Bird of Feather Discussion: Redefining Rights for a Gender Inclusive Networked Future

Background

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 2016[1] indicates that although average human development, improved significantly across all regions over the last fifteen years, one in three people worldwide still continue to live in low levels of human development. Systemic discrimination against women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, among other groups, are the barriers which are leaving them behind.

The ITU Report on ICT Facts and Figures 2016 indicates that the global Internet user gender gap has grown from 11% in 2013 to 12.2% in 2016 and developing nations such as Africa (23%) have a larger access gap than developed nations such as Americas (2%). They had further estimated that by the end of 2016, only one in seven people is expected to be online from Least Developing Nations (LDCs), of which, only 31% of them would be women.[2]

Existing gender disparities, discrimination and inequalities, especially of people living in the Global South in developing and least developed countries, have severely impacted the gender digital divide. Therefore, a stronger focus on those excluded and on actions to dismantle these barriers is urgently needed to ensure sustainable human development for all.

Empowering women and other disadvantaged groups, providing them meaningful and affordable access, enabling and rendering a greater voice in decision-making processes, requires a more refined analysis of key data to inform actions such as assessing their participation and autonomy, focussing on the quality of development rather than quantity is the need of the hour.

This is especially critical today in this digital age, where we do not want the women to be left behind, with their rights abused. Only when women are empowered digitally, would they be able to "Shape their own Future" which is the overarching theme of IGF 2017, along with the future of their families.

Abstract of the Birds of Feather (BOF)

The objective of the BOF session would be to share and learn from the experiences of women working in the field of Internet Governance and gender from the Global South. They would be sharing their experiences and perspectives on the challenges and their views on ways to improve the gender digital rights empowering women from these region to shape their own digital future. The current move in many countries of the global south including India is to digitize all services including financial services and facilities, to empower the citizens and bring a level playing field. However to achieve this vision the challenge today is to create policies and improve the social environment where women can freely access the internet, in their preferred language, watch content which they want, express themselves online without fear of being trolled, get equal

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[1] http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016_human_development_report.pdf
[2] http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2016.pdf

opportunities in the technical fields and encouragement to become social entrepreneurs through the generation of business and digital content.

The participants are expected to share regional and national perspectives on the social, structural and policy challenges to enhance gender inclusiveness for a connected future, highlighting specific concerns and sharing of the best practices and initiatives undertaken in their region by various stakeholders, to digitally empower women and those who are left out, providing them meaningful access, entrepreneurial opportunities and encouraging women in technology.

During the discussion the speakers would attempt to try and identify main global challenges related to gender rights, while highlighting specific regional or national issues, share best practices which nations or regions have adopted to overcome those challenges. Then they would attempt to share the areas of public policy or social aspects that need to be addressed along with suggestions, to improve the situation.

This would be an interactive session where participants would also be given time to share their perspectives.

Expected Outcome:

At the end of the session we expect participants to get an insight on the,
- Existing challenges in creating a gender inclusive networked future
  - Identify the common challenges across Global South nations
  - Emphasize the unique regional or national challenges if any.
- Best practices adopted by certain nations or regions to overcome the challenges
- Areas which need reforms along with suggestions;
  - Policy related to improving gender rights
  - Social and Cultural development.
  - Others

Panelists:
- Amrita Choudhury, CCAOI India - Civil Society Stakeholder Group - Female
- Maritza Aguero Minano, AUI Peru / LACRALO Secretariat - Academia - Female
- Evelyn Namara, Techpreneur Uganda - Private Sector Stakeholder Group - Female
- Nadira ALARAJ, ISOC Palestine - Technical Community Stakeholder Group - Female
- Nooria Ahmadi, AfIGF, Afghanistan - Technical Community Stakeholder Group - Female

Duration: 60 mins

Tentative Session Schedule:

- Introduction to the subject 5 mins
- Outlining the Current Scenario and Challenges by Participants 15 min
- Discussion on Regional and National Initiatives 10 mins
- Suggested improvements 10 mins

- Open Discussion 15 mins
- Summarizing key take away from the session 5 mins

Remote participation:

This workshop will rely on IGF support for remote participation and will also experiment with a variety of tools to bring in multiple views for the debate previously, during and after the presentation. Interactive document-building, intensive use of conversation in instantaneous social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or Weibo can be completed by warm-up sessions to the workshop with short video messages.

#GlobalSouthGender #IGF2017 will be the tags used.

Remote moderator/ Renata Aquino Ribeiro

Rapporteur: Angélica Contreras, Youth Observatory Mexico Civil Society

Session Tags:
- Access and Diversity
- Policies Enabling Access
- Digital Literacy
- Human Rights Online
- Gender Issues