

Towards a Gender Equal World

The EU Gender Action Plan and the EU's contribution to Beijing +25

Panel 6: Promoting women's and girls' empowerment through digitalisation

Thematic focus and questions for discussion:

Promoting women's equal access to the untapped potential of digital technologies is key to sustainable growth. It can accelerate progress on gender equality and women empowerment in education, economic participation, health and political participation. Digital solutions and technologies are also key to fighting climate change and achieving the green transition.

At the same time, the digital transformation risks heightening inequalities, given the unequal access and use of digital means - better known as – the digital divide. As this varies along the lines of discrimination patterns and intersectionality, the “gender digital divide” gets deeper when combined with other socio-economic, cultural and environmental cleavages, e.g. particularly affecting people living in rural, remote areas or landlocked countries, or belonging to the least developed economies and the poorest. Along with inequality, the digital transformation has also brought new dangers and challenges, such as online violence, gender bias and stereotypes, reinforced by improper or unethical use of Artificial Intelligence, or the disregard for women and girls needs in the data economy.

Reducing the gender digital divide and ensuring a safe place for women and girls in modern digital societies has great returns on investment. Women and girls represent an untapped potential as driver for change. They are an “invisible” resource, heavily underrepresented at decision-making level, while making the bulk share of the informal economy worldwide. They hold great entrepreneurial potential for innovative solutions tailored to local needs, crucial for achieving an inclusive green transition.

The panel aims at encouraging a multi-stakeholder discussion, providing insights in terms of challenges and innovative approaches to foster women participation in the digital transformation, discuss gender-sensitive digitalisation policies as a new area of GAP III, unfolding the EU institutions' ambition to address the digital gender divide and support partner countries' efforts towards a more inclusive digital transformation. The panel will equally provide insights into and encourage engagement in the work of the Generation Equality Forum and its Action Coalition Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality.

Panelists:

Carla MONTESI, Director “Planet ad Prosperity”, European Commission, Directorate for International Development and Cooperation

Barbara RAMBOUSEK, Director for Gender and Economic Inclusion, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Nandini CHAMI, Deputy Director, IT for Change, A+ Alliance

Katri Viinikka, Ambassador for Equality Issues, Finland

Henriette KOLB, Head Gender and Economic Inclusion Group, International Finance Corporation

Ibilola AMAO, Executive Consultant at Lonadek Global Services

Moderated by: Sasha RUBEL, programme specialist in the Digital Innovation and Transformation Section of the Communication and Information Sector at UNESCO