

## **Declaration on Promoting Gender Equality, Equity and Parity in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector**

The World Radiocommunication Conference (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2019),

*recognizing*

- a)* that while radiocommunication plays an important role in globalization and the effective development of information and communication technologies (ICT), statistically very few women participate in international radiocommunications processes;
- b)* that the work of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) can be advanced most effectively through the active inclusion and participation of women;
- c)* that there is a need to ensure that women participate actively and meaningfully in all ITU-R activities;
- d)* that the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR) has established the ITU Network of Women, launched at the 2016 World Radiocommunication Seminar, which is dedicated to promoting women in radiocommunications, telecommunications/ICT and related fields;
- e)* that ITU has adopted a Gender Equality and Mainstreaming (GEM) Policy, with the aim of becoming a model organization for gender equality that leverages the power of telecommunications/ICT to empower both women and men;
- f)* the progress made by ITU in raising awareness on gender issues, specifically over the last decade, in increasing women's participation in and contribution to international forums, in studies, projects and training, and in the establishment of an internal Gender Task Force, as well as the successful establishment by ITU of an international "Girls in ICT" day to be held every year on the fourth Thursday of April;
- g)* Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on gender mainstreaming in the ITU and promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women through ICT;
- h)* Resolution 48 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on human resources management and development and, in particular, its Annex 2 "Facilitating the recruitment of women at ITU";
- i)* the United Nations Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity;
- j)* Resolution 55 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, which encourages mainstreaming a gender perspective for an inclusive and egalitarian information society;
- k)* Resolution 55 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016) of the of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, which encourages mainstreaming a gender perspective in the activities of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T);
- l)* that the ITU's strategic plan references gender issues with a view to debating and exchanging ideas to define, throughout the organization, a concrete action plan with deadlines and goals;

*m)* the EQUALS Global Partnership, of which ITU is a founding member, which is made up of other United Nations agencies, governments, the private sector, academia and civil society organizations, and which aims to reduce the gender digital divide in the world;

*n)* the recommendation in the 2016 United Nations' Joint Inspection Unit report that the "Secretary-General present to the Council for endorsement at its 2017 session an action plan to complement the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy, with specific targets, indicative timelines and monitoring measures to improve gender balance, especially at senior management levels, within each component of the Union, and report annually to the Council on its implementation",

*bearing in mind*

*a)* that a fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter adopted by world leaders in 1945 is "equal rights of men and women";

*b)* United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution E/2012/L.8, on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, which welcomed the development of the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNSWAP 2.0), and the 60th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (March, 2016), which stressed the need to ensure women's full, equal and effective participation in all fields, and leadership at all levels of decision-making in the public and private sectors, and public, social, economic and political life;

*c)* the United Nations HeForShe initiative (2014) to involve men and boys in the promotion of gender equality;

*d)* that society as a whole, particularly in the context of the information and knowledge society, will benefit from equal participation of women and men in policy-making and decision-making and from equal access to communication services for both women and men;

*e)* that the outcome document of the overall review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) acknowledged that a gender digital divide exists, called for immediate measures to achieve gender equality in Internet users by 2020, especially by significantly enhancing women's and girls' education and participation in ICT, as users, content creators, employees, entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders, and reaffirmed a commitment to ensure women's full participation in decision-making processes related to ICT;

*f)* that women continue to be under-represented in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), particularly those fields related to the development of ICT, both in academia and in the professional ranks;

*g)* that enhancing women's and girls' education and their participation in ICT also contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equity and empower all women and girls;

*h)* the 2013 report of the Working Group on Broadband and Gender of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development: Doubling Digital Opportunities – Enhancing the inclusion of women and girls in the information society,

*declares*

- 1 that ITU-R should accelerate efforts to ensure that all its policies, work programmes, information dissemination activities, publications, study groups, seminars, courses, assemblies and conferences reflect the commitment to gender equality, and promote gender balance:
- i) by according high priority to gender mainstreaming in the management, staffing and operation of ITU-R;
  - ii) through the equitable selection of women:
    - a) for posts, including those at the Professional and higher levels in BR, in addition to other relevant considerations including geographical distribution;
    - b) for roles that build expertise and expand opportunity, such as delegates, including Heads and Deputy Heads of Delegation, and counsellors in the preparation towards and at World Radiocommunication Conferences;
    - c) for the chairmen, vice-chairmen and rapporteurs of the ITU-R study groups, including CPM, and of RAG;
  - iii) by encouraging Member States, Regional Organizations and Sector Members to support the inclusion of women in all aspects of ITU-R activities including both domestic and international processes;
  - iv) by the Director of the BR:
    - a) continuing to implement the ITU GEM Policy, including supporting the implementation of recommendations from the Joint Inspection Unit relevant to gender mainstreaming, supporting the Gender Focal Points for ITU-R, and encouraging BR staff to undertake relevant training;
    - b) continuing to integrate a gender perspective in the work of the BR in accordance with the principles already applied in ITU;
    - c) including in all circular letters the statement, “The membership is encouraged to include both women and men on their delegations”;
  - v) by supporting the ongoing work of the Network of Women to ensure that all women have an opportunity to develop as ITU-R leaders;
  - vi) by supporting the ITU Secretary-General to participate in the Planet 50/50 initiative sponsored by UN Women to tackle invisible gender bias as a Geneva Gender Champion on behalf of ITU-R;
  - vii) by improving the gender balance in candidatures for chairman and vice-chairman posts so as to support the active involvement of women as well as men in radiocommunications groups and activities;
  - viii) by promoting the use of ICT for the economic and social empowerment of women and girls;

2 that the Director of the BR should conduct and publish an annual review on progress made in the Sector in advancing gender mainstreaming, including by collecting and reviewing statistics on ITU-R activities by gender, including geographical distribution, publishing current information on a public-facing web portal, and sharing findings with the Radiocommunication Assembly and the next World Radiocommunication Conference;

3 that Member States should consider and adopt a Resolution at the 2023 Radiocommunication Assembly on gender equality, equity and parity in the ITU-R,

*further declares*

1 that ITU Member States and Sector Members should encourage the adoption of proven measures to increase globally the number of women pursuing academic degrees at all levels in STEM fields, particularly those related to the ICT;

2 that ITU Member States should urgently undertake active measures to increase the number of girls receiving primary and secondary education in mathematics and science that is sufficient to prepare them for undergraduate degrees in STEM fields, particularly in electrical engineering and computer science, which are critical for the development of ICT;

3 that Member States and Sector Members should substantially increase the number of scholarships and fellowships provided to women pursuing academic degrees at all levels in STEM fields, particularly in electrical engineering and computer science;

4 that, by 2023, Member States and Sector Members should substantially increase the number of internships, training opportunities and summer jobs available for women pursuing academic degrees in fields related to the development of ICT;

5 that the Member States, Sector Members and the BR should encourage and actively support ICT education for girls and women, and support all measures that will help prepare them for a professional career in ICT.