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PRESS RELEASE

Gender Advocates take equality message to WSIS closing plenary

The WSIS Gender Caucus will address the closing Plenary of the World Summit to acknowledge that constructive proposals have been incorporated into the WSIS Declaration and to urge governments to respect commitments made to gender equality during the Summit.

The WSIS Gender Caucus advocated for gender equality to become a fundamental principle and to align the Information Society with the Millennium Development Goals. Other recommendations included women's equitable participation in decision making about technologies; a multimodal approach in which new and old ICTs complement each other; design of ICTs to serve people; empowering women and girls through training in the use of ICTs and inclusion more generally; focused analyses to guide research and evaluation, especially concerning gender issues, for Information Society development.

The creation of an inclusive, diverse, gender equal Information Society, where human rights are valued will require everyone's commitment. Women's perspectives can contribute to making the difference between an Information Economy where gambling and pornography account for the most profitable applications and a true Information Society that serves human development – a global information society will serve all people, help eradicate poverty and increase knowledge for all in an economically sustainable manner.

The WSIS Gender Caucus has been an active participant in the WSIS Summit and all its preparatory processes and its contributions have been incorporated into the language of the Plan of Action. The Caucus organised a dynamic events programme which brought together international stakeholders to debate critical issues. The WSIS Gender Caucus also created a celebratory exhibition space which showcased women's contribution to the Information Society.

Government commitments and implementation of the Plan of Action will be monitored by the WSIS Gender Caucus through a North-South collaborative research programme. Results of this programme will be available to regional and national groups to inform governments on WSIS follow-up.

One of the WSIS Gender Caucus stakeholders, the United Nations Fund for Women, UNIFEM, through its Digital Diaspora Initiative is setting up an E-quality Fund for African Women and Innovation, which provides flexible funding to ensure that African women have opportunities for capacity development and economic security in the Information Society that is emerging.

The WSIS Gender Caucus is a multi-stakeholder group of women and men from national governments, civil society and non-governmental organisations, the private sector and the United Nations system. It aims to promote inclusion, diversity and gender equality in the Information Society.

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