Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on the Sixty- Seventh Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 67)

Session One:
“Ensuring meaningful connectivity to close the gender digital divide and promoting gender transformative technology design, development, and deployment.”

“Regional digital trends and development and existing gender digital divide”
by Anju Mangal, Head of Asia Pacific, Global Digital Inclusion Partnership
2.7 billion people offline in the world

Proportion of people offline by ITU Region

- Africa: 60%
- Americas: 17%
- Arab States: 30%
- Asia-Pacific: 36%
- CIS: 16%
- Europe: 11%

Source: ITU
On a global scale, 69 per cent of men are using the Internet, compared with 63 per cent of women. This means there are 259 million more men than women using the Internet in 2022.¹

In the Asia Pacific region, the percentage of female internet users stood at 61%, while men users stood at 67%.² Regional divides within Asia reflect a more problematic picture, where in South Asia 36% fewer women have Internet access compared to men.

Furthermore, 83% of women in South Asia hold ownership of a mobile phone but only 58% of them have Internet access. The divide can be measured with more accuracy when analysing data within Asia, where 15% of women are less likely to use a mobile phone in lower and middle-income countries.

The region most affected is South Asia, where the usage reduced from 50% in 2019 to 36% in 2020, within one year. This reduction was presumably exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionally affecting women’s access to the digital world.³

Source:
* ¹ https://www.un.org/en/un75/impact-digital-technologies,
What are some of the digital trends and development that the region has adopted for development?

1) Cultural and socio-economic barriers

2) Cost of exclusion
How the connectivity impacted gender equality and women’s empowerment?

• We have been looking at Meaningful connectivity for women and girls - working with women and girls to develop gender-responsive policies
• We have been assisting women and girls in Asia and the Pacific are benefiting from digital skills and digital literacy
• Working on digital gender scorecards to understand the digital gender disparity between men and women using digital technologies
• Engaging women and girls in developing broadband policies
• Working with key stakeholders to develop the digital gender inclusion strategy
What are the opportunities of providing affordable access and meaningful connectivity to women to stay connected and what can be done in order to close the gender digital divide in Asia and the Pacific?

• Reducing the tax on smartphones and devices
• Focusing on digital skills and content
• Developing key targets on broadband policies and ICT policies to reduce the digital gender gap
• Developing gender-responsive policies
• Providing incentives for women to access digital services in rural and remote communities
• Mentoring and coaching women and girls in ICT
Thank you!

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