



Defend the Gender Equality Paragraphs in the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action

A CALL BY THE WSIS GENDER CAUCUS

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The WSIS Gender Caucus applauds the adoption of gender equality and women's rights issues in the most recent version of the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action¹ (14 November 2003).

Gender Equality in the Declaration of Principles ADOPTED:

Specifically, we applaud the in-principle adoption of the following at the Third Preparatory Meeting Resumed Session in November 2003:

- *Paragraph 2. Highlights the challenge to harness the potential of ICTs to promote the Millenium Development Goals including the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.*
- *Paragraph 10. Demonstrates a commitment to ensuring the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end, we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool.*
- *Paragraph 26. Recognises that literacy and universal primary education are key factors for building a fully inclusive information society, paying particular attention to the special needs of girls and women.*

Gender Equality in the Plan of Action

We further note that the Plan of Action has the following paragraphs which are not in square brackets and which therefore stand a greater chance of being adopted.

- *Paragraph C4 12 g) Proposes the removal of gender barriers to ICT education and training and proposes equal opportunities in ICT-related fields for women and girls. It also notes the importance of targeting young girls with the aim of increasing the number of women in ICT careers and promoting the exchange of best practices on the integration of gender perspectives in ICT education.*
- *Paragraph C6 14 q) Encourages governments in collaboration with stakeholders to formulate ICT policies that foster entrepreneurship, innovation and investment, with particular reference to the promotion of participation by women.*

¹ Document WSIS/PC-3/DT/6 Rev 1_E

- *Paragraph C7 c) Promotes teleworking to enable citizens, particularly in the developing countries, LDCs, and small economies, to be able to live better lives in their societies and to work anywhere, and to increase employment opportunities for women, and for those with disabilities*
- *Paragraph C7 d) Promotes early intervention programmes in science and technology that should target young girls, in order to increase the number of women in ICT careers.*
- *Paragraph C8 24 h) Promotes programmes better focused on gender-sensitive curricula in formal and non-formal education for all and enabling communication and media literacy for women with a view to building the capacity of girls and women to understand and to develop ICT content.*
- *Paragraph C9 25 e) Promotes balanced and diverse portrayals of women and girls by the media.*
- *Paragraph D28 Suggests that the Digital Solidarity Agenda aims at putting in place the conditions for mobilising human, financial and technological resources to facilitate inclusion of all men and women in the emerging Information Society*
- *Paragraph E29 a) Promotes development of a composite ICT Development (Digital Opportunity) Index which could present analytical work on national policies and implementation, depending on national circumstances, including gender analysis.*
- *Paragraph E29 d) Promotes development of gender-specific indicators on ICT use and needs, and the identification of measurable performance indicators to assess the impact of funded ICT projects on the lives of women and girls.*

We note with concern however that the entire Plan of Action is in square brackets which means that these crucial paragraphs could be overturned.

VOTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

We call on all government delegates attending the High Level Third Preparatory Meeting Resumed Session taking place in Geneva on 5 & 6 December 2003 to

- Defend the existing paragraphs on gender equality and women's rights in the Declaration of Principles
- Adopt all gender equality paragraphs in the in the Plan of Action.

Your vote means that the world is one step closer to a genuinely inclusive World Information Society.

For more information on this brief and additional resources, during the High Level PrepCom 3 Resumed Session contact: Shafika Isaacs, WSIS Gender Caucus Steering Committee, Mobile: +41 76 5248230, Email: sisaac@genderwsis.org or Oliva Acosta, Gender Caucus Media Liaison, Mobile: +41 76 3039730 Email: oa.costa@va.com

The WSIS Gender Caucus is a multi-stakeholder group of women and men from national governments, civil society organizations, NGOs, the private sector, and the United Nations system who are working together to integrate gender equality issues into the WSIS process and outcomes.

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