

## Session Outcome Document

### Implementing Adaptive Governance and Sustainability to Boost Gender Equality at the Nexus of technology and Innovation in Research and Development

**WOMENVAI - 30/05/2024**

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Agenda/Session/253>

#### Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

The key challenges to boost gender equality in Science and Technology include :

- Structural barriers: persistent gender gaps and inequalities due to structural barriers within the research and innovation sector require specific actions to overcome<sup>1</sup>
- Underrepresentation: women and girls are significantly underrepresented in STEM including AI which impacts the diversity of thought in innovation and research<sup>2</sup>

Addressing these challenges is crucial for creating inclusive environments that harness all talents and perspectives, thereby enhancing the quality and impact of technological advancements and innovations. As such, there is a need for better integration of the gender dimension into research and innovation content to improve the quality and societal relevance of the outcomes. We discussed solutions:

- (1) Gender and AI legislation: Ensuring that AI technologies are designed and used in ways that promote gender equality and do not perpetuate existing gender stereotypes or discrimination. And encouraging transparency and accountability in AI systems to monitor and mitigate gender-based disparities;
- (2) Having gender equality, technology and innovation being at the center: integrating gender equality considerations into technological advancements and innovation strategies.
- (3) Having new paradigm approached that are more flexible: Fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement to ensure policies and practices remain relevant and effective in promoting gender equality.

#### Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025, please share your views on the emerging trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to date (5-8 bullets)

- Emerging Trends: the digital landscape is increasingly characterized by convergence, requiring collaborative approaches between regulators, government authorities, industry, and stakeholders and yet the gender balance is not yet done from our perspective;
- The AI and Machine Learning (ML) are driving the development of new digital learning and collaboration solutions, enhancing the outreach and impact of capacity-building programs:

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<sup>1</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/op-ed/2023/03/op-ed-technology-and-gender-equality-bringing-women-and-girls-to-the-centre-of-innovation>

these are growing fast without considering the Gender equality needed at all phases (legal, technical development, human resource education, stakeholders' involvement, etc.)

- Although there have been key milestones in internet governance, sector reform, and the progression of e-government, with open data emerging as a tool for transparency, yet there is an opportunity to utilize ICTs and new technologies to build an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

**Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, commitments, figures, and success stories (3-5 bullet points))**

All of the above propose tangible outcomes at different levels (from field action to highlevel governance:

- The IA toolkit “Génération IA” by EPF School of Engineers, led by the association that aims to make AI accessible to all by organizing roundtables, conferences, and creating tools to educate the public particularly the younger generation;<sup>3</sup>
- The WOMENVAI Digital Academy offers action-based workshops and training sessions aimed at capacity building in entrepreneurship for women entrepreneurs and small enterprises led by women, with a focus on gender equality and empowerment aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals;<sup>4</sup>
- The KIDSVAI initiative offers interactive workshops for school children, particularly girls, to deconstruct gender stereotypes and spark interest in technical professions, showcasing that these fields are open to all genders <sup>5</sup>
- The WOMENVAI Statement made at the occasion of the UN WOMEN CSW68 <sup>6</sup>

**Actionable plan and key recommendations (2-5 points)**

- Advocacy and awareness: promote the removal of gender bias and stereotypes in STEM education and careers to foster an inclusive digital economy
- Capacity Building: deploy initiatives for women and girls in STEM, providing training and mentorship programs to enhance their skills and knowledge in STEM disciplines
- Legal frameworks designed in a way that have these issue incorporated in them make sure that these are known and implemented.

**Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2025 (one paragraph)**

Preparing the Pact of the Future through ICTs is pivotal for a sustainable future and a more effective WSIS. Central to this is the integration of green ICT and sustainable practices within the information sector to diminish its environmental impact and foster ecological harmony. Importantly, ICTs are instrumental in combating climate change, offering enhanced monitoring and data analysis for informed action. Crucially, these efforts must prioritize gender equality by actively involving and empowering young women alongside their male counterparts. Their inclusion is vital, as it ensures diverse perspectives in developing innovative solutions and propels the crucial sustainability endeavours of the WSIS process.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epf.fr/actualites/generation-ia-l-association-qui-rend-l-intelligence-artificielle-accessible-tous>

<sup>4</sup> <https://womensvai.org/womensvai-academy/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://womensvai.org/kidsvai/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://womensvai.org/commission-on-the-status-of-women-68th-session/>