

Report to UNESCO New Zealand Global Knowledge Partnership Conference on ICT & Gender Kuala Lumpur August 20-23 2003

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2020 Communications Trust National Body
Involvement:

- Presenter Day Two
- Chair & Rapporteur Day Two
- Expert Rapporteur Day Three.
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Attendance sponsored by UNESCO NZ Office and New Delhi Office.

Co-organizing partners



Government of Malaysia ([GoM](#))*



Global Knowledge Partnership ([GKP](#))



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SOOKMYUNG WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY
Asian Pacific Women's Information Network Center ([APWINC](#))



Asia-Pacific Telecommunity ([APT](#))



United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific ([UNESCAP](#))

DAY ONE

20 August 2003

Chaired by **Tan Sri Razali Ismail** of **Malaysia**, speakers covered global and country status of ICT provision for disadvantaged communities, and overviews of project research. Three examples follow:

Dr M. Calvano, Head of Regional Office for **Asia & Pacific ITU**, outlined the background and planned direction of the WSIS conferences in:

- PrepCom3 Geneva Sept 2003
- WSIS Summit Geneva Dec 2003 and
- Tunis 2005

The intention is that the participants and their roles will be:

1. GOVERNMENTS, as key stakeholders, will:
 - Raise awareness of ICT
 - Access information to communities
 - Lay foundations for all citizens to access ICT
2. UN as the catalyst to the WSIS process
3. PRIVATE SECTOR responsibility is to:
 - Create material conditions
 - Motivate local content development
4. CIVIL SOCIETY will provide:
 - Diversity and hands-on experience

The WSIS Summit is the Core Summit Event, designed to attract Heads of State, with major side-events and other parallel events for other participants. The current status of registration from Governments is:

ASIA/PACIFIC	GLOBALLY
■ 3 confirmed	-- 32 confirmed
■ 7 interested	-- 11 likely
■ 21 showing interest	

The recommended action plan is to attract Heads of State, to enter into partnership agreements between stakeholders and to mobilize resources. Recommended websites:

www.itu.int/wsisis

www.iccw.org/home/e-business/wsisis

www.geneva2003.org

Ms Leelangi Wansundera of **Sri Lanka** then reported on her study in to Informatization of Women in

- NE Asia – China & Korea
- SE Asia – Indonesia & Philippines
- Sth Asia – India & Sri Lanka

At both the macro level and regionally her team found a lack of data and no gender-specific data available to begin from. Because of time and distance constraints they focused on the capital cities of the countries, participants being 500 women and 500 men between the ages of 15-65yrs from each city. From a total of 6000 questionnaires, 5952 were collected.

Outcomes showed that:

1. Governmental and personal efforts were the most important factors in people having access to ICT
2. Perceived beneficial effects of the use of ICT was the 2nd most important factor for individuals pursuing ICT
3. Ownership of ICT's was the 3rd most important

Question time saw challenge to the validity of the results, given that no rural communities were studied and it was agreed that this could have created a different picture.

Nassarudin Che Abu outlined how **Malaysia** is bridging the digital divide through its Community Computer Development Programme (CCDP). He identified a wide range of users as spanning between

High Users with mobility and high speed access ⇒ Low Users with lack of access to services. Government funded community Access Centres have been set up in rural areas and are run by local entrepreneurs. There are 15 sites in operation and 119 in implementation stages.

The specifications of the centres are

- 5 PC's
- 2 phones
- Owned by community
- ICT enrichment
- Local website with profile of local community

The challenges now are to translate the project into every state as part of a long-term strategy. This will require meeting and briefing to every state with feedback on potential sites, securing good, committed entrepreneurs, a smooth rollout from service providers and identifying suitable candidates for training. Critical success factors are:

- Full government support
- Provision of broadband access which can be extended to surrounding areas
- Training programme for operator, village committee, teachers and youth
- Operated by local entrepreneur
- Public phones
- Work closely with industry to ensure long-term success
- Involvement of state and district governments
- Involvement of local village committee
- Development of local website

These challenges and critical factors are closely aligned with the issues faced by Computers In Homes in New Zealand.

During question time, it was asked why the specific Gender paragraph and Small Island States paragraph had been removed after Session 2 of the WSIS plenary. It was also pointed out that there was no reference whatsoever to people with disability in any of the contributions.



DAY TWO

21 August 2003

UNESCO Track 2A: ICT in education, culture and communication for gender equity, was chaired by

Mrs. Carmelita Villanueva of **Bangkok**. The writer, **Di Das**, for 2020 Communications Trust, **New Zealand** was presenter in this section (see conference paper

<http://www.computersinhomes.org.nz/global-knowledge.pdf>) along with:

Dr P. Pichappan of the Digital Information Research Foundation of **India** spoke on Gender Gaps Regarding Mobility of ICT expertise. She said that gender studies were common in India, which showed women as low participants in ICT and the gender imbalance severe. No mobility studies had been done, and as a major problem identified in India is the brain drain, ICT could be seen as a tool to address this.

- In 2002 ICT education had near gender equality:
Women=45% & Men=55%
- Mean scores in ICT education were: Women=67.8% & Men=59.3%
- However, in higher levels of ICT e.g. specialization:
Men=76%

Women remain under-represented in government, business, political and social institutions, whereas men hold most of the management positions in telecommunication companies, regulatory and policy-making bodies.

The mobility study observed the mobility of ICT professionals. Questionnaires were sent to list servers, 87.5% of which were men. Men show much greater mobility than women and their productivity rises proportionately to the degree of mobility. The gap between women's ability to do and their actual output is huge compared to that of men. Pre-marriage productivity for women was very high, but post-marriage revealed more time restrictions and a lack of professional integration. Lack of mobility results in less networking and consequently lower productivity.

Research recommendations to promote gender equality included:

- Establish a hub for women ICT professionals
- Track specialization of women in ICT
- Create a pool of expertise which can contribute to knowledge transfer
- Encourage professional mobility for women
- Long-term policies to facilitate empowering and integrating women into global networks to realize their full potential.

Dato Zawiyah Baba National Library of **Malaysia** presented findings of an evaluative study of Women on the Web, using 50 Malaysian and 50 international women's websites, featuring information on education, health and religion.

The evaluation criteria was based on:

- Accessibility and availability of information
- Content for purpose audience
- Scope of content
- Currency/ up-to-datedness
- Responsibility statements and contact details
- Accuracy and authority
- Connectivity
- User friendly format
- Design and graphics
- Links to other sites
- Interactiveness, services and response

In general, the Malaysian and international sites were found to be comparable, with Malaysian sites being particularly strong in stated purpose and audience, scope of content, quality and accuracy of information and authoritativeness. International sites were more user-friendly and up to date, with better clarity.

Recommendations from Women on the Web were:

- Regular updating
- Graphics only when necessary
- Clear front page
- Ensuring active links
- Full-time webmaster
- Reliable contact details
- Promoting websites for women, linked to library websites
- Info-search workshops for women
- Active support from Heads of Women's Organisations

Mr. Lukito Hasta Pratopo of **Indonesia's** Ministry of Research and Technology outlined his government's initiative WARINTEK, which aims to help rural people and women to access the Internet. National ICT problems reflect global concerns of the digital revolution, but specifically those posed by physical infrastructure and high cost of telecommunications to remote areas. 70% of Indonesian Internet users are in Jakarta. Other issues are inadequate human resources in ICT, gender insensitivity, and a lack of local content for the 360 Indonesian languages. In addition to providing access to ICT, WARINTEK offers access to science and technology information, training, advice and local content. It is a non-profit programme, aimed at developing local ICT human resources, reaching women and rural users and raising awareness of science and technology. Its aims are in line with UN Millennium Development goals for:

- Eradicating poverty,
- Empowering women and promoting gender equality.

WARINTEK works through:

- Schools with extensive grant funding
- Local private entrepreneurs to run its centres
- Using documentation and information from government agencies
- Libraries, professional associations, NGO's, SME's, students and researchers
- Producing CD-ROMs on appropriate technology for distribution to interested agencies and audiences

Rural women in particular have taken advantage of the opportunity to begin small enterprise and improve agricultural production.

Dr Keiko Okawan, Professor Keio University, **Japan** described how School of Internet (SOI) aims at equal access to all higher education resources through the Internet and digital communication infrastructure. Considering the wealth of knowledge accumulated in universities and by scattered learners, SOI believes that these resources can be harnessed, digitized and shared on the Net. Students can access this pool of knowledge at a time convenient to them, and after 5 years, SOI has a workable model using synchronized multimedia to deliver lessons. Challenges faced by SOI include a lack of high-speed connectivity in some participating universities, so they use uni-directional link technology which transmits data via one-way satellite. Such read-only satellites are apparently cheap and strategic and require no licensing.

SOI Asia began a partnership in 2000 to extend the sharing of information all over Asia, and now operates in 11 institutions across 7 countries in Southern Asia. All connected institutions share lectures and interactive distance education, with training provided for maintaining the equipment.

Ms Akhila Sivadas, Centre for Advocacy and Research, **India** noted that policy makers and government departmental support is central to addressing gender inequality in ICT, but at present the Indian Government does not wish to interfere, which has left the ICT industry highly self-regulated. ICT initiatives are aimed at empowering women in marginalized communities and synergizing the whole community through e-communication. The civil society is using radio to develop communication, resulting in women experiencing greater credibility and recognition amongst their male counterparts. Women's groups are accessing information and participating in development. They can bring social and political concerns to

the public domain, promote cohesion in periods of civil strife and assist in shaping local content. Lessons learned include:

- Need for strong leadership and strategic relationships
- Go beyond functional partnerships – to meaningful synergy between stakeholders and partners, government and civil society
- Need for institutional expertise and organizational capacity building
- Recognise women's stake in creating content and shaping people-centred information

Professor Yi Xin Zhong, World Federation of Engineering Organisations, **China** gave a theoretical presentation on the origins of inequality as ideological, political, socio-productive and economic. He suggested solutions such as:

- Strengthen laws for protection of women
- Enhance women's physical capabilities
- Use ICT, science and technology to bridge the gender gap and address social productivity
- Harness technology to disseminate knowledge on wide educational fields

He drew comparison between an old Social Production Model (SPM) and a new model. The original SPM created unequal gender status in an agricultural society in which women's physical strength made them inferior, and she did not have the necessary tools/strength to narrow the inequity. But now in ICT, limitations and inequality imposed by lack of necessary tools can be overcome by the following actions:

- Be aware of the origins and importance of gender inequality issues
- Create good quality content for women to learn ICT
- Provide opportunity for all to learn ICT
- Protect equal rights for accessing ICT
- Change outdated ideology via education
- Continue to highlight and discuss the issue

Track 2A then broke into two interest groups of:

1. *Gender & National ICT Policy*
2. *Gender Issues in Content Creation*

for discussion and preparation of tentative recommendations for next plenary.

Di Das and Keiko Okawan were chosen as Chair and Rapporteur of group 2. A lively discussion followed, which identified the group's issues, and draft recommendations were formulated ready for presentation the following day.

Problem analysis:

- The wrong content found in ICT, especially the bad projection and treatment of women, can also result in negative impacts on society, culture, and on women in particular
- Content on the websites can undermine women's and gender interests and concerns, resulting in negative image and treatment of women
- Many educational materials and textbooks continue to include content that is not gender sensitive, so there is a need to be continuously alert in identifying where these are located and to eliminate them
- Much of the information on the Internet and other ICT is foreign content based with foreign perspectives and there is a need to encourage development of local content dealing with gender, which should be uploaded onto the internet
- At the same time there is also a need to share best practice, success stories and experiences in the area of gender mainstreaming between countries and thus a mechanism for translation is required to promote this objective
- Content creation is often handled by men, with little or no participation from women. Women are receivers of the content, yet seldom involved in the production side



DAY THREE

22 August 2003

"Expert" panel reported back to combined Track 2 audience. Di Das and Keiko Okawan refined the text and Di Das spoke.

Gender Issues in Content Creation

- Lack of women’s voice and expertise
- Language barrier/inappropriateness
- Exploitation of women /pornography
- Gender confusion

Recommendations From These Issues:

1. Lack of women’s voice and expertise

- For government and international organizations to organize and fund special working groups for successful country models to share best practice for promoting women’s expertise in ICT, and content development training

2. Language barrier

- To empower communities to encourage creation of locally relevant and useful content using local languages to improve access for women
- For stakeholders to revise, update and promote gender sensitive and appropriate language-use
- To foster understanding and information exchange, through promoting enabling mechanisms for local language translation

3. Exploitation of women /pornography

- For governments to promote better awareness raising about exploitation of women, pornography and child pornography in the media

4. Gender confusion

- For UN system to support and strengthen initiatives in gender education and awareness to cultivate understanding of gender issues in ICT

Similarly, recommendations were made from the Government ICT Policy group and Tracks 1, 2B, 3 & 4. All groups’ recommendations were refined into a composite list by the organising committees for presentation on the last day of conference.



DAY FOUR

23 August 2003

Representatives of **ITU, UNESCO, COL, USP and UNESCAP** reported back the Summary Reports and Recommendations of all Tracks, which were then adopted by the conference community.

The closing ceremony featured a pertinent speech by Malaysia’s Minister for Women and Family Development, **Dato’ Suriah Abdul Jalil** reminding the men present that women are a force to watch.

The Chair concluded that although the conference is over, all delegates now need to ensure that their governments are informed of the outcomes of this Forum.

Declaration and Recommendations
Forum on ICT and Gender: Optimizing Opportunities
23 August 2003
Malaysia

The Forum on ICT and Gender: Optimizing Opportunities held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, August 20-23, 2003, hosted by the Government of Malaysia and with various partners including the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), Asian Pacific Women's Information Network Center (APWINC), Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);

Reflecting on global consensus and **reaffirming** commitments made at previous international conferences and summits, in particular, the UN World Conferences on Women, Beijing and Beijing +5 and the agreed conclusions on ICT and Women at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, New York, March 2003;

Noting that the objectives of the conference are to increase awareness on the gender dimension of information and communication technology to provide input to the WSIS process on important aspects of ICT with implications for women, in the areas of confidence and security, education, entrepreneurship for small and medium enterprises and, rural and disadvantaged groups;

The participants of this Forum **call upon all stakeholders**, including governments, organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, international organizations, civil society organizations, private sector entities, research and educational institutions, academia, media and other stakeholders to recognize:

- the importance of ICT as a tool to promote women's empowerment, rights and dignity and full participation in the information society
- that ICT offers immense possibilities for enhancing women's participation in socio-economic and political development that will reduce poverty and improve quality of life
- the potential of ICT to overcome women's isolation gives all women a voice and improve governance with a view to achieving gender equality

The Forum **reiterates** that gender research and analysis on the impact of information and communication technology is essential for addressing the consequences of the digital revolution on gender equality.

Participants **urge** WSIS delegates to make commitments to increase women's access to and participation at all levels of the information society, especially in decision-making processes and to address the needs of women and girls including the indigenous, persons with disabilities as well as those in least developed countries, small island and land-locked countries and economies in transition.

The Forum **adopts** a project on ICT job opportunities for young men and young women to be implemented between the two Summits.

Therefore, **the Forum especially calls upon government representatives to WSIS** to take into consideration the following recommendations from this conference in the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action for the WSIS in December 2003 and beyond.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Confidence and Security in the Use of ICT

1. Raise awareness of women on security issues, growing cyber crimes and misuse of ICT using traditional and new media.
2. Develop gender sensitive guidelines for ISPs at national, regional and international levels.
3. Promote women's involvement in all aspects of security issues especially at policy making levels.
4. Provide cost-effective and appropriate security systems for vulnerable groups especially in rural areas, least developed countries, Small Island and land-locked countries and economies in transition.
5. Promote positive use of the Internet through capacity building workshops based on local values within a self-regulatory framework.
6. Promote close cooperation between ISPs & consumers to incorporate a gender perspective in codes of conduct and guidelines on Internet content.
7. Encourage ICT industry to develop applications for young girls that will promote positive self-development and computer skills.
8. Promote dissemination of information to women in rural areas through alternative means other than Internet such as CD ROMs and SMS.
9. Encourage development of local contents in local languages by and for women.
10. Enforce existing legal provisions at national and international level to safeguard citizens; women *inter alia*, from transnational cyber crimes.

Education

1. Ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective and coordination of the gender activities in all domains of national ICT policies and legislation including education and that all stakeholders including women's organizations participate in the drafting and monitoring of such policies and legislation.
2. Support the creation of locally relevant and gender sensitive educational materials that uses local languages for use on the Internet and in other media.
3. Build ICT capacity of marginalized groups and provide ICT skills to young people.
4. Support programs that give instructors especially females the skills and use ICT and Open/Distance Learning (ODL) in education delivery.
5. Support ICT capacity building in women's organizations to enhance their capability to transfer knowledge to their target groups.
6. Introduce ICT into the school curriculum at the earliest possible opportunity, ensuring equal access to all.
7. Conduct participatory research on ICT and ODL that informs policy input into education policy formulation, program evaluation and database creation and ensure that research results are accessible.
8. Compile best practices of women in ICT and education, and promote their dissemination including through libraries, databases, fora and websites.
9. Raise awareness of legislators and policy-makers of the benefits/opportunities of ICT for educational use.
10. Use the media to raise awareness and knowledge about how ICT can empower women and provide training for media journalists in reporting on women and ICT.
11. Formulate a set of global standards or guidelines for mainstreaming gender issues into educational policies and program on ICT.
12. Mobilize and allocate funds to ensure gender sensitive ICT policies and strategies in education and to strengthen infrastructure to support women's use of ICT and ODL for educational use.

SME Entrepreneurship

1. Encourage national telecommunication reforms and ICT policies to develop affordable and innovative means of communication for SMEs such as VSAT technology in remote areas, unbundled local loop or last mile access, the use of WiFi as well as the resale of telecommunication services; the adoption of open source software, shareware and open standards; and the use of alternative infrastructure such as community radios, packet radios, television, mobile; and the access of non-pc based communication devices such as radio, mobile, TV, telephony and fax.
2. Give priority to SME that employ ICT, especially those that are headed by and/ or employ women, for procurement of goods and services, to ensure national and global and growth of SME's.
3. Encourage Governments to put in place favorable and enabling financial and procurement policies to assist women to establish and sustain SME's, for poverty reduction.
4. Develop and integrate subsidized training programmes that facilitate the creation and sustainability of women's entrepreneurship opportunities.
5. Support the development of IT interface language and local content related to SME activities such as crafts, handicraft, agriculture, fisheries, livestock, savings and loans for women.
6. Develop an enabling ICT policy framework for SME's targeting women and vulnerable populations.
7. Encourage Governments and multi-lateral agencies to recognize the role and importance of grassroots SME's in using ICT to alleviate poverty in rural and urban poor areas and include them in national planning and funding provisions.
8. Encourage the development of partnerships between and among governments, NGOs, private sector, corporations, community, academic institutions, and different stakeholders to promote ICT in SME and entrepreneurship development.
9. Build a wider network between rural and urban areas in ICT and entrepreneurship with special attention to South-South co-operation.

Rural and Disadvantaged Groups

1. Give particular attention and tailor solutions in ICT to meet the needs of low income rural and urban poor women, young women and women with disabilities and indigenous people
2. Promote awareness of ICT to rural women through broadcasting media and demonstrate the benefits of ICT in exhibitions and other fora
3. Provide affordable ICT assets, resources, and bandwidth to rural areas through community access points such as telecenters and others
4. Promote multi-sectoral approach to ensure public community access points at minimum cost, such as post offices, libraries, and schools for disadvantaged groups, including migrants and refugees, as well as other communities, unemployed and underprivileged people, children, the elderly, the disabled, indigenous peoples, minorities, and those living in rural and remote areas
5. Promote enabling environments in all ICT sectors to strengthen the use of low-cost and open source technologies to facilitate access to information for disadvantaged groups
6. Design content to overcome barriers of literacy, particularly in sexual and reproductive health, to ensure confidentiality to disadvantaged women and girls
7. Encourage the use of ICT to ensure the right of expression of disadvantaged women, including training of trainers to teach women with disabilities
8. Encourage the development of web content that is relevant and useful for women with disability and parents that have children with disability and promote the application of Web-accessibility principles in Web design to have equal access to information
9. Strengthen ICT based network opportunities by building on existing women's community network
10. Mobilize resources to invest in ICT for development with specific reference to the advancement of rural women
11. Provide training on how to incorporate gender perspectives in planning processes for public and private partnerships and investment in ICT infrastructure, long-term programmes and projects for rural and disadvantaged communities
12. Identify measurable indicators to monitor and assess the progress and impact, including social aspects, of ICT policies and programmes in improving the quality of life of the disadvantaged group.

With the Pasifika contingent, Day 4

Part of the expert panel and friends, Day 3