 91-11-23710101

These Regional and National Consultations for articulating and working on various aspects of gender issues in the context of the Information Age have the immediate and specific goals of influencing the processes and outcomes of the WSIS at Geneva as well as the outlook, policy and activity of the Indian governments. However, it will be a continuing process over a broad agenda. We expect to have made substantial generic and specific impact by the time the second phase of the WSIS takes place in Tunis in 2005.

The Consultations are intended to be “focused” and “outcome” based; even though the Regional and Indian Organizers have the enormous challenge of educating their Governments, Private Sector, Civil Society and the people in general about WSIS.

Objectives

The **general objectives** of the **South Asian Regional Consultations on “Gender in Information Age”** can be classified into two areas:

Active: To use the immense power of the new ICTs, through its potential for a greater equalization of access to information and life opportunities, for meeting the goals of gender equality and women rights.

Reactive: To ensure that, as the building blocks of the emerging Information Society are laid, in policy, market directions, social and technology structures and in people’s as well as organizational attitudes, the existing gender inequalities are not carried forward, or, worse, accentuated.

The specific objectives of the South Asian Regional Consultations on “Gender in Information Age” are:

- To begin and sustain an “outcome” based, “focused” national consultation process on “Gender and ICTs”, including over virtual platforms, for articulating issues, enlisting support, dissemination and advocacy.
- To influence government’s position and policy toward above general objectives.
- To raise awareness and influence individual and organizational attitudes and activities towards above goals.
- To conceptualize and execute initiatives and projects for real movement towards the above goals.
- To gather commitment and support for such initiative and projects.
- To finalize a working paper on “South Asian Regional Gender and ICT perspective” along with a set of recommendations that could influence the Declarations and Plan of Action at the WSIS.
- To finalize a set of indicators that could track the impact of ICTs on gender issues in the Region for the below thematic areas chosen for the Consultations:

***ICTs for Gender Equality, Women’s Rights and Women’s Empowerment through Self-government Institutions*

***ICTs in Education-a Gender Perspective*

***ICTs for Women in the Health Sector*

***ICTs and the Gender-Role of the Media*

***Markets, ICTs and Women—New Livelihood Opportunities and Income Generation for Women Engaged in the Informal Sector of the Economy*

***Oral Traditions and Culture—Gender and ICTs*

***E-Governance and Gender—Crucial Connectors for the ICT Age*

Nominees of central and state governments, international agencies, civil society, NGOs, the private sector and other important stakeholders are expected to participate in the Regional Consultations.



 **Development Alternatives Group**

**Tentative Agenda of the South Asian Regional
Consultations on 'Gender in Information Society' in
preparation of the WSIS-2003-2005**

**November 17 – 18, 2003
9.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.
Windsor, Le Meridien Hotel,
Windsor Place,
New Delhi-110 001 (India)**

AGENDA –DAY - I

8:45 - 3:30 p.m.

Registration

9:00 - 9:15 a.m.

Introduction

Chetan Sharma-Founder Datamation Foundation

9:15 – 9.30 a.m.

Welcome

9:30 - 9:45 a.m.

Inaugural and Key Note Address by a Dignitary (Govt. of India)

9:45 -10:00 a.m.

Presentation by Dr. Gillian Marcelle—Founding Member-World Summit on Information Society-Gender Caucus (WSIS-GC) : WSIS-Gender in the Information Age perspective—progress so far and the challenges ahead

**Session I: ICTs for Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women
Empowerment through Self-government Institutions**

10:00 - 11:15 a.m.

**Chair: Mr. K.K. Jaswal- Secretary(IT)-GOI (Tentative)/
Mr. Narayanan-Additional Secretary-(IT), and
Mr. Vinod Vaish-Secretary(Telecom)-GOI/ Additional
Secretary (Telecom)-GOI (Tentative)**

Panelists: Ms. Firoza Mehrotra- Addl. Director (UNIFEM)

Ms. Anita GuruMurthy-IT4 Change

Dr. Mahesh Uppal

Prof. Bharti Sen-SNDT Women's University

Dr. Madhumita Gupta-USAID

**Dr. Roma Bhattacharjea-UNDP Gender Policy
Bureau, Nepal**

Ms. Sayantani Gaddam-Gyan Sanchar

Other Panelists are yet to be decided

15 minutes for Discussions and Recommendations

Coffee break

11:15 - 11:30 a.m.

Session II: ICTs in Education Sector: A gender perspective

11:30 - 1:00 p.m.

Chair: Addl. Secretary (Education), GOI

Co-Chair: Prof. M. Tawfik-Director (UNESCO)

**Dr. H.P.S.Dikshit-Vice-Chancellor-IGNOU OR
Alternate**

**Dr. Janaki Rajan-Director, State Council of Educ.
Research & Training-(Govt. of NCT)**

**Mr. Shailendra Prasad-NIOS OR Dr. M. Mukhopadhyay-
NIEPA**

**Prof. D.V.Sharma-Council of Boards of Sec.
Edu. (COBSE), GOI**

Remaining panelists are yet to be decided.

15 minutes for Discussions and Recommendations

Lunch break and Regional Gender and ICT applications on display

1:00 - 2.00 p.m.

Session III: ICTs for Women in Health Sector

2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Chair: Dr. Erma Manoncourt-Dy. Director-UNICEF

Co-Chair: Secretary OR Addl.Secretary-Health(GOI)

Ms. Vandana Shiva-VHAI

Mr. Shashank Ohja-The World Bank

Mr. Ranjan Dwivedi-WHO

Dr. Vijay Arul Das-Director,Christian Medical Assoc.of India(CMAI)

Dr.Uma Nambiar-National Cancer Foundation

Ms. JayaLakshmi-Dir.Gen of Hlth. Stat(GOI) OR Alter.

Other panelists are yet to be decided.

15 minutes for Discussions and Recommendations

Coffee break

3:30 - 3:45 p.m.

Session IV: Oral traditions and culture—gender and ICTs

3:45 - 5:30 p.m.

Chair: Dr. Susanne Ornager- UNESCO

Co-Chair: To be decided

Ms. Smita Bharti-Sanskriti

Sarai

Other Panelists are yet to be decided

15 minutes for Discussions and Recommendations

AGENDA-DAY - II

8:45 - 12:30 p.m.

Registration

Session V: Markets, ICTs and women—new livelihood opportunities and income generation for women engaged in formal/informal Sector of the economy

9:15 - 10:30 a.m.

Chair: Dr. Uday Kumar Verma-IAS,
V V Giri National Labor Institute (GOI)

Co-Chair: Ms. Poornima Advani-
National Women's Commission

Ms. Sarla Gopalan-IAS,Ex-Secretary-WCD, GOI

Dr. Nalini Gangadharan-Exe.Director-LABS
(Dr. Reddy's Foundation)

Dr.. Savithri Subramanian--UNESCO

Mr. Pramod Bhasin-Regional Head-GE
Cap.Intl.Svcs.

Dr. Kamini Prakash-Hope Foundation

Reps. Of Industry recommended by
CII/NASSCOM

Mr. Ranjit Khosla-Development Alternatives

Other Panelists are yet to be decided

15 minutes for Discussions and Recommendations

Session VI: ICTs and Gender-role of Media

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Chair: To be decided

Co-Char: Mrs. Surekha Subarwal-UNDP

Ms. Akila Sivadas – CFAR

Ms. Usha Bhasin-DOORDARSHAN

Ms. Pamela Phillipose-Indian Express

Ms. Soma Wadhwa-Outlook

Mr. Alok Mehta

Times Online Rep.

Other Panelists are yet to be decided

15 minutes for Discussions and Recommendations

Coffee break

11:30 - 11:45 a.m.

Session VII: E-Governance and gender—crucial connectors for the ICT age

11:45 - 1:15 p.m.

Chair: Mr. R.Chandrasekhar-Jt,Secretary
(E-Governance),GOI

Co-Chair: Dr. Pradeep Sharma-UNDP

Dr. K. Jayakumar-Director (AR&PG)-GOI

Ms. Renu Budhiraja-MC&IT(GOI)

Ms. Mona Dave-SEWA

Other Panelists are yet to be decided

15 minutes for Discussions and Recommendations

Lunch break and Regional Gender and ICT applications on display

1:15 - 2.00 p.m.

REPORT BACK AND RECOMMENDATION SESSION

2:00 - 5.30 p.m.

- Government nominee presents government's position on WSIS
- Presentation of the working paper on "South Asian Regional Gender and ICT perspective"
- Discussions on recommendations of seven sessions and working paper.
- Endorsement of the working paper.
- Finalization of indicators for tracking the impact of ICTs on gender issues in the Region.
- Final recommendations for WSIS—Geneva 2003.

CONCLUDING SESSION CHAIRED BY A DIGNITARY (YET TO BE FINALIZED)