

Session Outcome Document

Leveraging Multistakeholder Action to Combat TFGBV through the Global Partnership

National Democratic Institute

Wednesday 29 May 17:00–17:45

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Agenda/Session/237>

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- More women in politics improves outcomes for all people. The examples are [global and consistent](#). We know that the full participation of all people makes democracy better, but around the world, women are backing away from political participation, and [the #1 reason](#) they give is the attacks they face on social media. In the midst of elections, the increase of gendered disinformation is even more apparent. Online violence against women in politics is blinking red for democracy globally, and immediate steps must be taken to address it.
- Anti-rights state and non-state actors [use digital technologies](#) and platforms to target and exclude individual women and their groups strategically. They [delegitimize community campaigns](#) and when women and young girls see that happen, they keep quiet and [shy away from participating](#) for fear of harm or harm to their families.
- [Generative AI](#) more readily enables the large-scale and automated creation of falsified intimate images of the targeted women and uses AI-powered bots to amplify inauthentic messages. The attacks go beyond what can be charged in court with threats of physical violence (where laws exist). They focus on their gender roles and relations, as opposed to their policy and advocacy priorities.
- The panel highlighted the Global Partnership [meeting](#) which provided a unique opportunity for stakeholders to come together to shift the conversation around TFGBV from admiring the problem to planning the solutions. These solutions were developed by women in the global south and represent priority issues for the 14 governments of the [Global Partnership](#).
- Key partners for this conversation included National Democratic Institute who sponsored the event with the support of the UK government, with the United States and Kenya serving as copartners. UN Women, the Associate for Progressive Communications, and UNICEF also served as key partners for that gathering that informed the report presented.

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)

- When the WSIS action lines were developed, TFGBV (technology facilitated gender based violence) was not an issue clearly identified by member countries and stakeholders. The global growth of the challenge was specifically given voice in the context of the IGF, which sparked governments and civil society to work together to have the issue included in the 67th Committee on the Status of Women as a major concern. This exemplifies the power of the WSIS process to include new and critical issues that intersect with global priorities.
- WSIS must adapt its existing lines to acknowledge and address the rapid development of emerging technologies, including generative AI, the IoT, and other technologies that have spun up since WSIS was established in 2003, and most importantly its impact on people.
- Inclusion must be rooted in every action WSIS takes. Without the inclusion of women, persons with disabilities, ethnic and racial minorities, and the Global Majority, any internet governance plan will lack stability and majority buy-in.

Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, commitments, figures, and success stories)

- Civil society has been at the lead of tracking, identifying, reporting, and combatting TFGBV, contributing more than [300 identifiable interventions](#) to address these challenges ranging from legal frameworks to efforts to assist survivors.
- The Global Partnership meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in April 2024 provided a unique opportunity for stakeholders to come together to shift the conversation around TFGBV from admiring the problem to planning the solutions, the specific focus on women in elections and critical democratic moments clearly articulates the challenge to the promise of human rights law for the full participation of all people in the digital space.
- Advocacy efforts from civil society and governments should frame the problem of TFGBV appropriately and reinforce the fact that TFGBV is a democracy and national security issue.

Actionable plan and key recommendations (2-5 points)

- TFGBV is a clear and present danger to democracy. Democracy actions that don't explicitly address the challenges that women face fail to capture the experiences of half the population. Gender and inclusion have long been a focus of democracy efforts, but the gap in aligning inclusive technology objectives to democracy and gender persists. Achieving freedom of expression for all depends on the ability to prevent threats online, and among human, civic and political rights issues, freedom of expression is at particular risk from gendered disinformation which both excludes diversity and drives malign action towards the targets.
- Governments and the technology industry must act together and civil society must demand accountability. Civil society actors have documented research globally,



WSIS+20 FORUM HIGH-LEVEL EVENT 2024

27-31 May 2024
Geneva, Switzerland

developed strategies,
support women in

too big a task given the enormous imbalance in power between CSOs and governments, and between the majority of governments and the technology industry.

- Civil society, governments, and the technology industry must keep the focus on the individual survivors while they look at the systemic problem of TFGBV. Where legal frameworks don't exist, they must be put in place – and where they are in place, they must be socialized with judges and police forces. The responsibility should not be on a female politician to explain to law enforcement why a harmful meme against her children warrants their attention as a threat to the democratic process and a human rights abuse.
- Governments and the technology industry should react swiftly when harm is done, taking action to establish a safe environment for those attacked.

and banded together to
crisis moments, but it's far

Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2025 (WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event) (one paragraph)

The global problem of TFGBV should be a key topic at the WSIS+20 Forum. Not only has this issue been clearly identified as a key topic by civil society in the context of the IGF, UNESCO and the CSW, increasingly governments and technology companies have acknowledged the challenge. It is a tangible example of an intersectional issue between the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs that is a priority for individuals, global majority driven, multi stakeholder driven and most importantly, solvable. To create a safer, more inclusive internet environment, half of the world's population must be included. Connectivity alone will not empower women to fully participate in the digital space, the frameworks and best practices around technologies are critical for the wellbeing of all people.