# Broadband Commission Working Group on Gender & Broadband

# Concept Note for the Report – version 2

**Aim of this Report**

The Broadband Commission Working Group on Gender committed itself in Mexico to develop a report on ICTs, gender equality and women's empowerment. The Report is envisaged to help policy-makers and development practitioners in both ICTD and gender fields to better understand how to integrate ICTs and gender in their efforts. With this Report, the Working Group aims to produce a tool for stakeholders to use in advocating for and shaping concrete policy actions and strategies designed to transform the lives of women around the world.

**Context**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have helped focus on achieving certain targets related to gender equity and ICT access, and now the challenge is to understand the linkages between ICTs and women's empowerment in achieving those targets. ICT for development and gender equality/women’s empowerment *communities of experts* have shown the wide range of challenges faced by women around the world.

The Broadband Commission's Working Group on Gender & Broadband aims to analyze relevant issues and demonstrate areas of impact for policies on and investments in broadband in their reports. Broadband is the future of our connected world, and women should be able to participate fully in this broadband future. The Working Group provides a useful forum for collaborating to frame the analysis of gender equity and ICTD and to integrate approaches in the report.

Through the diffusion of mobile technologies, there are more opportunities for ICTs to enhance governance efforts and address challenges that women face globally. Unfortunately, we also know that women are currently disproportionately excluded from the benefits of new technologies, particularly throughout the developing world, preventing women and girls from accessing a range of opportunities that could improve their lives, and exacerbating inequalities that already exist between men and women. It also puts at risk the progress achieved so far through the MDGs.

For instance, women in middle and low-income countries are 21% less likely to own a mobile phone than men - a figure which increases to 37% in South Asia, 24% in the Middle East and 23% in Sub-Sahara Africa (GSMA 2010). Women are also less likely to have access to the Internet: nearly 25% less than men across the developing world – 45% less in Sub-Saharan Africa, 35% fewer women than men in South Asia, Middle East and North Africa, and around 30% in parts of Europe and Central Asia. The difference between low- and high-income countries is also notable -- most higher-income countries see much less lag between men's and women’s access to the Internet. In France and the US, women's access now exceeds that of men (Intel, 2013).

In her address to the Commission’s Mexican meeting, the Chair of the Working Group, Ms. Clark pointed out that “enabling more women to benefit from new technology is more than a matter of fairness. The strategic use of ICTs:

* Enables women to have a voice in decision-making that affects their lives and enhances their participation in public life and politics;
* Empowers women by enhancing their access to key services and to information relevant to their needs and to the welfare of their families; and,
* Empowers women economically by giving them increased control and access to resources and information and fostering their opportunities for successful entrepreneurship."

Ms. Clark challenged the audience to address these issues and to identify innovative strategies to harness the power of ICTs for promoting gender equality, empowering women and accelerating development progress overall. This Report is a response to the challenge.

**DRAFT Table of Contents [subject to further review, commentary & approval by the WG]**

The intention of the report is to provide tools for policy makers with concrete examples of successful, large-scale initiatives and suggestions for benchmarks and indicators for measuring progress. The three broad chapters will be:

1. **Executive Summary**  
   This section will introduce the Report. It should:  
   - put the report in context, overview of the interest of the Broadband Commission in gender issues;  
   - explain the Report’s purpose to help policy-makers and development practitioners in both ICTD and gender fields to better understand how to integrate ICTs and gender in their efforts;  
    - and summarize the Report’s key findings.  
   *Likely contributors: all members of the Working Group, compiled/edited by ITU, reviewed by UNDP (?).*
2. **Why Gender Matters [*The issue*]**  
   - This section will “build the burning platform” and explain the issues relating to gender gaps in access to – use of – behavior – attitudes and beliefs – access to jobs and labour markets – imagery, self-esteem and self-beliefs -- in ICTs, broadband and Internet.  
   => Not just one divide in access, but inter-related divides, bundled together.  
   - This section should explain that gender divides in access to ICTs is not just a transient issue, but ICTs are a reflection of far more entrenched / permanent divisions in society.  
   - How do these divides come about?  
   - It should give key examples of the potential and concrete evidence for ICTs fostering gender equality and empowering women.  
   *Likely contributors: UNDP, UN Women.*
3. **Measurement and Monitoring Chapter** **[*Statistics*]**  
   This chapter will provide an overview of the targets and baseline indicators currently available that could allow policy-makers and practitioners to measure progress in bridging, as well as some discussion of the challenges/obstacles currently experienced (data discrepancies, definitions, lack of data availability etc.) and a discussion of desirable indicators that should be available.  
   It should aim to give a brief overview of the current status of women’s access to ICTs (mobile, the Internet, broadband) and likely evolution.

*Likely contributors: ITU, PMIS, Nancy Hafkin (?).*

1. **Policy tools and Best Practices**  
   This chapter will give an overview of some of the different policy tools, best practices and successful experiences from around the world. What has worked, and what hasn‎’t? Are National Plans and/or quotas for access helpful or a blunt tool? Is it possible to change incentives, let alone some of the entrenched attitudes in different countries around the world? What are the key obstacles faced in eliminating gender divides in access and use of ICTs, and how can these be overcome?  
   It should also cite some examples and successful case studies, identifying why/how these proved successful.

*Likely contributors: ITU, WICTAD.*

1. **Conclusions & Policy recommendations**  
   This chapter should summarize the key findings of the Report (clearly linked with the first Executive Summary chapter) and provide some policy recommendations.

*Likely contributors: all members of the Working Group, compiled/edited by ITU, reviewed by UNDP (?).*

**Report timeline**A fairly tight timeline is foreseen for the report, which will rely on rapid turnaround by the ITU editorial team, especially over the summer holiday period. Provided experts respect deadlines for submission of contributions, it should be possible to circulate two drafts among the Working Group for review (21 June, comments by end June; 12 July, comments by end July), hopefully with a Final Draft for review 10 August MISTAKES-ONLY (it may be necessary to reflect late contributions in the second draft only).

  
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**Production, dissemination & follow-up**

The Report will be interactive and produced to be online. It is estimated that about 120 copies will be needed for the launch of the report, prior to the New York meeting. Dynamic content will be tailored for different audiences, locations or stakeholders. An active social media campaign and communications strategy will be developed by the WG with the Commission Secretariat, and the report will be disseminated using innovative media, and new channels and networks.