



Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

Fifth Meeting of the Telecommunication
Development Advisory Group (TDAG)
Geneva, 22-23 February 2001

Document TDAG-5/5-E
29 January 2001
Original: English

Note by the Director

TASK FORCE ON GENDER ISSUES (TFGI)

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to report on the activities and progress of the TFGI since the October 2000 meeting.

Main activities of the TFGI Working Groups:

Working Group 1: *Reform, legislation and regulation of telecommunications*

In conjunction with the Development Symposium for Regulators held at ITU Hqs 20-22 November 2000, a Gender Perspective Workshop was offered to the regulators on the afternoon of 22 November 2000. The workshop was intended to assist telecommunication professionals to rethink telecommunications policy from a gender perspective and implement gender-aware policies in their work. It focused on the theme "Ensuring affordable access" using a participatory approach to provide an important opportunity for regulators and policy makers to reflect on practical examples and share their own experiences to illustrate how gender perspectives in telecommunications policy can ensure a positive impact. The workshop was attended by 30 delegates from the Symposium and 10 ITU staff. Some excerpts from the workshop assessment are encouraging to note.

I hope that these kinds of workshops will take place again often with the aim of correcting the negative imbalance of women.

Let us have more of these workshops

A workshop of this kind should be convened again if possible within a year and for a much longer duration.

As a follow-up to this Workshop, Alison Gillwald, TFGI Steering Committee Member, has been requested to make a presentation on "*Gender perspectives in policy and regulatory guidelines on Universal Service and Licensing*", organized by the Telecommunication Regulators Association of Southern Africa (TRASA) from 19 to 21 February in Swaziland.

Working Group 2. *Technologies and global information infrastructure development and applications*

The gender questionnaire was re-sent in November 2000 and a total of 62 replies have now been entered in the database. Sixty percent of the organizations who replied indicated that they would be interested in receiving advice and/or assistance in implementing gender equality strategies. The questionnaire has been revised taking into account the data received last year.

Working Group 3: *Rural development and universal service/access*

During a recent mission undertaken by Mr. Yapi Bancouli, ITU official (Area office, Dakar) to

Niamey, Niger, he recommended that BDT assist with the pilot project initiated by the TFGI to establish a telecentre for women close to the urban center Niamey.

The TFGI recommends that the BDT take action to implement the creation of the two pilot telecentres in Niger and Ethiopia.

Working Group 4: *Finance and economics, and development of partnership with private sector and NGOs*

The Chairperson of WG4 and the Secretary of the Task Force met to discuss new initiatives for partnerships and follow-up with the TDAG sub-group for private sector.

Working Group 5: *Capacity building through human resources development and management*

A meeting was held at ITU Hqs in January 2001 with the Director of ESMT to discuss follow-up to the gender training given for ESMT trainers last year. The discussion centered around a strategy to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in the training modules, the importance of documenting ESMT activities to foster awareness and sensitization and the continued collaboration with NGOs working on gender issues in Dakar.

Extension of the gender training to the English Speaking Center of Excellence in Africa is recommended for implementation.

Working Group 6: *Networking and Partnerships*

The report "*The Task Force on Gender Issues: A catalyst for women's advancement in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)*" is available to TDAG participants as a separate document.

An on-line conference is planned to begin early this year with members of the TFGI. Each month the discussion will focus on the topic of one of the TFGI working groups. The discussion will promote awareness in the telecommunications sector, gather information from TFGI members on their projects and activities in their respective countries and generate a report to the next TFGI annual meeting.

Activities being launched by the ITU Group on Gender Issues

The ITU has been nominated to be task manager on "Gender and ICTs" and is carrying out a survey on UN projects currently being implemented. A preliminary report will be presented to the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE) at its Sixth Session in New York, 27 February - 2 March 2001.

A survey was also initiated by ITU to determine the use of "Chairman, Chairwoman, Chairperson and Chair" in the UN System. The results will be reported to IACWGE.