

ITU Gender Equality & Mainstreaming Policy

(endorsed by Council 2022)

1 Preamble

As the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs), ITU works to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive digital society. In this context, including a gender perspective in ITU's work is essential to ensure that the benefits of ICTs are made available to all women and men on a fair and equitable basis. At the same time, ITU is committed to cultivating an inclusive culture among its workforce.

2 Purpose

This policy presents a shared vision for integrating a gender perspective throughout the Union. It provides a tool to ensure that gender equality is a core consideration in ITU's strategic plans, activities, programmes, and procedures. This policy also outlines an accountability mechanism to ensure oversight and achievement of results and an action plan to be developed and reviewed periodically.

3 Scope

The Gender Equality & Mainstreaming (GEM) policy applies to all staff members at headquarters and field offices and covers ITU's internal operations as well as its programmatic work.

4 Rationale

The GEM policy builds on the following resolutions: Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), WTDC Resolution 55 (Buenos Aires, 2017), WTSR Resolution 55 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016), the "Declaration on Promoting Gender Equality, Equity and Parity in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector" (WRC-19), and Resolution 48 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) on Human Resources Management and Development.

ITU has also endorsed the UN system-wide policy on gender equality and the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on gender equality and women's empowerment. Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women is in line with ITU's mission to connect the world. This implies incorporating a gender perspective in the implementation of all the plans, programmes, activities and procedures of the Union. ITU also recognizes that gender equality helps foster a more inclusive, creative, and effective organization which is linked to increased productivity and innovation. To lead by example, ITU thus also commits to applying a gender perspective within its own organization.

5 Policy

ITU's Gender Vision statement

ITU's vision is to become a model organization for gender equality, and to leverage the benefits of ICTs to empower both women and men.

Objectives

To fulfil this vision, the GEM policy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Achieve gender equality within ITU to allow both women and men to equally contribute to and participate in the work of the organization;
- Develop policies, programmes, projects and capacity development activities that allow for both women and men to equally benefit from ICTs, and further achieve equalities and parity in the representation of women;
- Strengthen institutional plans and procedures for gender mainstreaming and to review the organization's delivery mechanisms to integrate gender issues more effectively;
- Provide an accountability framework for gender equality and an internal monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism in accordance with the requirements of the UN-SWAP.

In relation to the above objectives, this policy commits ITU to take actions focusing on the following areas:

a) *Organizational Culture and Staffing*

The GEM policy proactively commits ITU to promoting an inclusive workplace and to nurture an enabling environment for gender equality by:

- Fostering a participative organizational culture that fully supports promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and values the contribution of each staff member, irrespective of gender;
- Promoting inclusive decision-making processes and management styles;
- Ensuring a gender-sensitive approach in applying HR policies and practices including in recruitment and staff development;
- Implementing a capacity development plan for gender equality and the empowerment of women for all staff, including senior managers tailored training, and the assessment of capacities of all staff;
- Implementing measures aimed at significantly improving gender parity at all levels and in each sector, including specific senior level accountability mechanism in place for ensuring the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- Enhancing flexible work arrangements and implementing policies on parental leave and entitlements, adoption, family and emergency leave and breastfeeding;
- Taking appropriate measures to enhance respect for diversity;
- Supporting the work of the Senior Gender Affairs Officer and the Gender Task Force, to add efforts towards gender parity in ITU; and
- Ensuring an active involvement in an inter-agency community of practice on gender equality and the empowerment of women, including all levels of entity staff at headquarters, and field offices.

b) Plans, Programmes and Activities

ITU will ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women becomes standard practice in all its plans, programmes, activities, projects and services. In order for women and men benefit equally from ICTs, ITU's work will systematically consider and address women's as well as men's needs, priorities and experiences as part of the development of policies, programmes, projects and capacity development activities so by:

- Integrating a gender perspective in processes and activity planning including strategic and financial planning;
- Including gender assessment in plans, programmes, activities, services and procedures;
- Promoting and showcasing good practices in the use and adoption of ICTs for gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- Conducting evaluations to assess corporate performance on gender mainstreaming or evaluation of the GEM policy;
- Implementing resolutions aimed at increasing the participation of women in ICTs;
- Providing sex-disaggregated data on the participation of the membership in the work of the Union, and advocating for gender balance in decision-making bodies, statutory committees and study groups;
- Developing a financial resource tracking mechanism to quantify disbursement of funds;
- Enhancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in ITU's communication plan; and
- Using gender-sensitive language in all ITU documents including pictograms and non-text representation.

6 Operationalization

a) Responsibility for Implementation

The implementation of this policy requires the commitment, participation and contribution of each staff member. All staff members are required to give their full support and sustained efforts in carrying it out.

The responsibility and the accountability for its successful implementation rest with senior management and elected officials. ITU's governing bodies are responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated for the implementation of this policy.

The Secretary-General of ITU will continue to implement his commitments as an International Gender Champion and will continue to encourage Member States and other stakeholders to increase the participation of women in ITU's activities. The Elected Official will continue to publicly advocate gender equality.

The Gender Task Force, composed of Gender Focal Points representing the General Secretariat units, Bureaux, including field offices, and Staff Council, will continue to support the implementation of the policy. Each Gender Focal Point will be appointed by a formal delegation and authorization from the respective hierarchy. Written terms of reference will be established detailing the roles and responsibilities of the Task Force and Gender Focal Points.

The Task Force will prepare a Union-wide action plan with delivery dates, roles and responsibilities.

The Task Force will also coordinate reporting on gender equality activities as required by the Council and the UN-SWAP. Senior managers will proactively promote improvements in UN-SWAP Performance Indicators where requirements are not met/exceeded.

The Gender Focal Points will act as catalysts in implementing the action plan and will assist all staff in their Bureaux/General Secretariat units both at headquarters and in the field offices in evaluating and monitoring activities towards the achievement of the objectives of the GEM policy.

b) Governance

In order to strengthen accountability and exchange of experience among managers, the progress and difficulties encountered in their areas of responsibility shall be reported to the Management Coordination Group (MCG) periodically, at least biannually.

The gender-related activities for the achievement of the organization's objectives shall be reported to Member States annually.

ITU shall ensure a targeted audit engagement that includes gender as part of the risk-based audit planning and refer to it in relevant reports.

The GEM policy is a living document that will be reviewed and if needed updated at least every five years, in line with UN-SWAP recommendations. The action plans will be monitored and, if needed, updated at least every two years as an integral part of the policy's implementation to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women are incorporated into the plans, programmes, activities and procedures of the Union.
