



Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Report
**of the Expert Group Meeting on technology as a renewed hope to achieving
gender equality in the Arab region: fact or illusion?"**
Beirut, 24-25 October 2018

Summary

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Centre for Women organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) titled “Technology as a Renewed Hope to Achieving Gender Equality in the Arab Region: Fact or Illusion?” from 24-25 October 2018 at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon.

The meeting brought together regional and international experts for an in-depth discussion of the first draft of a study titled “*Technology as a Renewed Hope to Achieving Gender Equality in the Arab Region: Fact or Illusion?*” This discussion conceptualized how Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the Arab region could rise to the challenge and boost the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

The meeting offered an opportunity to review the chapters of the study, each of which is focused on one of the six targets of SDG 5. The participants provided comments on the structure and contents of the study. They also shared their insights and experiences on how to challenge ICTs to promote gender equality, including lessons learned and foreseen challenges. They discussed how these experiences can be customized to the Arab context, taking regional specificities into consideration.

The meeting concluded with an agreement on a set of recommendations to support the finalization of the study along with a set of proposed policy recommendations to different stakeholders in support of their efforts to achieve gender equality in the Arab region.

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Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Centre for Women held an expert group meeting (EGM) titled “Technology as a Renewed Hope for Gender Equality in the Arab Region: Fact or Illusion?” in Beirut on 24 and 25 October 2018. The meeting brought together regional and international experts to:

- (a) Discuss and validate the first draft of the study entitled “Technology as a Renewed Hope for Gender Equality in the Arab Region: Fact or Illusion?”;
- (b) Solicit and document experiences and discuss how these can be customized to the Arab context;
- (c) Develop sound policy recommendations for future action.

I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The meeting resulted in a set of substantive comments and input from the participating experts on the structure and content of the foreseen study. Participants also shared a wealth of information and knowledge on initiatives and experiences to enrich the study. Furthermore, the meeting concluded with the discussion of a set of proposed policy recommendations to emanate from the study. These recommendations are articulated around five main pillars, namely:

- (a) Legal reform;
- (b) Policy frameworks;
- (c) Institutional frameworks;
- (d) Infrastructure;
- (e) Awareness-raising and capacity-building.

II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

A. OPENING SESSION

3. The opening session presented the situation of women in the Arab region, highlighting the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a focus on the Arab region. It also provided an overview of the study and the challenges faced in its preparation and finalization.

4. Ms. Mehrinaz Elawady, Director of the ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW), provided a short intervention on women’s rights and gender equality in the Arab region. She also noted that SDG 5, dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, offered a great opportunity to promote gender equality and help Arab States fill the gender gap. She mentioned that Arab States have actively advanced some elements identified by SDG 5, namely undertaking “reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources” (target 5.a) and adopting and strengthening “sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality” (target 5.C), as evidenced by the many legal reforms related to personal status laws, violence against women as well as the policies and strategies developed for the advancement and empowerment of women. However, Arab States had not been fully investing in target 5.b on enhancing “the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women”. She highlighted that the link between gender equality and enabling technology remains weak, and even missing.

5. Ms. Sukaina Al-Nasrawi, Social Affairs Officer at ECW, discussed the role of ICTs in the SDGs in the Arab region viewed through a gender equality lens. She presented the grounds for the use of ICTs in promoting gender equality, referring back to the Beijing Platform for Action in which there was a commitment to the full

and equal participation of women in and through media and new technologies of communication, as well as in all areas of science and technology. She explained that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) affirmed in 2003 that “ICT development provides enormous opportunities for women, who should be an integral part of, and key actors, in the Information Society”. Phase two of the WSIS in 2005, which focused strongly on the empowerment opportunities ICTs provides for women, reiterated this idea and participating Governments called for the removal of gender barriers to ICT education and training. Ten years later, at WSIS+10 the potential of ICTs as tools to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment was recognized at the global level. This provided the grounds to call for ICTs as one of three means of implementation for a dedicated goal to gender equality (SDG 5) among the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable. The speaker noted that in 2011, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in its fifty-fifth session focused on the importance of access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work. She elaborated on the specific SDGs where ICTs are mentioned explicitly in their targets and noted that a mapping of WSIS commitments and the SDGs shows the harmony between the two international frameworks and their development agendas. Using statistics to illustrate her point, she explored the gender gap in mobile telephone ownership and usage, internet usage and the digital divide globally and in the Arab region, and specifically in low and middle-income countries. The presentation concluded by noting that while applying ICTs toward gender equality in the Arab region is challenging, there are good practices to learn from and a detailed analysis of the targets from a technology and gender perspective was needed.

6. Building on the previous presentations, Ms. Rouba Arja, ECW Social Affairs Officer, reviewed the situation women in the Arab region, which despite significant efforts made by Arab States since 1995 remained bleak and worrying. Gender inequality was still persistent in the region. She noted the 2030 Agenda provided an opportunity to redress the situation given its focus on the centrality of gender equality as an underpinning principle in the achievement of the SDGs. Though gender equality was mainstreamed through all SDGs, Goal 5 was specifically dedicated to gender equality and women’s empowerment. This two-track approach was highly relevant for the region as gender inequality intersected with many other inequalities, further weakening the situation of women. The means of implementation combined efforts in the three areas of economic reforms and financial services, legal environment and enhancing technology. However, among the three means, enhancing technology to promote the empowerment of women remained under researched. Noting the study was designed to fill this gap in research, she presented its structure which was comprised of an introductory chapter, five chapters focusing on the six targets of Goal 5 and conclusions and recommendations. Flagging the challenges in fine-tuning the report given the interconnectedness of the targets, she reminded participants that the ultimate objective of the meeting was to review the structure and content of the study, provide comments to support its finalization and conduct an in-depth discussion on the policy recommendations that the study would lead to.

B. SESSION I: TECHNOLOGY AS AN ENABLING FRAMEWORK TO REDUCE GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION

7. Ms. Arja presented the contents of chapter 2 which focused on the role of technology in reducing gender-based discrimination (target 5.1). She identified regional trends, including the persistence of discriminatory views among the majority of both men and women in the region in relation to women’s roles. Women were confined to conventional roles and prioritized men over women in terms of access to jobs. Women carried the vast majority of daily domestic tasks and caretaking. Changes in the role of women outside the households were accepted as long as the man remained the primary breadwinner and the woman continued to be the primary caregiver and organizer of domestic life. Unlike many other regions in the world, these perceptions do not seem to have been changing significantly with new generations. She also highlighted the role of education as a driver to induce changes. The continuous concentration of women in conventionally “female” fields followed the stereotypes and the widespread social construct in the region, despite the increasing educational attainment of women. The presenter explained that experiences in ICTs around the world have been a double-edged sword in terms of gender equality and women’s empowerment: while ICTs presented

considerable potential to enlarge women's empowerment, they have also been seen as vectors that perpetuated established stereotypes and discrimination against women.

8. In the discussion that followed, participants agreed that the study needed deeper insight into the Arab context and a greater focus on technology, particularly in the introductory chapter. Participants also agreed on the importance of providing definitions and further unpacking terminologies and concepts used in the study, such as "enabling technology" and "ICTs".

9. The discussions stressed the necessity of contextualizing, acknowledging and linking all the arguments to the prevailing gender narrative in the region. Participants discussed how gender norms and stereotypes could influence women's attitudes towards ICTs, citing the examples of the different levels of use of social media between women and men and how gender stereotypes were sometimes reinforced by technology such as computer games. They proposed that the study incorporate more Arab women voices, and particularly young women.

10. The discussions also addressed the issues of women's underrepresentation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields despite their high levels of educational attainment. Participants pointed out to the need to not forget women in rural contexts given the important role ICTs can play there, namely in empowering women and helping them improve their livelihoods, and at the same time in reducing the gender gap at the household level. The issue of women's protection and digital security was raised.

11. Participants also cited some global and regional initiatives relevant to the issue of gender-based discrimination including:

- Gaza Gateway: a new social enterprise initiative designed to help young information technology (IT) graduates gain work experience, employability training and create new opportunities within the devastated Gaza economy;
- Tamkeen: an initiative focusing on empowering Arab youth with a focus on women;
- Launch of virtual courts in the United Arab Emirates which enable women to have more access to justice without the burdens of going to court;
- Gender-auditing: examples of how it has been used in several institutions in Lebanon, including gender analysis of projects and gender-sensitive budgeting;
- Arab Women Organization: In-house initiative of the League of Arab States to engender mobile applications on legal issues, starting with mobile applications for women in rural areas as a prototype.

C. SESSION II: TECHNOLOGY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

12. Ms. Al-Nasrawi presented the contents of chapter 3 of the study which focused on the role of ICTs in implementing targets 5.2 and 5.3 related to combatting violence against women (VAW). She noted that VAW was a critical human rights violation with wide-ranging impacts on public health, societal well-being and economic development. She described regional trends including the prevalent forms of VAW in the region, such as domestic violence, honour killings, child marriage, forced prostitution and trafficking, sexual harassment and female genital mutilation, as well as others. The speaker explained that according to available statistics, one out of three ever-married women in the Middle East and North Africa region have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. Among this pool of ever married women, the prevalence of violence is almost double for divorced women than to currently-married or widowed women. She discussed how ICTs could enable new forms of VAW while at the same time combat VAW. New forms of violence and aggression through ICTs include online harassment, cyber stalking, privacy invasions, blackmail, viral rape

videos, trolling, sexting and the distribution of sex videos. She highlighted that technology-related VAW cause psychological and emotional harm, reinforce prejudices, damage reputations, fosters economic loss and pose barriers to participation in public life. She also noted that technology-related VAW could lead to sexual and other forms of physical violence. On the other hand, the speaker pointed out the added value of ICTs in combatting VAW, noting the impact of merely owning a mobile phone in increasing female ICT literacy, along with other positive attributes. Examples from the region were explored and a list of questions on the topic was provided to guide the discussion.

13. In the subsequent discussions, the participants highlighted the need to provide a clear understanding of VAW and to further contextualise the issues presented. In terms of ICTs as an enabler of VAW, participants mentioned new trends of violence that had been generated by ICTs in the Arab region and gave the examples of the ability to harass women with anonymity, particularly women with disabilities, and targeting women through internet by religious extremists. Participants repeatedly underlined the importance of reforming and developing the legal frameworks needed to protect to rights of all internet users, including women. Examples were shared on the negative impact of ICTs when relevant legal frameworks are absent. In Lebanon, for example a woman who was prominent in the feminist movement was harassed on social media documented the abuse and made it public. When the issue was taken to court, she lost the case to the harasser. Participants agreed on the bearing of sharing failed initiatives to draw lessons and recommendations to improve policy. In terms of ICTs as a tool to combat VAW, several examples such as the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault; the Love Matters global online platform that seeks to bridge the gap in sexual reproductive health information between young people, sexual health experts, educators and services; the #JusticeForNoura campaign which led to overturning the death sentence of a Sudanese teenager who had been forced into marriage at 16 and who was convicted of murdering her husband during a rape. Other good practices on how ICTs can contribute to increase women's security in conflict situations included an initiative undertaken in Jordan in which mobile money enables women refugees to have control over their money using technology for different aims. Instead of carrying cash which would increase their vulnerability, women could use their e-money on their mobile phones. In the State of Palestine, a special police team was set up to monitor harassment of women on social media such as Facebook. Women can now report cases of online harassment to the police, who deal with it accordingly. Whereas cybercrime units in other countries usually operate for everyone regardless of gender, these special units have been set up for women. This initiative is worth documenting for the institutionalization aspect and specific targeting of women as clients.

14. Participants discussed challenges restraining the use of ICTs for combatting VAW, namely the ICTs infrastructure of the countries and women's ability to use technology. They stressed the importance of women's agency and questioned women's power to use this technology when available. They noted the critical role of governments and pointed out to the Arab Governments' weak support and commitment to challenging the use of ICTs to promote gender equality.

D. SESSION III: TECHNOLOGY AND WOMEN'S SOCIOECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

15. The third session started with a presentation of chapter 4 by Ms. Sophia Huyer, Director of Women in Global Science and Technology, which was dedicated to technology and women's socioeconomic empowerment (target 5.4). She stated that the target focused on women's unpaid care and domestic work and how it impeded their participation in the paid labour market, and thus the critical need to recognize and support women's unpaid and domestic work. In her presentation, she noted that Arab countries have not significantly progressed on the issue of regulating and calculating unpaid work, and that women continued predominated the informal sector. The speaker also presented the women's economic situation in the Arab region, namely their participation in the labour market where the gender wage gap continued to be high. She highlighted how ICTs can be a pathway to women's economic empowerment by allowing women to engage in income-generating activities, mitigating precarity of working conditions and increasing access to financial/banking services. She also cited some examples from the region such as a Bahraini initiative that allowed enterprises to be registered without having a physical address, a simple step which provided women with greater

opportunity to undertake income-generating activities and was extremely helpful for refugee and migrant women.

16. Participants discussed how ICTs could contribute to recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work and how social media could be used by women to make their voices heard, citing an example of a calculator for women to calculate the weekly value of their unpaid work, available at <https://qz.com/work/1083411/this-calculator-makes-the-unpaid-work-women-do-visible/>. The participants debated the possibility of linking this initiative to time-use surveys, which examine how women spend their time and on what tasks, to evaluate unpaid work. Participants also discussed how ICT-based innovation contributed to the economic status of women in the region. They cited several examples in addition to the mobile money initiative in Jordan, such as incubators and e-businesses that are more frequently established by women in Sudan and Egypt. However, participants also noted the many obstacles that hinder such initiatives including the lack of financial digital inclusion, the issue of safe delivery of goods, the problem of distance and transportation faced by rural women, poverty and financial constraints, lack of skills, finding relevant content and language barriers. The role government in providing education, infrastructure and funds was stressed. Participants also mentioned that many competitions are being launched to empower women and girls with ICTs in the region. They highlighted the example of the Technovation World Pitch Summit, a competition run by a global non-profit organization that invites teams of girls from all over the world to produce mobile application that help address real world problems through technology. It is worth noting that the State of Palestine team won second place in 2018.

17. Participants agreed on the need to focus the discussion on unpaid care which constituted a major blockage leading to women's inability to participate in the economic sector. However, participants stressed the importance of setting a societal model that allowed the emancipation of all women and girls and to avoid the establishment of a model whereby unpaid care is contracted to the most vulnerable women such as poor or and migrant women in the form of precarious work. They discussed the relevance of addressing the gender norms and stereotypes to re-establish a fair division of work among the family members and the role of ICTs in supporting this endeavour.

E. SESSION IV: TECHNOLOGY AND WOMEN'S EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

18. Ms. Al-Nasrawi presented chapter 5 on the role of ICTs in implementing target 5.5 on ensuring women's full access, effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. She described the regional trends, including the progress in the level of women's political representation in the Arab region, noting that it remains low when compared to global averages at various governance levels. For example, women's representation in local councils in most countries is poor. She also noted that the representation of women in cabinet positions is improving in the Arab region, however, women are generally assigned portfolios corresponding to their traditional social roles, namely education and health. The speaker tackled the representation of women in the judiciary which is improving but on a slow and uneven path and depending on the type of courts. She discussed how ICTs could be used by women to make their voices heard, promote their participation in decision-making and as a tool to enhance access to services for women and girls. Examples from the region on the pros and cons of the use of ICTs to implement this target were presented.

19. Discussions throughout this session focused on the double-edged sword of ICTs. Some participants argued that whereas ICTs were an inevitable way of life and the future of communication, they can be used to exclude women and create a false illusion of a public sphere. For example, Senegalese female politicians who were using ICTs to collaborate among themselves at a time when they were not able to move at night. While ICTs allowed them to communicate and coordinate, they nonetheless kept them confined to a virtual public sphere. Also, while women in the Arab world had gained tremendous opportunities to raise their voices online and in other modes, they were still not well-represented in the public sphere where decisions were made. There was an urgent need to translate women's quantitative presence online into a real presence and representation

in the political arenas. Others argued that the trend was now for all political debates and discussions to be online, thus encouraging women's use of ICTs was giving them the tools for the future. ICTs provided an opportunity to reach even those that cannot all be physically far away. Participants agreed that while women could use ICTs to their advantage, they should not be considered as an end but rather as a means to improve their situation particularly in political representation and participation. The use of ICTs by women to advance their political participation should be supported, keeping in mind that their ultimate purpose was to meet men at equal levels everywhere, both in virtual and in physical spaces.

20. Participants also discussed the role of traditional media and its link with ICTs. Tunisia was presented as an example of a country where ICTs played a crucial role in determining the outcome of the elections, even though the country continues to be dependent on classical media such as radio. Women were able to use ICTs and social media to overcome corruption and other obstacles to accessing traditional media. Thus, because transitional media was not always accessible to women, it was important to the skills to use new types of media. Participants also discussed the need to have programmes to train women on the use of ICTs for decision-making and influencing purposes. In tandem with the need to increase women's awareness on when to use ICTs to make their voices heard, was when to stop using ICTs and become physically present. The session concluded with an agreement on the importance of clarifying the kind of change needed to achieve gender equality and how ICTs could contribute to this change.

21. Participants highlighted the role of Arab Governments in improving services for women and girls using ICTs and discussed e-governance portals and platforms as important tools to enhance governments' capacity to provide services, achieve policy goals and increase efficiency and transparency by encouraging greater trust, participation and engagement of citizens. Such platforms empower women and allow them to gain information on what is happening in their country and make their voice heard. Participants provided examples from India and Estonia. In India, e-service centres have been established at the village level to allow easy access to rural citizens, particularly rural women, to online government services. Estonia had established e-governance systems and had become the most advanced digital society in the world by putting in place e-solutions for all government services (governance, tax, health, residency, voting), allowing women easy access to all these services. In the Arab region, many countries, such as Jordan, Tunisia, and Morocco, have also carried out successful open governance initiatives. In some of the Gulf countries, such initiatives were adopted but focussed more on open data than on open governance.

22. Participants discussed the challenges that might hinder the use of ICTs to achieve target 5.5 in the Arab region. They mentioned regional challenges including the lack of awareness and skills on the use of ICTs, affordability of technology, lack of data, lack of government buy-in, curtailing of freedom of speech, the cultural background in general, gender social norms and even lack of interest at times. Furthermore, participants raised issues related to the psychology of oppression and the sexism.

F. SESSION V: TECHNOLOGY AND ENHANCING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

23. Ms. Arja gave a short presentation highlighting chapter 6 focusing on target 5.6 on the role of technology in enhancing women's access to health services. She explained the main problems related to this target were the limited access to services and the lack of knowledge and information about family planning and sexual and reproductive services. She mentioned that 40 per cent of married women in the region use modern contraception. Explaining the role of ICTs to overcome these problems, she gave several examples from different countries on the potential use of ICTs to enhance access to health services. She noted that experiences so far demonstrated the benefit of ICTs to boost the realization of target 5.6 with the relatively limited negative effects.

24. In the discussions that followed, challenges for using ICTs to enhance women's access to health raised including the lack of health information available in Arabic. Since the Syrian Arabic Republic was the only country that used the Arabic language for scientific content, the ongoing war had negatively impacted scientific content in Arabic. Even if some of this content was still available, it was either outdated or from untrusted sources. The cultural perception of the female body in the Arab region was also raised, along with the ways

men in the region tend to have control over women's bodies. An example of a study conducted in Yemen to determine to what extent women, especially in remote areas, use ICTs as sources of reproductive health information, was cited. The study showed that those women who needed the most to access health information, used ICTs the least, for reasons including poverty, lack of access to ICT-based devices and lack of awareness. The study also revealed that in terms of health-related decisions, the husband appeared to be the major decision maker. The generational gap was also presented as a challenge, with an example from Tunisia where reproductive health care and information was restricted to married women and was considered a taboo issue for young girls.

25. Regarding the lack of health data, participants emphasized the huge gap between health informatics, or the collection and management of data on health, and health communication, or the strategies to use data to change behaviour and perceptions about health. These two fields are quite distinct and there was a need to develop health informatics (database, language, research) and then work on health communication, which would be a good role for women groups and governments, among others.

26. Participants underlined the importance of e-health services, the need for education and awareness campaigns, the need to focus on equipping women by providing them with the information and the necessary tools to access it. Information alone was not enough; it needed to be accompanied by behaviour change.

27. Two major good practices were noted. The first example was the iBreast exam sensor, which was developed in the United States and has been widely used by women in India, especially in rural areas, to detect breast cancer. This handheld battery-operated tool was used to detect breast cancer without radiation, and at a very low cost compared to mammograms, making it accessible. The good practice was the Respond Lebanon app launched by ABAAD that provides crucial information, such as guiding principles, procedures, roles and responsibilities for actors involved in the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Lebanon within the framework of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan.

G. SESSION VI: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

28. Building on the discussions throughout the two-day meeting, this session focused chiefly on the policy recommendations to come out of the study. The proposed recommendations are divided into the following categories:

1. *Legal reform*

- Reforming existing legal frameworks and developing new ones to support the use of ICTs, taking into account the removal of barriers relating to the empowerment of women.

2. *Policy Framework*

- Putting in place monitoring and evaluations systems to measure accomplishments;
- Mainstreaming gender in all national development programmes and plans, and undertaking planning with a focus on ICTs as an enabler for sustainable development;
- Including ICTs as a component in all national women's policies and programmes;
- Enhancing gender-sensitive e-government and open government programmes;

3. *Institutional frameworks*

- Enhancing an enabling environment for women's online employment and for running online businesses;

- Capitalizing on existing efforts to use ICTs for gender equality in both the public and private sectors;
- Promoting the development of gender sensitive digital Arabic content to ensure wide dissemination;
- Using both traditional and non-traditional media outlets to ensure a wide dissemination of knowledge and information to promote gender equality;
- Promoting collective action of women's organizations to access, package and use the information and other resources on entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Promoting transparency, accountability, participation and implementation of a gender-sensitive budget;
- Promoting women's political participation; and
- Addressing cultural issues and gender norms.

4. *Infrastructure*

- Systematically collecting sex and age disaggregated data in the use of ICTs; and
- Enhancing infrastructure by considering Public Private Partnerships to ensure access and affordability.

5. *Awareness-raising and capacity development*

- Promoting equal access to education and ICT literacy; and
- Redressing the digital gender gap through information dissemination and trainings;

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

29. The EGM was held at the United Nations House in Beirut on 24-25 October 2018.

B. PARTICIPANTS

30. A total of 12 regional and international experts on gender and technology for development from Armenia, Canada, Egypt, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the State of Palestine, the Republic of South Africa, the Sudan and the United Arab Emirates participated in the meeting, in addition to staff from the ESCWA Centre for Women and other divisions. The annex to the present report provides a list of participants.

C. OPENING

31. Ms. Mehrinaz Elawady, Director of ESCWA's Centre for Women, welcomed the participants noting that meeting was held in the context of the preparations for a study on SDG5 and technology, particularly ICTs. She provided an overview of the importance of the study, the rationale behind its preparation and a preview of the meeting's process. She explained that the meeting aimed to initiate a discussion on how technology can be utilized to advance the six targets of Goal 5 of the SDGs. She highlighted that the discussion was expected to inform a revised draft of the study and support its improvement and finalization by filling in

the knowledge and analytical gaps. She presented the agenda which discussed the chapters one by one with a focus on their main arguments and initiatives.

D. EVALUATION

32. Participants assessed the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the meeting through a questionnaire distributed at the end of the meeting for this purpose. The feedback received from participants was positive with 70 per cent rating the overall quality of the meeting as very good to excellent and 80 per cent considering it as meeting their expectations. Over 80 per cent of the participants found the presentations provided during the meeting clear and the written material distributed before of excellent and good quality. As a follow-up action, several participants proposed reviewing and commenting on the advanced draft of the study.

E. AGENDA

33. Presentations and discussions were made over seven sessions. The agenda of the meeting is summarized below:

- (a) Opening Session;
- (b) Session 1: Technology as an enabling framework to reduce gender based-discrimination (target 5.1);
- (c) Session 2: Technology and violence against women and girls (target 5.2 and 5.3);
- (d) Session 3: Technology and women's socioeconomic empowerment (target 5.4);
- (e) Session 4: Technology and women's effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership (target 5.5);
- (f) Session 5: Technology and enhancing women's access to health services (target 5.6);
- (g) Session 6: Conclusion and recommendations.

Annex*

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