



PRESS RELEASE

ROUND TABLE – “GENDER AND WSIS” Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro Hotel Hyatt, 17. October 2003.

Over the past decade the political and economic situation the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been crisis-ridden. The aftermath of the war has led to an enormous brain drain and a general lack of resources. Much of the burden are carried particularly by women in their personal and family lives. The situation is worsened by the digital divide and limited access to information. Even where there may be the opportunity for women to access information, they are limited by the content of the information which may not be relevant to them and/or, because of language barriers. How do we empower women and bridge the gendered digital divide remains an important question. Worldwide efforts to enable equal opportunities for all will be discussed at the impending World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), which is being held under the high patronage of Koffi Annan, UN Secretary-General. It is expected that in relation to gender the WSIS will:

- provide a global platform to energize and educate the world community on the emerging issues related to gender divide in the Information Society
- discuss the way to bridge the gender divide
- include the gender perspective in universal Declaration of Principles and a Global Action Plan and
- generate a catalytic effect for future actions related to the promotion of gender equality.

The first phase of the WSIS will take place in Geneva hosted by Government of Switzerland, from 10 to 12 December 2003 and second in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005.

The Serbian NGO “Equal Opportunities together with the Ministry for Science and Technology and the WSIS Gender Caucus have organized a Round Table on 17 October 2003 with following objectives:

- to make visible all the actions related to the WSIS,
- to do lobbying and advocacy in support of gender integration and women's rights in the WSIS process and
- to draw attention on gender perspective in the national program in Serbia and Montenegro for building the Information Society and use of the information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The following questions will be addressed by Round Table panellists:

- What is the National program in developing Information Society?
- What is the socio-economic nature of Information Society?
- How to influence the global platform with gender perspective in transition economies?
- What is the infrastructure for Information Society?
- How to make develop a pragmatic approach to WSIS in relation to gender?
- What is the contribution of the media to promote Information Society?

The Programme for the Round Table is enclosed as Annexure 1.

The Draft Recommendations to Government, the UN, International Organizations in Serbia and Montenegro, the Private Sector, NGOs and the Media are prepared for discussion and approval. (see Annexure 2).

ANNEX 1: AGENDA FOR ROUND TABLE

«WORLD SUMMIT ON the INFORMATION SOCIETY and GENDER EQUALITY»

organized by NGO «Equal Opportunities»,
Ministry of Science, Technology and Development, Republic of Serbia
and World Summit on the Information Society Gender Caucus

Belgrade, Hotel Hyatt, Room “Focaccia”, October, 17th 2003.

9.30-10.00 Registration

PART ONE: 10.00 –13. 00

10.00 Moderator: **Dr Nataša Gospić**, President of NGO “Equal Opportunities”

1. Opening, **Prof Dr Dragoljub Mićunović**, President of the Parliament of SCG (not confirmed)
2. “National strategy towards the Information Society”, **Dr Dragan Domazet**, Minister of Science, Technology and Development, Republic of Serbia
3. “The role of gender equality in development of the democracy”, **Boris Tadić**, Minister of Defence SCG (not confirmed)
4. “Gender Equality and World Summit on the Information Society”, **Rosario Gracia-Luque**, WSIS Gender Caucus
5. “Development of the Telecommunications as Information Society Infrastructure”, **Prof Dr Dragor Hiber**, Telekom Srbija

11.15-11.30 Coffee break

11.30-13.00

6. “Institutionalization of Gender Equality”, **Johan Hommes**, OSCE in SCG
7. “Information Society and Gender Equality – Case Study of Sweden”, **Jan Lundin**, Embassy of Sweden
8. “Gender balance – Business Success”, **Jan Hultgren**, President of Ericsson d.o.o., Belgrade
9. “Knowledge Management”, **Prof Dr Zorica Uzelac**, Faculty of Technical Science, Novi Sad
10. “Gender Equality in Montenegro”, **Nada Drobnjak**, Government of Republic Montenegro

13.00-14.00 Cocktail

PART TWO 14.00-16.30

14.0. Moderator: **Prof Dr Snežana Pantelić-Vujanić**, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering, Belgrade

11. “Projects for Equal Opportunities”, **Divna Vučković**, NGO “Equal Opportunities”
12. “Role of media in promoting Information Society and Equal Opportunities”, **Nada Kovačević**, Center for democratic initiatives support

13. Successful Women in ICT Area: **Mirjana Rosić (Eunet), Ljiljana Berat (Cisco Systems), Dijana Gligorijević (Telegroup)**

16.00 Closing, Moderator: **Dr Nataša Gospić**

Hosted by: ERICSSON, TELEGROUP, EUNET, CISCO SYSTEMS and MOBTEL

ANNEX 2.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

ROUND TABLE "GENDER AND WSIS" Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro Hotel Hyatt, 17 October 2003

The Round Table "Gender and WSIS" held in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro on 17 October 2003, organized by NGO "Equal opportunities" in cooperation with Ministry for Science and Technology Republic of Serbia and WSIS Gender Caucus and with participation from government, international organizations, NGOs and other players from info-communication sector:

reflecting: on global consensus and **reaffirming** commitments made at previous international conferences and summits, in particular, the UN World Conferences on Women, Beijing and Beijing +5 and the agreed conclusions on ICT and Women at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, New York, March 2003;

confirming Declaration and Recommendations approved by The Forum on ICT and Gender: Optimizing Opportunities held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, August 20-23, 2003,

having in mind Declaration from Pan European Preparatory Conference for WSIS, Bucharest 2002.

noting: that objectives of the Round Table are to increase awareness on the gender dimension in preparation for WSIS process,

further noting: that objectives of the Round Table are to draw attention of inclusion of gender perspective in all processes of preparation of National programmes for Information Society,

the participants of this Round Table **call upon** Government, Civil Society Organizations, Non Governmental Organization, Private Sector Entities, Research and Educational Institutions, Academia, Media and other stakeholders to recognize:

- That in the process of bridging the digital divide gender divide should be eliminated
- The importance of ICT as a tool to promote women's empowerment, rights and dignity and full participation in the information society
- That ICT offers immense possibilities for enhancing women's participation in socio-economic and political development that will reduce poverty and improve quality of life
- The potential of ICT to overcome women's isolation, give all women a voice and improve governance with a view to achieving gender equality.

The participants of this Round Table recommend:

a) to government:

1. To ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective and coordination of the gender activities in all domains of national ICT policies and legislation,
2. Support the creation of locally relevant and gender sensitive educational materials that uses local languages for use on the Internet and in other media,
3. Build ICT capacity of marginalized groups and provide ICT skills to young people,
4. Support programs that give instructors especially females the skills to effectively teach ICT skills and use ICT in education delivery,
5. To put in place favorable and enabling financial and procurement policies to assist women to establish and sustain SMEs, for poverty reduction,

6. Encourage the development of partnerships between and among governments, NGOs, private sector, corporations, community, academic institutions, and different stakeholders to promote ICT in SME and entrepreneurship development,
7. Provide affordable ICT assets, resources, and bandwidth to rural areas through regulations on obligations for universal access.
8. Ensure that State delegation for WSIS will have 30% of women members.

b) To state delegation for WSIS:

1. To include gender dimension in state statement for WSIS,
2. To support gender inclusion in WSIS Declaration and Action plan.

c) To UN and other International organizations in Serbia and Montenegro:

1. Support ICT capacity building for women to enhance their capability to transfer knowledge to different target groups.
2. Support the partnership with NGO's to prepare and held seminars, workshops and courses on gender mainstreaming in ICT sector.

d) To private sector:

1. Encourage the development of web content that is relevant and useful for women,
2. Strengthen ICT based networks,
3. Mobilize resources to invest in ICT for development with specific reference to the advancement and benefits for rural women like telemedicine.

e) To NGOs:

1. Encourage and organize the training of women to use ICT,
2. Encourage the training of women and children with disability and promote the application of Web-accessibility principles in Web design to have equal access to information,
3. Provide training on how to incorporate gender perspectives in planning processes in ICT projects, particularly for rural communities.

f) To media

1. To promote the benefit of ICT in improvement of human lives
2. To encourage women from rural areas to use ICT printing articles and broadcasting suitable programmes.