High-level Panel Follow-up Roundtable 1C - Digital Inclusion
1st Session: 6 December 2019 11:30 AM – 1:30PM EST

Meeting Note

Recommendation 1C: We call on the private sector, civil society, national governments, multilateral banks and the UN to adopt specific policies to support full digital inclusion and digital equality for women and traditionally marginalised groups. International organisations such as the World Bank and the UN should strengthen research and promote action on barriers women and marginalised groups face to digital inclusion and digital equality

Champions:

Government of Mexico, UN Women

Key Constituents:

The Government of Canada, The Government of Denmark, The Government of France, The Government of Japan, The Government of Malawi (Least Developed Country Group Representative), The Government of Sweden, Government of Switzerland, European Union (EU), African Development Bank (AFDB), Data2x, Global Partners Digital, Internet Society (ISOC), International Trade Centre (ITC), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), UNAM Mobile, West Virginia University, Omidyar, Wikipedia, Web Foundation, World Bank

Opening remarks of the recommendation Champions

This recommendation can seek to scale up ongoing efforts to close the digital divide and create new collaborations where necessary – recognizing that the digital divide is growing and that current efforts are falling short. Ongoing initiatives in the areas of digital inclusion for women and migrants will be central to the work, while also supporting efforts for other traditionally marginalized groups in the digital space, including around, participation, representation and skill development, especially for private sector work and trade. This work can be regularly updated to Member States through the "Group of Friends on Digital Technology" co-chaired by the Governments of Finland, Mexico and Singapore as well as through the Beijing+25 events in Mexico City and Paris in 2020.

Themes raised by the Key Constituents

Engagement of all data sources: There was an expressed need for increased data on digital technologies and women, where gaining knowledge on how gender gaps arise and how data can be used to help close them will be critical. Data and information on other marginalized groups is also critical but it must be coordinated among many sources, including governments, private sector, civil society and include geospatial data wherever possible. It was noted that priority areas for consideration of digital inclusion

were agreed by G20 countries recently in Japan, including infrastructure, literacy, gender gaps, SMEs, elders, people with disabilities.

Digital inclusion expertise and experience: Many of the key constituents have been working in this space for over a decade and there is a history of learning and best practices that must be applied to initiatives moving forward. This includes digital project management experience, data methodologies, and personal experiences like the opening of digital Ambassadors offices, and UN processes like the first committee resolution on ICT for sustainable development.

The multitude of digital divides: Several constituents noted that there is more than one divide within the digital sphere. There is a between men and women that must be bridged but there's also a divide between rural and urban and between developed and developing countries, especially least developed countries where only 19 per cent of people connected to the internet on average.

Digital inclusion, security and digital rights: Speakers noted that that digital access goes hand in hand with security and human rights. Many least developed countries lack legislation to protect privacy and political processes, noting that a unified rather than fragmented approach to digital inclusion and digital capacity building is needed – while also considering regional and cultural differences.

Closing remarks

This Roundtable group offers three areas for progress 1) identifying gaps and challenges to closing the digital divide 2) the opportunity to amplifying existing efforts across the digital inclusion space 3) the development of new concrete multistakeholder actions.

Champions and constituents each noted the fundamental importance of achieving universal access and particularly meaningful access to digital tools. This will require the 1C group to work closely with group 1A around digital connectivity and group 2 around digital help desks.

Next steps

- The Champions will circulate a note to advance next steps and further the creation of working groups.

- Data2X will lead a working group focused on examining recommendation 1D