International Telecommunication Union

ITU-T

TELECOMMUNICATION
STANDARDIZATION SECTOR
OF ITU

WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION ASSEMBLY
Geneva, 1-9 March 2022

Resolution 55 – Promoting gender equality in ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector activities

FOREWORD

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency in the field of telecommunications, information and communication technologies (ICTs). The ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) is a permanent organ of ITU. ITU-T is responsible for studying technical, operating and tariff questions and issuing Recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis.

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), which meets every four years, establishes the topics for study by the ITU-T study groups which, in turn, produce Recommendations on these topics.

The approval of ITU-T Recommendations is covered by the procedure laid down in WTSA Resolution 1.

In some areas of information technology which fall within ITU-T's purview, the necessary standards are prepared on a collaborative basis with ISO and IEC.

RESOLUTION 55 (Rev. Geneva, 2022)

Promoting gender equality in ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector activities

(Florianópolis, 2004; Johannesburg, 2008; Dubai, 2012; Hammamet, 2016; Geneva, 2022)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Geneva, 2022),

considering

a)   that while standardization plays an important role in globalization and the effective development of information and communication technologies (ICTs), statistically very few women participate in international standardization processes;

b)   that the standardization work of ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) can be advanced most effectively through the active inclusion of women;

c)   that there is a need to ensure that women participate actively and meaningfully in all ITU-T activities;

d)   that the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB) has established the ITU Women in Standardization Expert Group (WISE), launched at the meeting of the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) in February 2016, dedicated to promoting women in standardization, telecommunications/ICTs and related fields and to recognize the men and women who have made a remarkable contribution in promoting the work of women in these fields,

noting

a)   that ITU has adopted a Gender Equality and Mainstreaming (GEM) Policy, with the aim of becoming a model organization for gender equality that leverages the power of telecommunications/ICTs to empower both women and men;

b)   the progress made by ITU in raising awareness on gender issues, specifically over the last decade, in increasing women's participation in and contribution to international forums, in studies, projects and training, and in the establishment of an internal Gender Task Force, as well as the successful establishment by ITU of an international "Girls in ICT" day to be held every year on the fourth Thursday of April;

c)   the Gender Declaration approved at the World Radiocommunication Conference (Sharm El-Sheikh, 2019), which declared the commitment of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector to gender equality and balance, and which also declared that ITU Member States and Sector Members should encourage the adoption of proven measures to increase globally the number of women pursuing academic degrees at all levels in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, particularly those related to ICTs;

d)   Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on gender mainstreaming in ITU and promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women through ICTs;

e)   Resolution 48 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on human resources management and development and, in particular, its Annex 2, on facilitating the recruitment of women at ITU;

f)   Resolution 55 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, on mainstreaming a gender perspective for an inclusive and egalitarian information society;

g)	Resolution 1187, adopted by the ITU Council at its 2001 session, on a gender perspective in ITU human resources management, policy and practice, which requests the Secretary-General to allocate appropriate resources, within existing budgetary limits, to establish a gender unit with full-time dedicated staff;

h)	Resolution 1327, adopted by the Council at its 2011 session, on ITU's role in ICTs and the empowerment of women and girls;

i)	that the Secretary-General has issued an updated ITU English Language Style Guide, which addresses the use of non-discriminatory language;

j)	that ITU, in its strategic plan, includes gender issues with a view to debating and exchanging ideas to define, throughout the organization, a concrete action plan with deadlines and goals;

k)	the ITU-UN Women Gender Equality and Mainstreaming – Technology (GEM-TECH) awards, which celebrate exceptional personal or institutional achievement and innovative strategies that harness ICTs for women's empowerment;

l)	the recommendation in the 2016 United Nations Joint Inspection Unit report that the "Secretary-General present to the Council for endorsement at its 2017 session an action plan to complement the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy, with specific targets, indicative timelines and monitoring measures to improve gender balance, especially at senior management levels, within each component of the Union, and report annually to the Council on its implementation",

recalling

a)	that a fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter adopted by world leaders in 1945 is "equal rights of men and women";

b)	United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution E/2012/L.8, on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, which welcomed the development of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), and the 60th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (March, 2016), which stressed the need to ensure women's full, equal and effective participation in all fields, and leadership at all levels of decision-making in the public and private sectors, and public, social, economic and political life;

c)	the United Nations HeForShe initiative (2014) to involve men and boys in the promotion of gender equality;

d)	the EQUALS Global Partnership, of which ITU is a founding member, which is made up of other United Nations agencies, governments, the private sector, academia and civil-society organizations, and which aims to reduce the gender digital divide in the world;

e)	the United Nations International Gender Champion initiative and the ITU's Secretary-General's commitment to promote the Panel Parity Pledge,

recognizing

a)	that society as a whole, particularly in the context of the information and knowledge society, will benefit from equal participation of women and men in policy-making and decision-making and from equal access to communication services for both women and men;

b) that the outcome document of the overall review of the World Summit on the Information Society acknowledged that a gender digital divide exists, called for immediate measures to achieve gender equality in Internet users by 2020, especially by significantly enhancing women's and girls' education and participation in ICTs, as users, content creators, employees, entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders, and reaffirmed a commitment to ensure women's full participation in decision-making processes related to ICTs;

c) that enhancing women's and girls' education and their participation in ICTs also contributes to the achievement of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls);

d) the 2013 report of the Working Group on Broadband and Gender of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development: Doubling digital opportunities – Enhancing the inclusion of women and girls in the information society,

resolves

1 that ITU-T continue efforts to ensure that all its policies, work programmes, information dissemination activities, publications, study groups, seminars, courses, assemblies and conferences reflect the commitment to gender equality, and promote gender balance:

i) for posts, including those at the Professional and higher levels in TSB;

ii) in the selection of chairmen, vice-chairmen and rapporteurs of the ITU-T study groups and of TSAG;

2 that high priority be accorded to gender mainstreaming in the management, staffing and operation of ITU-T, while taking into account geographical representation;

3 that ITU-T continue to support WISE,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to take the necessary steps to continue implementing the ITU GEM Policy, including, supporting the implementation of recommendations from the Joint Inspection Unit relevant to gender mainstreaming, supporting the Gender Focal Points for ITU-T, and encouraging TSB staff to undertake relevant training;

2 to accelerate the integration of a gender perspective in the work of TSB in accordance with the principles already applied in ITU;

3 to accord high priority to gender mainstreaming in ITU-T management, financial assistance, staffing and operation;

4 to conduct an annual review on progress made in the Sector in advancing gender mainstreaming, including by circulating questionnaires and by collecting and reviewing statistics on ITU-T standardization activities by gender and region, in order to identify challenges to women's participation and subsequent solutions; and to share findings with TSAG and the next world telecommunication standardization assembly;

5 to encourage the participation of women in all aspects of ITU-T activities, and particularly the opportunity to participate in meetings, and support an increase in the number of women from all regions in ITU-T leadership positions by:

i) encouraging the membership to include women on their delegations, by, *inter alia*, including in all circulation letters the statement, "The membership is invited to include women on their delegations whenever possible";

ii)   making the selection of women for TSB positions at the Professional and higher levels a top priority;

iii)   providing training on participation in meetings, writing contributions and chairing meetings;

6   to enhance the ongoing work of WISE to ensure that all women have an opportunity to develop as ITU-T leaders;

7   to continue posting on a public-facing WISE webpage current information on the number of women attending Sector events, including administration or Sector Member affiliation and study group distribution, and identify the study groups in which women hold leadership positions;

8   to include gender balance as a factor in the distribution of financial assistance to attend ITU-T meetings where resources are available;

9   to join the ITU Secretary-General in participating in the Planet 50/50 initiative sponsored by UN Women to tackle invisible gender bias as a Geneva Gender Champion on behalf of ITU-T,

invites the Secretary-General

1   to comply with the reporting obligations, as required by UNSWAP, on ITU-T activities aimed at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women;

2   to continue encouraging ITU staff to take account of the gender-neutral guidelines in the ITU English Language Style Guide and to avoid, as much as possible, the use of gender-specific terms,

invites Member States and Sector Members

1   to submit candidatures for chairman/vice-chairman posts in order to support the active involvement of women as well as men in standardization groups and activities and in their own administrations and delegations;

2   to actively support and participate in the work of TSB, to nominate experts for the ITU-T WISE group and to promote the use of ICTs for the economic and social empowerment of women and girls;

3   to encourage and actively support ICT education that encourages girls' and women's participation, and support all measures that will help prepare them for a professional career in ICT standardization;

4   to encourage greater participation of women delegates and foster their expertise;

5   to encourage the adoption of proven measures to increase globally the number of women pursuing academic degrees at all levels in STEM fields, particularly those related to telecommunication/ICT standardization.