



WSIS Gender Caucus Defending New Paragraph 10 in the Declaration of Principles

(Non-Paper of the President of the WSIS PrepCom on the Declaration of Principles, 5 November 2003)

The WSIS Gender Caucus notes attempts at the SubCommittee 2 Plenary Discussion on Monday 10 November 2003, to remove the importance of the new Paragraph 10 which is the main paragraph in the Declaration of Principles highlighting the importance of integrating gender equality perspectives.

We call for the defence of this paragraph and support the proposal by the South African Government Delegation to amend the current Paragraph 10.

EXISTING PARAGRAPH 10:

We affirm that development of ICTs provides enormous promise for women, who should be an integral part of and key actors, in the Information Society. We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis on equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. We should mainstream a gender perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

We affirm that.... We should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end.

JUSTIFICATION

Historically gender equality advocates in the Information Society have made numerous statements which have been adopted in the UN system, with particular reference to mainstreaming gender. We refer inter alia, to the following :

1. The Statement by the Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) Meeting in New York in February 2003;
2. CSW Resolution 46/3 Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into all Policies and Programs in the United Nations System; and
3. The ECOSOC adopted Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 which called for the mainstreaming of gender in the entire UN System

These statements emphasize:

1. That women form up to 50% of the world's population and cannot therefore be reduced to a mere 'vulnerable group';
2. The critical importance of 'mainstreaming' gender equality perspectives in all aspects of the Information Society including infrastructure, access, capacity building, policy and content development issues; and
3. That mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality;

We commend the government delegations from Canada, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and Switzerland for defending this paragraph and encourage more government delegates to support it.

For more information on this paragraph and additional resources, during the PrepCom 3 Resumed Session contact: Shafika Isaacs, WSIS Gender Caucus Steering Committee, Mobile: +41 76 5248230, Email: sisaac@genderwsis.org