SIDE EVENT

"Women's Empowerment in the Digital Age: Implementing WSIS Outcomes and Agenda 2030"

organized by the Governments of Costa Rica, Tunisia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America in collaboration with
ITU, UN Women, Microsoft, Mozilla and the Association for Progressive Communication

On Tuesday, 15 December 2015, 1.00 – 2:45 PM at UN Headquarters, Conference Room 6

Programme   Light Lunch will be served outside of CR 6 from 1 - 1.15pm

Introduction by H.E. Mr. Noomane Fehri, Minister of Communication Technologies and Digital Economy of the Republic of Tunisia

Presentation of GEM-Tech Award winners by Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Deputy Secretary-General, ITU

Panel Discussion
Panelists: H.E. Ms. Anusha Rehman Khan, Minister of State for IT and Telecommunications, Pakistan
H.E. Ms. Maja Fjaestad, State Secretary, Swedish Prime Minister's Office
Ms. Mitchell Baker, Executive Chairwoman of Mozilla
H.E. Ms. Catherine Novelli, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment, US
Ms. Anriette Esterhuysen, Executive Director APC
Moderator: Ms. Doreen Bogdan, Chief of Strategic Planning and Membership Department, ITU

Discussion with the Audience

Introduction of the **Action Plan** by Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director UN Women

Closing remarks by H.E. Mr. Philipp Metzger, Secretary of State and Director of the Federal Office of Communications, Switzerland

RSVP by **7 December 2015 to**:

http://www.itu.int/en/action/women/gem/Pages/registration-women-empowerment2015.aspx

This side event will build on the progress made since the adoption of the Beijing Platform of Action, WSIS and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It will provide an opportunity to identify and review challenges and possible solutions to address women's empowerment in the digital age. The meeting will also encourage stakeholders' commitment to close the gender gap in ICTs and celebrate the GEM-Tech Award 2015 winners as role models for the international community. Concluding with the presentation of an Action Plan, this meeting aims to set out the framework for critical actions to accelerate inclusive sustainable development.

2015 is a landmark year for women's empowerment in international fora. The 2030 Agenda adopted by UN Member States this September identifies ICTs as key enablers of development. The catalytic power of ICTs for development is recognized as holding 'great promise for human progress' and ICTs are cited in 4 of the 17 goals. SDG 5 – 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' – contains an implementation target reinforcing the role of ICTs for gender equality: *Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women* (SDG 5b). In July, the post-2015 development agenda was underpinned by a global framework for financing development, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*.

The inclusion of women is vital for the shift towards development and poverty eradication, yet persistent concerns regarding gender equality remain. Exactly 20 years ago, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995* called for the 'full and equal participation of women' in and through media and new technologies of communication; yet in 2014, there were just 16 women ICT Ministers in the 193 ITU Member States, and ITU estimates that 200 million fewer women than men around the world have Internet access – and the digital gender gap may well be widening. Given that over 95% of jobs today have a digital component, if women are not adequately trained, they will have reduced access to employment and will face social exclusion.

It is more than a decade since world leaders at the World Summit for the Information Society affirmed that ICT development provides enormous opportunities for women. They committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. The recently adopted WSIS+10 Outcome Document (Geneva 2014) recognizes the potential of ICTs as a tool for promoting gender equality in ICTs. The effective implementation of the WSIS Action Lines can help accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and to that end, all stakeholders should renew efforts to ensure the convergence of development processes.

More information about the event is available here:
http://www.itu.int/en/action/gender-equality/Pages/women-empowerment.aspx