



Recent policy statements

One major step ahead was taken at the World Telecommunication Development Conference in March 2002 with the agreement to convert the Task Force on Gender Issues in the Development Sector to a Standing Working Group on Gender Issues with a mandate to include gender initiatives in all the work programmes established under the Development Sector. This means that gender has now become a permanent feature of the established Telecommunication Development Bureau structure. To carry out its gender initiatives, the ITU Development Sector established a gender unit in September 2002 through financing by Norway for gender expertise.

A recommendation from the World Telecommunication Development Conference to the Plenipotentiary Conference (September/October 2002) resolved to continue the work in ITU-D to mainstream and advance the gender perspective through ICT programmes that improve the socio-economic conditions for women, particularly in developing countries. It also instructed the Secretary-General to ensure that the gender perspective is incorporated in the work programmes, management approaches and human resource development activities of ITU and to take immediate steps to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in all ITU contributions to WSIS.

Operational activities

ITU has made special efforts to integrate a gender perspective in its work by providing training for the members of the Group on Gender Issues and including a segment on gender in ITU during the orientation course for newly recruited staff members. . In April 2003, ITU-D organized an in-service Gender Mainstreaming Capacity Building Programme for all staff in the Development Sector. ITU also participated in the UN Interagency study on Mainstreaming Gender in Programme Budget Processes.

Special attention has been given to increase the gender awareness of Council members and Administrations participating in ITU conferences, particularly through Panel sessions and discussion sessions during Council, Plenipotentiary Conferences and other meetings. Reports have been submitted on the progress in the implementation of a gender perspective to ITU Council and to the Plenipotentiary Conference in September-October 2002.

A specific harassment policy has been developed and presently under study for implementation. A work and family agenda as well as personnel recruitment policies are topics under discussion by ITU Management. Gender statistics for ITU meetings are being initiated.

Other activities

On the occasion of World Telecommunication Day 2002, a close collaboration was established with ITU Communications Unit to provide a gender focus on the 2002 theme of "ICT for all – empowering people to cross the Digital Divide" with the issue of a survey questionnaire on women and ICTs to which more than 500 responses were received and analyzed.

The ITU Group on Gender Issues regularly organizes special events for International Women's Day, which has attracted a great number of staff. ■

ITU
Gender Focal Point and Chief
Conferences Department
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneve 20
Switzerland
Fax: 41-22-733-72 56
E-mail: hanne.laugesen@itu.int
<http://www.itu.int/home/index.html>