



## **WSIS Gender Caucus Orientation Session**

**Effective Lobbying and Advocacy  
for Change and Gender Equality**

**WSIS GENDER CAUCUS  
Context and Background**

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**Geneva, Switzerland**

**13 September 2003**

## Definitions

**Gender Equality** – equality under the law, equality of opportunity (including equality of rewards for work and equality in access to human capital and other productive resources that enable opportunity), and equality of voice (the ability to influence and contribute to the development process).<sup>1</sup>

### Lobbying and Advocacy

“The general effort of trying to convince others about the correctness of one’s agenda by using various means of communication is considered advocacy. Advocacy is the big umbrella concept that encompasses a vast array of communication methods used to influence a particular or general opinion. Lobbying is a specific method of advocacy. All advocacies are not lobbying but all lobbying is advocacy.”

In short, we can say lobbying is:

- Endeavoring to persuade decision-makers to agree with you
- A creative, determined, focused, aware and persistent activity
- A hard-edged activity which involves you being taken seriously and annoying people/crossing swords. **But it does not have to be a war**
- An activity about people and power **not** issues - success/failure frequently is a result of the people involved with lobbying the people in power rather than the issue itself
- A way of thinking, analyzing, seeing and creating patterns of responses<sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Engendering Development, A World Bank Policy Research Report, 2001

<sup>2</sup> Source: Business and Professional Women , BPW NZ

The purpose of this presentation is to give brief background information on the WSIS Gender Caucus and map out the way forward in terms of activities and partnerships as a way forward to achieving the core objective of intervening in the larger context of the WSIS process.

It has been noted that availability of ICT infrastructure is a prerequisite for improving the basic economic conditions, communication facilities and social change of a country's population.

The WSIS-Gender Caucus is a multi-stakeholder group consisting of women and men from national governments, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the United Nations system. The development objective of the WSIS-Gender Caucus is to ensure that gender equality and women's rights are integrated into WSIS, its processes and outcomes.

## **WHY A GENDER INTERVENTION IS REQUIRED IN THE WSIS PROCESS**

To:

- Ensure that gender equality and women's rights are acknowledged as cross-cutting principles
- Include women as leaders and decision-makers in all planning processes for the Summit and recognition that women's perspectives can make a significant contribution to aligning the Summit with the Millennium Development Goals;
- Facilitate and encourage women as members of national delegations and representatives of civil society and business by setting targets for delegations to include at least 30% women including gender and ICT experts<sup>3</sup>;
- Include in the theme of applications --design of ICT projects which take women's needs into account, for example by developing technology solutions suited to rural women, women

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<sup>3</sup> Building on commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action 1995

- in conflict areas, and applications that assist with the HIV/AIDS pandemic
- Develop projects that will collect and, analyze, appropriate gender specific data and reporting mechanisms to evaluate and monitor the impact of ICT developments on women and girls;
  - Implement an information dissemination campaign that includes a wide range of media such as radio, drama and print and variety of languages.
  - Commission a study on the interaction between gender equality and ICT, which should include development of gender equality, and ICT baseline study, indicators, conceptual tools and case studies on the impact of ICT on achieving gender equality, to inform the dialogue of the Summit.

## **GC CORE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES**

The purpose of the core programme of activities is to work out the appropriate mechanisms for the day-to-day working relations with partner organizations in order to achieve its objective. It is also to show case these activities and strengthen the value of the GC intervention in the information society to other advocates, senior policy makers and donors.

### **The GC core programmes of activities are:**

Lobbying and Advocacy  
Electronic Networking  
Events  
Research and Documentation  
Communications and Outreach  
Capacity Building  
Fundraising  
Civil Society Bureau gender focal point team  
Regional Activities

A series of activities under the above programmes are being planned for execution over the next coming months.

Additional activities will include on-going strategic alliance building, partnerships on WSIS process national programmes and developing of a web site [www.genderwsis.org](http://www.genderwsis.org) Developing strategic alliances and relationships with other gender advocates would also be a primary activity of the GC. Each potential alliance and partnership would be aimed at providing specific experience and expertise to the GC.

## **MAJOR MILESTONES OF THE WSIS GC**

The WSIS Gender Caucus was formed during the African regional preparatory conference (Bamako 2002), which took place in Mali from 25-30<sup>th</sup> May 2002 with an initial registered number of 10 organizations. At present the GC has about 100 registered organizations.

Participation and interventions at PrepCom I September 2002  
Geneva

Participation and interventions at PrepCom II February 2003  
Geneva

Participation and interventions at PreCom III 2003 Geneva

Participation at the UNIFEM Diaspora Meeting in Uganda April 2003

Participation at the ITU WGGI Meeting in July 2003

Participation at the Highway Africa Conference in South Africa  
September 2003

Participation in PreCom III September 2003 Geneva

## **GC BENCH MARKS**

Interventions at different WSIS Prep COM 1, 2, 3 and Intersessional Meetings

Until March and August 2003 respectively, the GC did not have the resources or personnel to develop strategic alliances with partner organizations nor develop and implement a full range of development programmes and activities.

A Steering Committee formed in March 2003 to voluntarily formulate and spearhead programmes and activities designed to promote the engagement and inclusion of women in the information society.

Within a month of the formation of this Steering Committee, the Sub-Finance Committee conceptualized a project proposal was submitted to Nordic funding partners for funding consideration.

By July 2003, the GC received a three-year (2003-2006) funding commitment from Nordic funding partners. The GC Funding commitment from the Nordic partners was the catalyst to develop and implement a programme of activities that would feed into the overall WSIS Plan of Action.

By end of July and beginning of August, the GC contracted consultants to implement its programme of activities as outlined in the document.

A web site [www.genderwsis.org](http://www.genderwsis.org) that is currently being developed that will provide information on the GC and its partners as well as increase its communication flow and ability of all gender advocates in electronic networking and sharing of a wide range of activities and resources. Though the web site is currently in the English Language, plans are underway to have French and Spanish versions soon.

## **EVALUATION**

The GC Steering Committee in addition to consulting with all other partners and gender experts will evaluate its strategic plan and make adjustments. The GC is currently in the process of developing its organizational structure.

Following completion of each programme of activity, a full evaluation report will be submitted and reviewed by the Steering Committee and other stakeholders including their observations, analysis and recommendations.

The GC Steering Committee will meet regularly online and occasionally physically to review status updates and evaluations and prepare a "lessons learned" report that will be distributed to other stakeholders.

## **OUTCOMES OF ORIENTATION WORKSHOP**

The outcomes of this orientation and other national workshop programmes are important not only to the GC but also to its partners, other advocates and the WSIS process.

It is envisaged that the outcomes will:

- ✓ Increase cohesion of the Gender Caucus
- ✓ Equip participants with strategic lobbying and advocacy skills
- ✓ Develop a strategic lobbying and advocacy document and tool kit that will successfully provide timely and crucial interventions into the WSIS Plan of Action
- ✓ Initiate and strengthen partnerships with other advocates
- ✓ Encourage sharing of best experiences
- ✓ Encourage and facilitate networking, exchange and resource sharing among all participants
- ✓ Develop a pool of experts in different fields

**Steering Committee** – consisting of Shafika Isaacs, Eva Rathgeber, Pat Faccin, Ingunn Yssen, Jacqueline Morris, Lettie Longwe, Rosario Gracia-Luque, Gillian Goddard, Gloria Bonder, Vicky Martin, Ruth Ochieng, Gillian Marcelle and Sucharita Eashwar.