

IGF 2016 Workshop Report Template

Session Title	EQUALS: The need for collaboration on the global gender digital divide
Date	9 December 2016
Time	10.15 – 11.15am
Session Organizer	ITU & UN Women
Chair/Moderator	Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Rapporteur/Notetaker	
List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations	<p>Microsoft, Paul Mitchell – Private Sector GSMA, Claire Sibthorpe– Private Sector Mexico, Yolanda Martínez Mancilla - Government Web Foundation (Alliance for Affordable Internet), Nanjira Sambuli – Civil Society UNCTAD, Cecile Barayre – International Organization Association for Progressive Communications (APC), Jac SM Kee -- Civil Society UNWOMEN, Lara Blanco – International Organization</p>
Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):	The key issue raised during the panel was how to approach the challenges related to the gender digital divide in areas of access, skills, and leadership.
If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each Presentation	There was a brief introductory presentation on EQUALS: The global partnership to end the gender digital divide. This presentation covered the 3 areas of action of this multistakeholder partnership: Access, Skills, and Leadership. The governance structure was briefly outlined and the need of a research- based approach was highlighted.
Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session: (3 paragraphs)	<p>The discussion was led by a panel with the abovementioned participants. The first topic covered the challenges associated with granting women with access to ICTs and highlighted historical issues and future opportunities to overcome those challenges. This panel also discussed key issues the partnership could immediately focus its efforts on in the upcoming years.</p> <p>The second major area of discussion was regarding strategies to engage and enroll more women in ICT studies. This conversation was brought about due to the 2nd area of action of the partnership: Skills. During this discussion panelists discussed existing initiatives and trends that were taking place in the area of STEM studies, as they relate to women.</p> <p>Governments do necessarily have a role in the overall discussion and need to adopt policies and strategies which ensure gender balance and digital inclusion.</p>

	<p>The third big aspect focused on the several opportunities that ICTs offer to women entrepreneurs that want to start and grow businesses. In this regards, it was highlighted how many women entrepreneurs, particularly in developing countries, face a number of barriers such as institutional, systemic, and customary and cultural practices, beliefs and norms.</p> <p>The final discussion that took place gave a critical analysis of global partnerships, such as EQUALS, and the benefits of working in global, multi-stakeholder initiatives to tackle such complex areas of focus, such as the gender digital divide. This conversation was led by the Web Foundation, and pointed out the potential benefits such as inclusivity of all players and coordinated efforts on a scale not achievable by single entities.</p>
<p>Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways: (3 paragraphs)</p>	<p>The Equals session focused on access, skills and leadership in ICTs. Panel members shared private sector, government, civil society and UN System perspectives and work on the topic. Doreen Bogdan introduced the ITU UN Women partnership. Paul Mitchell from Microsoft referred to their work under the Pink Cloud Initiative, as well as their Youth SPARK initiatives to promote programming skills for women and Yolanda Martinez Mancilla introduced the work that the Government of Mexico is doing under the Digital Government Unit of the Ministry of Public Administration. Civil society presentations from the Alliance of Affordable Internet and the Alliance for Progressive Communications addressed access barriers, cultural norms, safety and risks.</p>