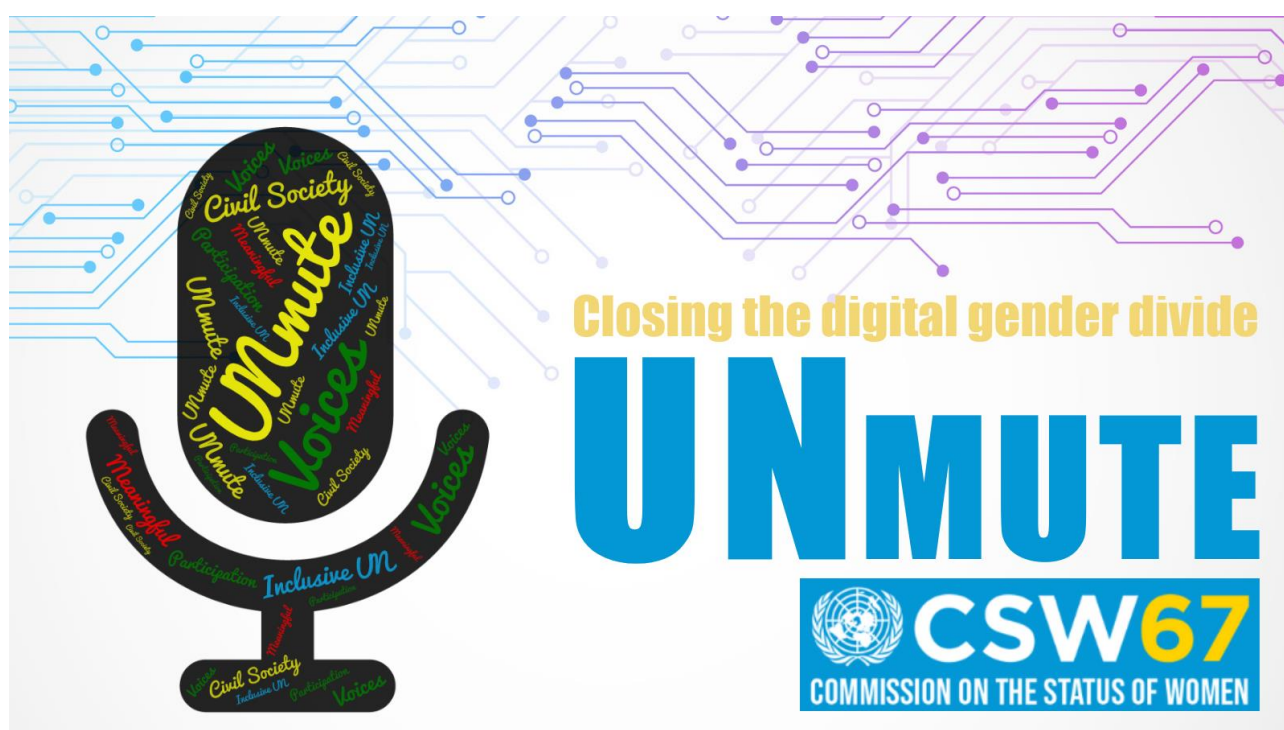


Side event: 67th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

Closing the digital gender divide

Ensuring women and girls a seat at the virtual table

March 23'



Justification

The Secretary General has repeatedly stressed that “leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline”. In a recent [insight](#), USG and UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous underlines the need of “safe, universal and meaningful connectivity – based on gender equality”. From the local to the global level, ensuring that everyone benefits from expansion of connectivity is key to unlock the power of women and girls. This is also the case for women and girls’ access to historically male-dominated forums. However, the current inequality in access to and quality of digital connectivity has created unequal access to participate meaningfully in virtual or hybrid areas of decision-making such as the UN. This includes digital infrastructure, quality internet connection and ensuring that women and girls have access to digital devices that enables participation in UN processes.



Evidence shows the opportunities that virtual formats offer in terms of broader participation of civil society in UN meetings and processes, particularly from the global South. To ensure globally accessible and inclusive virtual or hybrid meetings we must take into consideration issues such as equal access to internet, digital skills, language barriers, time zones, and safety, [including ICT-facilitated violence](#), which often holds a gendered component. Neglecting the challenges of unequal virtual access to tables of power results in both lost opportunities to harness the unique knowledge of women and girls, as well as other targeted groups in global policy making, as well as their possibility to unlock their full potential.

In the [report](#) of the Secretary General leading up to CSW67, it is recommended that *“Efforts to close the gender digital divide and ensure that no one is left behind in the digital economy and society must be expanded and grounded in equity”*. In order to ensure this, and in the light of the priority theme of CSW67, this side event dives into the challenges and solutions in order to realize digital gender equity and ensuring women and girl’s access to decision-making forums such as the UN.

Objectives

Building upon the #UNmute initiative, this side event explores how to ensure inclusive access to decision-making forums for civil society, focusing on women and girls, through safe, universal, and meaningful connectivity. Through a multi stakeholder dialogue including civil society, government representatives, the UN, and the private sector, we aim to outline ways of digitally connecting women and girls to the global policy level. We will dive into the major challenges to digital equity, explore opportunities such as digital tools and training to connect and meaningfully include civil society, especially women and girls, and discuss how to link the different levels of engagement to ensure that everyone is #UNmuted.

Format

The side event will be online and will be based on an interview style panel discussion in two parts, separated by an interactive expression of opinion of the audience. The event is set for 1 hour.

| Date | Time | Venue | Moderator |
|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 15 March 2023 | 9-10 am. EST | Register here | TBC |



Programme

| THEME | PANELIST |
|----------------------|--|
| Introductory remarks | The Permanent Representation of Denmark to the UN |
| Panel 1: Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IWGIA (partner TBC)• Catalina Escobar, Co-founder and Chief Strategy Officer, Makaia• Katherine Townsend, Director for Policy, World Wide Web Foundation (TBC) |
| Interactive element | |
| Panel 2: Solutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IWGIA partner (partner TBC)• Catalina Escobar, Co-founder and Chief Strategy Officer, Makaia• Katherine Townsend, Director for Policy, World Wide Web Foundation (TBC)• The Permanent Representation of Denmark to the UN• The Permanent Representation of Costa Rica to the UN• Google (speaker TBC) |
| Concluding remarks | The Permanent Representation of Denmark to the UN |

Organizers

Global Focus and The Permanent Representation of Denmark to the UN.