



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and  
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly  
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and  
peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Iranian Elite Research Center, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **The Role of Information Technology in Empowering Women**

Empowering women is a prerequisite for development and is a concept that encompasses both individual and societal dimensions. On the other hand, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is expected to serve as a significant tool for enhancing women's empowerment by increasing the flow of information and knowledge, influencing public opinion, and expanding opportunities for education and employment, enabling women to be more empowered than ever before.

Women make up approximately half of the world's population, and the importance of women's roles in the growth and development of societies, especially their economic growth, is undeniable. In other words, women are considered development actors, and their empowerment and capacity-building are highly effective in achieving sustainable development goals. Undoubtedly, women are the most effective tool for the development of societies. Empowering them encompasses increasing their self-awareness, building self-confidence, and expanding women's freedom of choice by themselves. Through the stages of empowerment, women become aware of their inner needs and desires, strengthen their courage to achieve their goals, and acquire the necessary ability to realize their desires. The core of the empowerment discussion revolves around women's ability to control their own destiny.

Some important components of women's empowerment include having access to education, addressing property rights, eliminating discrimination in the job market, and changing traditional attitudes towards women. Employment and education, with their impact on women's social status, enhance their ability to live independently, express themselves, be aware of the outside world, and have the skills to influence decisions. This, in turn, increases women's independence and power.

On the other hand, information and communication technology (ICT) is a remarkable tool that millions of people worldwide use every day. In many countries, women are socially and economically disadvantaged compared to men. In this context, information is considered a primary driver of progress for nations, societies, and individuals, and it helps women in this regard.

One of the tools for empowering women is access to and utilization of information and communication technology (ICT), which can increase equal opportunities for women and provide them with platforms for empowerment. Because in today's world, acquiring knowledge can lead to power and overcoming poverty, and the acquisition of knowledge disproportionately affects vulnerable groups such as women. This issue has more pronounced effects in developing countries due to the lower level of women's participation.

With the emergence and understanding of the capabilities of technology, there is hope that technology can turn many challenges related to women into opportunities. It can not only provide a platform for increased women's participation but also reduce existing disparities between countries in other areas that have an impact on women's participation. Because technology can contribute to the dissemination of knowledge, increased productivity, efficient knowledge transfer, cost reduction, and, most importantly, enhancing awareness, self-confidence, acceptance, and women's meaningful employment in society.

But unfortunately, girls and young women around the world that must play crucial roles as human rights defenders and agents of change, frequently excluded from formal decision-making processes, they tend to use alternative ways of engaging in public life, including online spaces. Among the challenges they face are limited

access to education, professional training and economic opportunities. Digital gender-based violence and harassment, gender- and age-based discrimination, as well as ongoing conflicts, unilateral sanction, authoritarian regimes and climate change also impact their activism.

This pivotal role can be summarized through several key points:

- **Access to Information and Education:** Information technology enables women to easily access educational resources and economic information, enhancing their skills and knowledge.
- **Establishing Digital Businesses:** Women can start online businesses using information technology, creating new economic resources and increasing their income.
- **Remote Work Opportunities:** Information technology allows women to work remotely, enabling a better balance between work and home life.
- **Promotion of Social Capabilities:** Through online spaces and social networks, women can connect with individuals nationally and globally, share experiences and knowledge, and strengthen their social capabilities.
- **Gender Equality:** Enhancing women's access to information technology contributes to gender balance in the economy and the job market, helping to combat gender discrimination.
- **Diplomatic Efforts to Lift or Ease Sanctions:** Advocate for diplomatic negotiations to lift or ease sanctions through government and international organizations. This can help reduce the negative impact of sanctions on access to technology.

In addition to these key points, it's important to recognize that information technology empowers women not only economically but also socially and politically. Here are further aspects of its impact:

- **Financial Inclusion:** Information technology, particularly mobile banking and digital payment systems, enables women, especially those in underserved areas, to access financial services and manage their finances more effectively.
- **Education and Skill Development:** Online courses and e-learning platforms provide women with opportunities to acquire new skills and certifications, making them more competitive in the job market.
- **Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Information technology fosters an environment where women can innovate and create new solutions to societal challenges, thereby contributing to economic growth.
- **Women's Health and Well-being:** Health-related apps and telemedicine services powered by IT help women take better care of their health, ensuring a healthier and more productive workforce.
- **Empowerment for Decision-Making:** Access to information through technology equips women with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their lives, families, and communities.

Therefore, information technology, as a powerful tool, plays a crucial role in the economic empowerment of women and can contribute to improving their economic and social status in societies.

In continuation, we would like to refer to some of the human rights and international documents and reports that have addressed the role of information technology in empowering women economically:

- United Nations (UN) and Sustainable Development Goals: The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to facilitating access to information technology and promoting the participation of women in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry, emphasize the economic empowerment of women.
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Reports: The International Telecommunication Union conducts in-depth analysis of gender considerations in the field of ICT and the positive effects on the economic empowerment of women, regularly publishing reports in this regard.
- International Labour Organization (ILO) Reports: The International Labour Organization examines the role of women in the Information and Communication Technology industry and provides recommendations for gender balance in this sector.
- World Health Organization (WHO) Reports: WHO highlights the importance of information technology in improving healthcare services and its impact on the health status of women.
- Reports from National Human Rights Institutions: Human rights institutions in various countries also prepare documents and reports on the economic empowerment of women through information technology.

These resources and documents can be credible sources that play a significant role in justifying and promoting the economic empowerment of women through information technology. Based on all the mentioned documents, the global community, including non-governmental organizations, developed and developing countries, should collaborate with international organizations such as the Commission on the Status of Women to facilitate access to modern technologies for women and young girls, turning their daily challenges into opportunities. This will empower women and girls to excel in their roles to the fullest extent possible.

In conclusion, information technology not only enhances women's economic empowerment but also plays a broader role in improving their overall quality of life. Governments, organizations, and societies should continue to invest in bridging the digital gender divide and promoting digital literacy among women to unlock their full potential and contribute to sustainable development.

We end the statement by saying that United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres through the sixty-seventh session of the Commission under the priority theme "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" urged leaders to promote women and girls' full participation and leadership in science and technology, from Governments to board rooms and classrooms. He said: "Together, let's push back against misogyny and forward for women, girls and our world."

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