Interactive dialogue

Technology and innovation: Tools for progress

Monday, 16 March 2020, 3.00 – 4.30 pm, United Nations Headquarters

Concept note

Overview
The digital revolution has been one of the most rapid and far-reaching transformations since 1995. It now impacts almost every aspect of economic, social and political life. Digital tools have changed the way people communicate, inform themselves, and relate to each other; affected governance systems, including the way in which social protection and public services are delivered for inclusive societies; altered production and consumption patterns with far-reaching implications for the world of work and well-being of all; and led to the rise of ‘big data’ as a valuable raw material that is mined to support new forms of economic activity.

Innovation and new technologies can contribute in many different ways to accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. However, they can also perpetuate existing inequalities and create new barriers and challenges for women and girls. The Report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation call on the adoption of specific policies to support full digital inclusion and digital equality and to strengthen research and promote action on barriers faced by women and marginalized groups. In order to ensure that innovation and technology delivers transformative results for women and girls, a concerted effort is needed by private and public sector partners to address such challenges in an integrated manner. The objective of the interactive dialogue is to discuss approaches for ensuring that innovation and technology become tools for progress for women and girls everywhere.

Format and participation
The interactive dialogue will be chaired by Ms. Jo Feldman (Australia), Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women. A moderator will support the Chair.

The event will start with short introductory comments by a group of expert panelists, followed by a moderated dialogue. This moderated dialogue will be an opportunity to highlight case studies and examples of good practice in the innovative use of technologies for promotion of gender equality, and for responding to challenges that women and girls encounter in the digital age.

The floor will then be open for comments and questions from Member States and other stakeholders in an interactive dialogue. Panelists would respond to any questions posed and make short concluding comments, time permitting.
The Chair will wrap up and close the meeting.

**Leading questions**

Participating stakeholders in the high-level interactive dialogue are invited to address the following questions:

1. The digital revolution represents a great opportunity to make a significant difference in bridging gender gaps in many areas. What are concrete examples of how technology has been used to increase women’s well-being, autonomy, rights or economic participation?

2. Early feminist responses to the digital revolution were largely optimistic about the potential of digital technologies for empowering women. Have those expectations been met? How is technology contributing to transforming gender stereotypes and facilitating the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment? What key challenges need to be addressed?

3. Innovators are left responsible for their approach to innovation, which often results in teams lacking diversity, and tools that are biased or lack gender responsiveness. What steps and measures are needed to ensure that corporate systems and culture become more gender responsive, and what is the role of Government and other stakeholders in this regard?

4. Role models and mentors are recognized as an important element in encouraging women and girls in choosing non-traditional areas of education and/or employment, and in succeeding in such fields. What good practices exist in inspiring women and girls to work in a STEM related field and how can young women be encouraged to join the digital working space?

**Outcome**

The outcome of the interactive dialogue will be in the form of a Chair’s summary, prepared in consultation with the regional groups through the members of the Bureau.