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**Contribution by the Republic of India**

# Promoting Gender parity at itu

1. **Background**

ITU is the global focal point for governments and private sector in the arena of global telecommunication development. However, its key priority also lies in enabling universal access of telecommunication and information to people across the world. The role of ITU is significant in encouraging participation of people from all sections and sectors of the world.

In this context, it can be observed that bridging global digital divide is crucial in bridging gender divide and vice-versa. In a scenario where global internet penetration is 12 percent lower for females than for males, the role of ITU is very crucial to bring gender parity in order to enable women to reap benefits of today’s information age and knowledge economy.

As an agency of UN, ITU is a crucial part of the global agenda to promote gender equality and empowering women. ITU, in this regard has taken some initiatives to promote gender equality. Some of them are as follows.

* Resolution 70 to mainstream gender perspective in ITU;
* Resolution 48 reaffirms the need to facilitate the recruitment of more women professionals and higher categories, especially at senior levels.
* ITU regularly participates in UNWOMEN meetings on gender equality. ITU and UNWOMEN launched EQUALS initiative to bridge gender digital divide.

However, in terms of improving the access, skills, career and leadership of women, more efforts are always desirable. The gender digital divide presents real challenge for the world as future economic growth depends upon the full participation of the workforce, including women. Unless, women are part of the technological advancements and made stakeholders and leaders of global telecommunication, the larger goal of social and economic empowerment of women would become a serious challenge.

There is a huge untapped potential in the form of talented women who can use ITU as a platform to advance the cause of gender equality and empowerment across the world. The pace of changes in technology in today’s world requires a highly skilled and performing workforce. Given the that there are less women in the field, the ITU should be more aggressive in terms of out­reach in order to reach more qualified women around the world. It should promote more leadership opportunities for women in different categories and grades.

1. **Proposal**
2. In ITU, women are holding less than 25 percent of technical positions. Therefore, member countries and ITU should make efforts in capacity building and recruitment of more women in technical positions.
3. The average age for junior positions at professional level is high, i.e. 33 years for women whereas its 30 years for men. Young women should be encouraged for recruitment at junior positions.
4. More women should be encouraged to be part of ITU conferences, working groups and meetings.
5. The member countries should hold specific workshops and conferences involving women delegates of ITU to spread awareness about opportunities and challenges for women at global level.

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