



6-17 March 2023



CSW67

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

**INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE
EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

Progress toward gender equality

CONCEPT NOTE: SIDE EVENT – CSW 67th SESSION

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS ACTION COALITION

Realizing Women's Economic Rights in the Digital Economy through Inclusive Financial Access and Use

ORGANIZERS: Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights

CO-SPONSORS: CARE International, FEMNET, International Labour Organisation, International Trade Union Confederation, Government of Mexico, Government of South Africa, Government of Sweden, UNCDF, UN Women

WHEN: 7 March | 3pm – 4:15pm ET

WHERE: Conference Room B

BACKGROUND:

Technological developments are at the center of transforming and reshaping the economy and the world of work. These developments are wide ranging and far reaching, from impacting how the financial system operates to enabling new avenues for employment and entrepreneurship, including the growth of the digital economy. While these developments provide substantial new opportunities for working age women, they come with numerous challenges that must be better recognized, understood and addressed by the global community. The Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights seeks to support the realization of women's economic rights in this changing landscape. In doing so, the Action Coalition aims to advance progress towards a number of targets including:

- the gender gap in financial inclusion is reduced as a result of increasing both formal and informal financial inclusion, including for women at risk of being excluded from formal financial services;
- the number of women's economic empowerment national programs integrating digital financial services and participation through gender-responsive platforms is increased by at least 50%;
- the gap in labour force participation between prime-age women and men with small children is decreased by half, resulting in an additional 84 million women joining the labour force;
- decent work is expanded in the formal and informal economy to reduce the number of working women living in poverty by 2026 by a recommended 17 million.

Underpinning the Action Coalition's work on financial inclusion is the recognition of how gender-responsive access to finance and financial services are important facilitators of women's economic empowerment, autonomy and financial independence with potential to influence the shifting of gender norms and women's participation in the workforce. While financial inclusion has increased for much of



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the world, gender gaps remain. Globally, 78 percent of men and 74 percent of women (a gender gap of 4 percentage points) have an account, an indicator of financial access. Developing economies have a wider average gap of 6 percentage points, which represents a recent improvement from where the gap stood at 9 percentage points¹. Women additionally represent 54 percent of all unbanked adults, with unbanked women living primarily in rural areas and often in poverty². New technological developments have enabled the spread of digital financial services, including mobile money, which has provided encouraging opportunities for those who have traditionally been excluded from the formal financial system, including women in rural areas. Digital Financial Services can contribute to women's financial inclusion, enabling them to save, build assets, secure loans, expand their businesses, as well as receive government payments and remittances.³ However, challenges remain, including that women are 12 percent less likely to own a mobile phone, 6 percent less likely to use the internet and often fall behind on the necessary digital financial literacy skills.⁴

As digital financial services and products have expanded, so have new ways of working through the digital economy. For example, e-commerce has provided new avenues for women entrepreneurs to gain access to markets and greater profits⁴ and the emergence of the “gig economy” has provided new ways to own enterprises and connect firms with workers. Despite this, gender inequalities that already exist for women are only mirrored, if not compounded, in the digital economy. Huge gaps exist in women's access to education, training and jobs in new technology and digital sectors. Additionally, the sector often sees inadequate realization of decent work, including labour protection, social protection and benefits such as parental leave, perpetuating precarious employment situations for women working in the digital economy.⁵

To expand women's rights in the digital economy, there is a need to focus on implementing gender-responsive policies and regulations that enable products and services to meet the diverse needs of women. Additionally, as new ways of working transform and expand, there must be a focus on ensuring decent work and supporting women to access the tools, skills, and education required to not only succeed in the digital economy, but to hold equal decision-making power as men. It also requires addressing the structural drivers and social norms that are preventing women's access to financial services and the regular, safe use of technology.

OBJECTIVE:

The **Generation Equality Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights** will explore the critical issues surrounding financial and digital inclusion for women worldwide, and their implications for the labour market and the realization of decent work for women workers. The event will focus on concrete policy solutions, services and products for closing financial and digital inclusion gaps and creating an inclusive digital economy.

¹ The World Bank Group. 2022. *The Global Findex Database 2021*.

² Ibid.

³ Economic and Social Council. 2022. *Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls: Report of the Secretary-General*.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Economic and Social Council. 2016. *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work : report of the Secretary-General*.

FORMAT:

This will be a moderated event held in-person under the collaboration of Leaders and Commitment Makers of the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights. The event will include a panel discussion, highlighting diverse voices. The event will include a moderated Q&A session with panelists.

ABOUT GENERATION EQUALITY:

Generation Equality is a civil society centered, multi-stakeholder global movement for gender equality, convened by UN Women in partnership with civil society and youth. Through co-creation and diverse and inclusive consultations, feminist advocates have come together from across the globe to foster action and renew movements for gender equality, as well as to launch a set of innovative and multi-stakeholder Action Coalitions (ACs).

The Action Coalitions engage governments, women's, feminist and youth-led organizations, international organizations, and the private sector to:

- catalyze transformational change in the lives of women and girls by leveraging the power and efficacy of collective action;
- drive an inclusive, cohesive, and impactful global movement and community of practice;
- sustain increased public & private investment through new and expanded commitments for gender equality;
- deliver irreversible and quantifiable results for women and girls, in line with the Global Acceleration Plan and in service of the SDGs.

Six specific themes are being addressed by the Action Coalitions including: i) Gender Based Violence; ii) Economic Justice and Rights; iii) Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); iv) Feminist action for climate justice; v) Technology and innovation for Gender Equality; vi) Feminist movements and leadership. There is also a global Compact on Women, Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action. [Find out more here](#)

During the Paris Forum, the six Action Coalitions launched the [Global Acceleration Plan](#) for Gender Equality, an ambitious roadmap for accelerating progress on gender equality over the next five years. Gender equality is not just a goal: it is critical to the survival of the planet, realizing the rights of all girls and women, and building new economic and social systems that include, and work for, everyone. This effort is even more urgent now as COVID-19 has laid bare critical gaps in equality that have left millions of women and girls – particularly those who are most marginalized – behind.



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