



International Taskforce on Women and ICTs

DECLARATION OF AGREEMENT IN SUPPORT OF GIRLS AND WOMEN IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Recognizing that there are many business, civil society, government, and non-government organizations working both collaboratively and independently to conduct research, build awareness, and promote programs to remove the barriers that currently restrict girls' and women's access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), impede their technology literacy, and discourage their full participation in the ownership, development, control, and management of ICTs,

Recalling the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document adopted at the 23rd special session of the General Assembly entitled "Gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century," on the potential of ICTs to contribute to the advancement and empowerment of women,

Recalling the special session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century," and its resolve to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000) and its resolve to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people and to promote gender equality and empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable, and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all,

Recalling the article 42 of the Declaration on science and the use of scientific knowledge adopted by the UNESCO/ICSU World Conference on Science on the 1st of July 1999 expresses that "The difficulties encountered by women, constituting over half of the world's population, in entering, pursuing and advancing in a career in the sciences and in participating in decision-making in science and technology should be addressed urgently."

Recalling also the Agreed Conclusions 2003 of the United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women on "Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and Information and Communications Technologies," which states that "ICTs offer tools for enhancing women's full access to the benefits of information and new technologies,"

Recognizing that women's full and equal access to ICT-based economic and educational activities supports women's contributions in both business and home-based activities and improves women's socioeconomic status, strengthens the family, and provides access to information, communication, freedom of expression, and formal and informal associations,

The following organizations and individuals that are currently providing programs, research, and/or resources in support of women and ICT agree that in order for countries to be economically competitive, politically stable, and socially secure, we must utilize technology to continue making advances in health, politics, education, business, agriculture, consumer goods, and national security. Countries and communities need their smartest minds to be focused on the development, access, and implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – including those of women. Failing to recognize and remedy women's severe under-representation in the development of ICTs and ICT policy, including both access and leadership, limits our ability to advance our global society. ICT allows women increased participation in political, social, and economic arenas and supports empowerment for themselves, their families, and their communities.

- ✦ We are *concerned* about the cultural and structural barriers that disproportionately affect women's access to ICTs, particularly in countries in the process of peace-building and reconstruction.
- ✦ We are *concerned* that the participation of women in ICT design and development is failing to expand and is even declining in some areas in both the developing and the developed world.
- ✦ We are *concerned* that there is a lack of visibility of women entrepreneurs, inventors and innovators of ICT.
- ✦ We are *concerned* that women's limited access to ICTs and their lower level of technological literacy globally will continue to compound the chronic shortage of skilled scientists, engineers and mathematicians needed to solve the century old challenges that have yet to be significantly erased.
- ✦ We are *concerned* that there continues to be a prevalence of gender stereotypes that discourage girls from entering science and technology courses and careers starting at an early age and reinforced within the family, at school, in the media, and in society at large.
- ✦ We are *concerned* that the rapid development of ICT has led to the proliferation of pornography in media content which is both demeaning to women and promotes violence against women and further encourages the criminal misuse of ICT for sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and trafficking in women and girls, including those affected by violence, abuse, and other forms of sexual abuse.
- ✦ We are *concerned* about the lack of basic infrastructure and support for ICT access and usability in the developing countries and in rural areas of all countries which confound the continuing challenge of girls' and women's unequal access to education.
- ✦ We are *concerned* about the lack of relevant and accessible content available through the Internet related to the richness and breadth of women's lives, concerns, interests, and possibilities.
- ✦ We are *concerned* about the lack of disaggregated and standardized national-level data about women's access, technical literacy and skills, workforce participation, and leadership participation in ICT policy, programs, occupations, and the industry.

The following organizations and individuals that are currently providing programs, research, and/or resources in support of women and ICT know from experience that:

- ✦ ICT development benefits from women's direct participation and leadership.
- ✦ ICTs support all areas of social, political, and economic development to improve the lives of women, their families and communities.
- ✦ There are broad differences amongst the regions of the world in the level of opportunity and quality of services available for girls and women in access, education, and workforce participation of ICTs, as well as basic needs. Therefore, rather than developing a single action plan, it is necessary to develop multiple models that are both broad and flexible to allow for modifications and suit national and cultural requirements.
- ✦ To the extent possible, programs and strategies should seek to collaborate and provide mutual support to create positive change in support of girls and women in ICT, including developing and implementing national policies, legislation, programs, projects, strategies, regulatory and technical instruments relating to ICT, and the media and communications.
- ✦ Policy development, implementation and governance relating to ICT access, use, literacy, development, and design locally, regionally, nationally and internationally should include a significant number of women as representatives, participants and leaders and should thoughtfully consider the impact of said policies on girls and women.
- ✦ The media play an important role in shaping the culture and are a valued and strategic partner of organizations supporting women's participation and leadership in ICT policy and governance.
- ✦ Research is critical to understand all aspects of the issues relating to women's and girls' involvement with ICTs, the impact of ICTs on women's lives, and the opportunities of ICTs to provide options for women, including overcoming illiteracy, creating opportunities for entrepreneurship, allowing women to work from home and care for their families, accessing ICTs from rural locations, and enhancing and enriching their quality of life.
- ✦ Rigorous evaluation and monitoring also serve as the framework for all good program and policy development. Policies, practices, and funding that support the collection and analysis of data and knowledge are encouraged, supported, valued, and disseminated at all levels of policy making.

In view of the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society, *the following organizations and individuals that are currently providing programs, research, and/or resources in support of women and ICT agree that* the following are essential elements in the formulation of a global action plan and encourage other individuals and organizations to join them in support of their current efforts or develop their own, including the following:

- ✦ Share effective practices relating to increasing girls' and women's participation and leadership with respect to ICTs with other organizations and individuals to expand the knowledge and resource base about what works globally.
- ✦ Define indicators and standards for women's full participation and leadership, stimulate data collection, and set benchmarks in order to produce accurate and comparable worldwide statistics.

- ✦ Build critical mass by encouraging women to join networks that mentor, support, and encourage women in ICT and related fields.
- ✦ Set precise targets for measuring program development and outcomes and work collaboratively with networks in order to assure the flow of information.
- ✦ Identify critical need areas for the development of activities, programs, and public policies that will support women's full participation and leadership in the information society and work collaboratively to address those critical needs.
- ✦ Expand efforts and collaborate to strengthen current public policy initiatives, including providing information on key meetings in which businesses, government agencies, NGOs and other interested organizations or individuals can attend and/or support.

Organizations Endorsing the Agreement

- ✦ American Association of University Women <http://www.aauw.org/index.cfm>
- ✦ AAUW Educational Foundation <http://www.aauw.org/ef/index.cfm>
- ✦ APC WNSP http://www.apcwomen.org/eng_index.html
- ✦ ASAFE, Africa www.asafe.org
- ✦ Association of Professional Women Engineers in Nigeria www.apwen.org
- ✦ ATEF, Italy <http://www.atef.org/>
- ✦ Bellanet International Secretariat www.bellanet.org
- ✦ Business and Professional Women Germany e.V. www.bpw-germany.de
- ✦ Center for Ecological, Economic, and Ethical Education, USA
- ✦ Center of Excellence Women and Science (CEWS), Germany <http://www.cews.org>
- ✦ Center for Gender Equity, Camano Island, Washington, U.S.A www.josanders.com
- ✦ Center for Women and Information Technology at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, U.S.A. www.umbc.edu/cwit
- ✦ Copen Family Funds, a private foundation
- ✦ Computer Science Teachers Association, U.S.A. csta.acm.org
- ✦ Datamation Foundation
- ✦ DeVry University Business Women in Information, Science, and Engineering program (BWISE) http://facweb.phi.devry.edu/clubs/wise/devry_wise_programs.htm
- ✦ e-Business Center Peking University, People's Republic of China www.ebc.pku.edu.cn
- ✦ Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), USA www.edc.org
- ✦ E-knowledge for Women in Southern Africa EKOWISA, Zimbabwe, Africa www.ekowisa.org.zw
- ✦ Enterprising Women, U.K. - <http://enterprising-women.org/show.php?nav=7>
- ✦ Equalitec U.K. - http://www.equalitec.org.uk/equalitec_main/index.cfm
- ✦ Femtec, Germany <http://www.femtec.org/content/0/2070/1085/>
- ✦ Foundation of Women Entrepreneurs FEW Malta - <http://www.women.org.mt/>
- ✦ Friends of the John William Education Center, Inc. www.fjwec.org
- ✦ Gender, Diversities & Technology Institute, U.S.A. www.edc.org/GDI
- ✦ Gender Perspectives Opening Diversity for Information Society Technology (GIST), Germany <http://www.e-gist.net>
- ✦ Georgian Technical University, Tbilisi, Georgia - <http://www.gtu.ge/>
- ✦ Global Alliance for Diversifying the Workforce in Science and Engineering www.globalalliancesmet.org
- ✦ Global Women Inventors & Innovators Network (GWIIN) www.gwiin.org
- ✦ GONE RURAL, Malkerns, Swaziland, Africa www.goneruralswazi.com
- ✦ Hansen Partnership, Inc. www.HansenPartnership.com
- ✦ Helping Hands Initiative Incorporated, Staten Island, New York www.helpinghandsinitiative.org
- ✦ Hewlett-Packard Bulgaria - <http://welcome.hp.com/country/bg/bg/welcome.html>
- ✦ ICT & Education, Zutphen, Netherlands www.ict-edu.nl
- ✦ iEARN Egypt <http://www.iearnegypt.org>
- ✦ iEARN Lebanon <http://www.iea.org.lb>, <http://www.earnlb.org>
- ✦ iEARN-Pangea, Barcelona, Spain
- ✦ iEARN Slovenia http://www.ljudmila.org/iearn/index_h0.htm
- ✦ iEARN Tunisia
- ✦ iEARN UK www.earnuk.org
- ✦ iEARN-USA <http://us.earn.org/>
- ✦ Immaculata University of Immaculata, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. <http://www.immaculata.edu/>
- ✦ Institute for Women in Trades, Technology & Science, U.S.A www.iwitts.com
- ✦ Institute of Social and Gender Policy, Russia www.genderpolicy.ru
- ✦ Interactive Education and Resource Network (iEARN), Macedonia www.imor.org.mk
- ✦ International Commission on Workforce Development <http://www.icwfd.org/>
- ✦ International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists www.inwes.org
- ✦ The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) www.irex.org
- ✦ Irene Namatovu, MTN Uganda
- ✦ IRMA-India <http://www.irma-india.org>
- ✦ John William Montessori School, Kumasi, Ghana www.jwms.org
- ✦ Life Sciences Computing, USA <http://www.lifesciencescomputing.com/>
- ✦ Matilda Amisah, Matamiss Enterprise, Ghana, West Africa
- ✦ MDD Consultancy – Information Society Services, The Netherlands - <http://www.mdd-consultancy.com/>
- ✦ Peggy Meszaros, Ph.D.; CFCS, William E. Lavery Professor of Human Development Director, Center for Information Technology Impacts on Children, Youth, and Families College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Department of Human Development, Virginia Tech, U.S.A. <http://www.humandevlopment.vt.edu/appliedmastersmain.htm>
- ✦ MentorNet www.MentorNet.net
- ✦ MINÖK, Hungarian Network of Women, Hungary
- ✦ National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece - <http://uoa.gr/>
- ✦ National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, USA www.napequity.org
- ✦ National Center for Women and Information Technology, U.S.A. www.ncwit.org
- ✦ Nigerian Society of Engineers www.nse.org.ng
- ✦ Nokia Corporation, Finland- <http://www.nokia.com/>
- ✦ NRC – The Swedish National Federation of Resource Centers for Women <http://www.nrckvinnor.org>
- ✦ NUTEK – The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, Sweden – <http://www.nutek.se>
- ✦ Orillas-iEARN Center
- ✦ Papirbredden Innovasjon, Norway - <http://www.pi-as.no>
- ✦ Portia U.K. - http://www.portiaweb.org/pages/Portia_Projects.html
- ✦ PTC, the Product Development Company <http://www.ptc.com/>
- ✦ QUIN-Estonia www.quinest.ee
- ✦ Research Group Digital Media in Education of the University of Bremen, Germany <http://www.dimeb.de>
- ✦ Roumania Chamber of Deputies, Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women, Roumania.
- ✦ SM Consulting, U.S.A. www.smcteam.com
- ✦ Steinbeis – Europa - Zentrum, Stuttgart, Germany - <http://www.steinbeis-europa.de/>
- ✦ The Thornburg Center for Professional Development. TCPD.org
- ✦ Uganda Investment Authority Women Entrepreneurs Network, Uganda, Africa www.ugandainvest.com
- ✦ UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology, U.K. www.setwomenresource.org.uk
- ✦ UNESCO Regional Chair Women, Science and Technology in Latin America www.catunescomujer.org
- ✦ The University of Alabama at Birmingham ADVANCE Program and the Office for the Advancement of Women in Science and Engineering
- ✦ University of Maryland Baltimore County, Maryland, U.S.A. www.umbc.edu
- ✦ VHTO, The Netherlands - <http://www.vhto.nl/>
- ✦ Voices of African Mothers, Africa <http://www.vamothers.org>
- ✦ Women in Engineering Programs & Advocates Network (WEPAN) <http://www.wepan.org/>

- ✚ Women's Political Resource Centre, Georgia
- ✚ WINNET – European Network of Women Resource Centres <http://www.winneteurope.eu>
- ✚ WiTEC Hungary (European Association for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology)
- ✚ WiTEC U.K. www.witec-eu.net www.inovaconsult.com
- ✚ Women@SCS, Carnegie Mellon University, U.S.A. <http://women.cs.cmu.edu>
- ✚ Women, Media and Change(WOMECE), Pan Africa www.womec.org
- ✚ Women in IT of Fiji www.clariti.com.fj
- ✚ Women's Information Center, Georgia www.ginsc.net
- ✚ Women in Global Science and Technology, Toronto, Canada www.wigsat.org
- ✚ Women Without Borders www.women-without-borders.org
- ✚ The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts <http://www.wagggsworld.org/en/home>
- ✚ World Federation of Engineering Organizations <http://www.unesco.org/wfeo/>
- ✚ YTKO, U.K., France Greece - <http://www.ytko.co.uk/>