

WSIS+20 for CSTD

Gender & Human Rights from Scientific/Economic Perspective

Remarks on V.1

17 November 2025

Thank you, Chair. I speak as Co-Chair of the Gender Advisory Board to CSTD and on behalf of the Gender in Digital Coalition.

We thank Ambassador Janina for her leadership in this critical review process.

Twenty years after WSIS, we stand at an inflection point. The question before us is not whether to include gender equality in digital transformation, but whether we will harness the full innovation potential that gender equality unlocks.

The scientific evidence is unambiguous. Research published in *PNAS* demonstrates that underrepresented groups generate more novel scientific ideas—but these contributions are adopted less often, resulting in lost opportunities for innovation. When we exclude women and marginalized communities from technology development, we don't just lose fairness—we lose the best ideas.

Studies in *Science* show that all-female inventor teams are 35 percent more likely than all-male teams to focus on women's health needs. Who benefits from innovation depends on who gets to invent. At the organizational level, companies with gender-diverse leadership report significantly higher innovation revenue. This isn't about social justice separate from development goals—**inclusive approaches outperform exclusionary ones.**

The economic costs of exclusion are staggering. When AI systems are trained on datasets that undercount women's informal labor, when agricultural data omits women farmers, when health data ignores women in low- and middle-income countries, these systems don't just fail women—they produce economically inefficient solutions that undermine development objectives. The gender digital divide isn't just unjust—it's economically irrational.

And the harms of inaction are accelerating. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence now operates at scales previously unimaginable. Algorithmic systems embed bias into

decision-making about credit, employment, and justice. Each day that we delay implementing gender-responsive frameworks, these harms compound, and the costs of remediation increase.

This brings me to Rev1. While we welcome specific improvements—enforcement reporting requirements, the explicit inclusion of UN Women in UNGIS—**the document systematically fails to operationalize gender commitments where they matter most.**

The artificial intelligence section contains zero gender analysis. Monitoring requirements actually regressed from the Zero Draft, deleting gender-disaggregated indicators. Technology-facilitated violence provisions remain aspirational without survivor-centered approaches or accountability mechanisms.

Member States, this is not about rhetoric. When you adopt AI governance frameworks without gender analysis, you are choosing inefficiency. When you delete gender-disaggregated monitoring requirements, you are choosing to remain blind to persistent inequalities. When you refuse to operationalize TFGBV protections, you are accepting that half of humanity cannot safely participate in the digital society you claim to be building.

The WSIS+20 outcome will either demonstrate that the international community has learned from twenty years of partial implementation, or it will cement another generation of missed opportunities.

Gender equality is not an add-on to WSIS success—it is the precondition for it. We urge Member States and UNGIS to embrace the scientific evidence, the economic imperative, and the moral necessity of transforming commitments into operational frameworks.

Thank you.