

## **What mechanisms can ensure digital technologies favor inclusion and close gender gaps?**

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### **Summary of text:**

The digital ecosystem has the capacity to accelerate the advancement of women and connect them with opportunities to improve their income, continue their education, access health services and participate politically. Despite general progress in digital uptake, emerging technologies have been shown to breed new dimensions of the gender digital divide.

Women engage in a narrower range of digital activities than men, particularly in the case of emerging technologies, such as big data, blockchain and the Internet of Things. Similarly, the participation of women as creators and decision makers in the field of digital technologies is very low. Women-led design and women's participation in investment, research, public policy design and business is paramount to the emergence of technology which responds to women's needs, aspirations, circumstances, preferences, and priorities.

Gender gaps persist across the digital ecosystem due to the failure to modify an underlying system of discrimination against women. Existing efforts to change this system have focused largely on its consequences and outputs, rather than on the drivers of discrimination. Gender perspectives remain largely absent from policy-making process and gender-disaggregated data which supports diagnosis, analysis, problem-solving and public policy evaluation is still lacking. A permanent solution to the gender digital divide requires a transformation in culture, which calls for a systemic approach.

### **Key recommendations:**

- Gender perspectives should be applied to all processes of policy-making and technology design, including Internet governance, content moderation, algorithmic programming, research and innovation, policymaking and evaluation, and data processes, among others. Gender perspectives can be captured through the use of methodologies, questionnaires and guidelines. Stakeholder training, particularly in the case of regulators and authorities, is critical in ensuring the integration of gender perspectives. Gender-disaggregated data must be collected and utilised in all efforts to bridge the gender digital divide.
- A systemic approach must be employed to bridge the gender digital divide. Stakeholders must work collaboratively and strategies must acknowledge the cross-cutting factors which underpin patterns of gender inequality. The root causes of the gender digital divide should be addressed and the power imbalances between men and women interrupted.
- Disruptive shifts must be encouraged within technology companies, including the elimination of discrimination and gender pay gaps, and the promotion of diversity and inclusion to create workplaces which are safe for women. Digitalization should support labor flexibility and should not impede women's salary, job security, or career advancement.
- Financial resources must be directed to women-led ventures, inventions, research, and projects.
- A care economy, which redistributes social, private, and public responsibilities, must be cultivated to support women's participation in the labor market.