

Draft Zero Draft of Agreed Conclusions

ECOSOC Commission on the Status of Women — WIMUN NY 2024

1. The Commission on the Status of Women emphasizes the critical role of digital technologies in sustainable development, building upon the foundation set by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the outcomes of relevant United Nations conferences and summits. It stresses that the full and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is essential for advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
2. The Commission reaffirms that the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, including the right to development, are crucial for the full and equal participation of women and girls in society and for women's economic empowerment.
3. The Commission reiterates the importance of international legal frameworks, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, along with their Optional Protocols that establish a global legal foundation to achieve gender equality.
4. The Commission underscores that integrating a gender-responsive approach that addresses the different situations, roles, needs, and interests of women and girls in the design of technology is crucial for the promotion and protection of their rights in the digital age.
5. The Commission recognizes that digital technologies have profoundly transformed societies, promoted innovation and offered unprecedented opportunities. The Commission also recognizes that they have the potential to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda and advance social development for all, including women and girls, by ensuring access to lifelong quality education, and health-care services.
6. The Commission further recognizes that achieving women's full participation in innovation and technological change in the digital age is essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful societies, sustainable economic growth and ending poverty in all its forms.
7. The Commission recognizes that while technology can be used to promote women's and girls' full realization of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, digital tools can also be used to perpetuate gender stereotypes and amplify inequalities between men and women, on the one hand, and boys and girls on the other.

8. The Commission acknowledges that women and girls face multiple obstacles that can undermine their ability to access information and communications technologies which are needed for them to become equipped with the knowledge, awareness and skills for their social and economic empowerment.
9. The Commission expresses concern that the economic and social fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the impacts of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters and has pushed people further into extreme poverty, particularly women and girls. It recognizes that this has magnified the unequal pace of digital transformation within and between countries since the poorest and the most vulnerable, who are the hardest hit by these health and environmental issues, are also those who lag behind the most in access to information and communications technologies.
10. The Commission also expresses deep concern that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in girls spending more time online, which has led to an increased risk of both criminal and sexual exploitation of girls.
11. The Commission recognizes that these illegal activities cuts across national boundaries and that the criminals who engage in the misuse of these digital technologies are becoming increasingly skilled at avoiding detection and investigation, and calls for international cooperation among States, their law enforcement and judicial authorities, and the private sector to increase their ability to detect and prosecute these crimes against women and girls.
12. The Commission notes with concern that new technological developments can also perpetuate existing patterns of inequality and discrimination in the absence of effective oversight and that this contributes to setbacks in gender equality and women's empowerment. It also notes with concern that there is a need to address challenges associated with the misuse of new and emerging digital technologies which can be used to incite gender violence, hatred, and discrimination.
13. The Commission also recognizes that the fulfilment of the human rights of girls requires developing their digital literacy skills as well as those of their parents or legal guardians, teachers and educators, and empowering them to report and seek help in responding to online threats and bullying and raising their awareness of online safety.
14. The Commission notes with concern the limited participation of women and girls in the conceptualization, development, implementation and use of digital technologies and reiterates the importance of including women in the decision-making process that is involved

in establishing policies and programmes to promote women's and girls' ability to use digital technologies and to address any potential negative impacts of such technologies.

15. The Commission is deeply concerned about the data on the gender digital divide that indicates more than half of the women and girls in the world do not have access to the Internet and that in the least developed countries two thirds of the women and girls do not have access.
16. The Commission recognizes that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges for all women and girls, and that there is a pressing need -- particularly in African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries, countries transitioning to a higher income per capita, countries in situations of conflict, post-conflict countries and countries affected by natural disasters -- to close the gender digital divide and increase the quality of access to the Internet by building a reliable digital infrastructure that will improve speed, stability, affordability of the Internet.
17. The Commission recognizes that a lack of access for women and girls to affordable, accessible and reliable technologies and services remains a critical challenge in many developing countries, in particular African countries, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries, countries transitioning to a higher income per capita, countries in situations of conflict, post-conflict countries and countries affected by natural disasters.
18. The Commission recognizes that new technologies are changing the structure of labour markets and that they provide new employment opportunities that require skills ranging from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology. The Commission stresses the importance of assisting women and girls in making the transition to an increasingly digital labour market by providing more technical and vocational training.
19. The Commission recognizes that in order to achieve women's full participation in the technology workforce, including well-paid careers in cloud computing, software and artificial intelligence development and data management, and to assist them in becoming entrepreneurs, innovators, researchers and industry executives and leaders, it will be necessary to put in place policies and programmes that promote equal representation of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

20. The Commission expresses concern that the share of women in information and communications technology occupations remains low, especially in developing countries and acknowledges that investment in digital literacy skills is required to boost the employability of women. The Commission stresses the importance of technical and vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities, recognizing that new technologies are transforming labor markets and creating new employment opportunities that require a range of skills, from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and information and communications technology (ICT).
21. The Commission also recognizes the importance of assisting women and girls, in developing countries and least developed countries, to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the use of the Internet to start a business through e-commerce.
22. The Commission recognizes that digital literacy is negatively impacted by the lack of investments in information and communications technology infrastructure as well as investments in improving school connectivity. It also recognizes the critical role of teachers and parents in ensuring that girls receive a quality education, and the importance of strengthening their capacities, skills and competencies in providing online and digital learning by providing support through training and improving the technological infrastructure so that the quality of their access is as good as it can be.
23. The Commission also recognizes the importance of fully engaging men and boys, as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
24. The Commission calls upon governments at all levels, in collaboration with relevant United Nations entities, international and regional organizations, and in accordance with their national priorities, to engage civil society groups, including women's organizations, youth-led groups, faith-based groups, and the private sector along with other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to undertake the following actions:
 - (a) Implement existing commitments and responsibilities concerning the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, ensuring their complete and equitable access to human rights and fundamental freedoms to enhance their quality of life, livelihoods, and overall well-being;
 - (b) Promote the economic empowerment of women and the transition of women from the informal to the formal economy by improving their digital literacy skills through

technical and vocational training to facilitate their entry or re-entry into the labour force;

- (c) Ensure that all women and girls have the opportunity to acquire advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and information and communications technology (ICT);
- (d) Promote the leadership of women and their full, effective and equal participation in decision-making regarding the development of new technologies;
- (e) Harness the potential of technology and innovation to improve women's and girls' lives and close the digital and knowledge divide;
- (f) Close the gender digital divide and ensure that the benefits of digital technologies are available to all women and girls by building a reliable digital infrastructure that will improve speed, stability, affordability of the Internet in developing countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries, countries transitioning to a higher income per capita, countries in situations of conflict, post-conflict countries and countries affected by natural disasters.
- (g) Invest in research and development to spur the development of lower-cost connectivity options;
- (h) Regulate emerging digital technologies to tackle the challenges associated with the use of such technologies in ways that have adverse impacts on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;
- (i) Promote online safety and raise awareness among women and girls on how to identify online predators and how to report them to law enforcement;
- (j) Improve coordination between States, their law enforcement and judicial authorities, and the private sector to increase their ability to detect and prosecute criminal activities against women and girls that involve the use of digital technologies;
- (k) Increase the quality of access to the digital technologies for women and girls by investing more in information and communications technology infrastructure and equipment, particularly for those living in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries, countries transitioning to a higher income per capita, countries in situations of conflict, post-conflict countries and countries affected rebuilding infrastructure after natural disasters.

28. The Commission calls upon the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to continue its pivotal role in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by coordinating the efforts of the UN system to achieve gender equality and by engaging civil society, the private sector, employers' associations, trade unions, and other stakeholders, to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.