



US WOMEN'S CAUCUS AT THE UN

CSW 67 Statement

Gender and Technology

Promise and Peril: Technology today dominates all aspects of our lives, transforming communications, commerce, education, healthcare, employment, transportation, elections, and even dating. Women have made significant contributions in STEM sectors in the fields of space travel, biotech, artificial intelligence, internet, communications, and entrepreneurship. The digital world and Internet media giants would not exist without the leadership of women scientists and technologists. More women are studying science, engineering, and medicine, and they are teaming up with female entrepreneurs to serve the unmet health needs of women and girls and other technological advances.

Yet the promises of better lives through technological innovations are distributed very unevenly and carry numerous barriers and even peril for women. Men still dominate technology fields to the exclusion of women, especially in leadership positions. Harmful gendered social norms that exist in the "offline" world are replicated in the online world, limiting women's access to employment, banking, and even healthcare. Not least technology has dramatically increased harassment, cyber stalking, trafficking, and online abuse of women and girls, and threatens to permanently leave behind half the world's population.

Gender and Technology Facts

- Globally, men are 21% more likely than women to have access to the internet.¹
- Only 35% of students in higher education in STEM fields worldwide are women,² and only 28% of the science and technology workforce are women.³
- In a study of 23 Latin American and Caribbean countries, less-educated, rural women were the least digitally connected.⁴
- Even when women have the same levels of education, income, literacy, and employment as men, they are 7% less likely to own a mobile phone and 16% less likely to use mobile internet.⁵
- Only 3% of STEM CEOs are women⁶ and only 19% of board directors are women.⁷
- Investments in femtech - technical solutions for women's health needs - represent only 1.8% of total investments in digital health.⁸
- In 22 countries, 58% of girls reported online harassment on social media, usually sexual in nature.⁹

Global Recommendations

We call upon governments to address the gender digital divide by taking decisive action to:

- A) Ensure that **all children have access to digital devices** through school and community-based programs, especially low-income, rural, and indigenous girls.
- B) Provide **scholarships, internships, and mentorship programs** to encourage girls and women to enter STEM fields, and offer student loan forgiveness credit for women in STEM employment.
- C) Facilitate **women's employment in STEM fields** by criminalizing sexual harassment, addressing child and elder care needs, and ensuring unfettered access to full affordable sexual and reproductive services regardless of country or region.
- D) Create incentives for **STEM leadership pipelines for women** and mandate quotas for women on STEM boards.
- E) Provide **funding streams for female STEM entrepreneurs** and scientists, including in femtech.
- F) Enact legislation to **hold technology companies responsible**, especially social media firms, for gender-based malicious abuse and harassment on their platforms.
- G) Mandate the collection of **gender-disaggregated data** on all aspects of gender and technology to monitor progress towards equality and inform funding and policy decision-making.

Specific Recommendations by Issue

STEM Leadership

- Increase training and development for inclusive gender and multicultural diversity and validate women's leadership styles, changing mindsets to embrace strength in differences.
- Promote paradigm shifts to expect full equity for women to fast-track diversity and inclusion.
- Advance systemic change in diversity of thought, with intentional receptiveness to STEM women's contributions.

Education

- Fund digital skills training and access to technology for girls and young women, including community-based training for out-of-school girls.
- Increase representation of positive female role models in technology such as female STEM teachers and other professionals.

Digital Divide

- Promote projects on women's digital literacy, employment and financial access to foster gender inclusive development as recommended by the UN e-Government Development Index.
- Provide funding and equipment for gender responsive digital training centers to target underserved groups including women of color, rural women, handicapped, pregnant and immigrant women.
- Increase the representation of positive female role models and encourage software creator to develop tools for women at all levels of education and language proficiency.

Environment

- Target special funding for education and skills-building in technical, scientific environmental fields.
- Using new technology, create special nodes to enable business, government, and gender-informed NGOs to collaborate on improving environmental problem solving.
- Strengthen the gender-environment-technology nexus by assessing technical environmental policies through a gender lens and gender equity policies through an environmental-technology lens.

Health

- Tighten privacy laws to guarantee that medical information will remain private, with strict penalties for violations especially by medical professionals or internet providers.
- Ensure reliable internet access to low-income and rural areas to expand telemedicine, and invest in mobile medicine to provide in-person services to pregnant, handicapped, or elderly women.
- Require scientific research and medical trials on drugs and treatments to include women of all ages.

Rurality

- Mandate gender mainstreaming in the development of technology programs in rural areas and prioritize appropriate learning opportunities for rural women and girls in agricultural technologies.
- Support the worldwide Alliance for Affordable Internet target for 5GB broadband to be no more than 2% of average monthly incomes by 2026 ("Journey from 1 to 5").
- Prioritize biodiversity and local or cooperative land ownership rather than corporate privatization and agricultural technologies that threaten biodiversity and farmer autonomy.

Violence against Women

- Prohibit and criminalize online violence against women, especially the unauthorized distribution of intimate images as recommended by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.
- Pass legislation to prohibit and criminalize online violence against women in politics, journalism, and other public positions, as recommended by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.
- Publish reports on the incidence, prosecution, and conviction of violence against women online to increase victim confidence in the criminal justice system, as recommended by GREVIO.

¹ USAID Digital Inclusion & GeoCenter 2022. [The Gender Digital Divide](#)

² UNESCO 2017. [Cracking the code: Girls' and women's education in STEM.](#)

³ Studiously Yours 2022. [Women's role in science and technology.](#)

⁴ IDB 2020. [Digital exclusion: An obstacle that hinders rural women's work.](#)

⁵ GSMA 2022. [The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022.](#)

⁶ Catalyst 2022. [Women in STEM.](#)

⁷ MSCI 2020. [Women on Boards: 2020 Progress Report.](#)

⁸ Medi-tech Insights 2021. [Global femtech market - Digital revolution in women's health.](#)

⁹ Plan International 2020. [Free to be online.](#)