

BRIDGING THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

**A Report on Gender and ICT in
Central and Eastern Europe and the
Commonwealth of Independent States**

*Central and Eastern
Europe Office*



*Regional Bureau for Europe
and the Commonwealth of
Independent States*

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Foreword

In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as in other regions, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are increasingly recognized as a powerful instrument for reducing poverty, promoting good governance, and facilitating sustainable human development. This report represents a joint effort by UNDP and UNIFEM to draw attention to the less known, yet equally powerful, potential of ICTs as a vehicle for advancing gender equality. The report however emphasizes that this potential cannot be realized if ICT policies and tools are gender blind and if ICT as a growing sector in our modern world remains pervasively male-dominated.

The Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), its follow-up five-year review in 2000, and other global forums, including most recently the 2003 World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), affirm that despite significant regional variation, ICT development affects women and men differently, and that in all regions, women face fundamental barriers to benefiting from ICTs as well as to influencing ICT development policies.

This report highlights imbalances between women's and men's access to and participation in ICTs and asserts that more needs to be done to ensure that women equally enjoy the benefits arising from the global knowledge-based economy at all levels of ICT policy and practice. Integration of gender perspectives within ICT for Development (ICTD) calls for increased political commitment by policy-makers and practitioners accompanied by dedicated measures and resources. As promising new areas such as e-governance, e-learning or e-commerce increasingly entrench these emerging technologies, it is crucial that policy directions and processes are effectively planned from the outset, and that proper linkages are established not only between gender and ICTs, but also across these other sectors – for which specific gender mainstreaming requirements must be accommodated.

Over the past decade, the gender and ICT advocacy movement has seen growth at a global level. In the CEE/CIS it has remained in its infancy, with diffusion of its ideas still characteristically *ad hoc* and fragmented. Gender and ICT advocacy networks, where such exist, are weak and confined to the fringes of a women's movement that is preoccupied and overburdened by other burning priorities. Yet as this report emphasizes, if appropriately harnessed, ICTs stand to meaningfully contribute to and mutually reinforce the advancement of effective, more expeditious solutions to gender inequalities and women's rights violations, including problems such as gender-based violence or the unequal participation of women in political as well as in economic spheres.

UNDP plays an important role in the CEE/CIS region in supporting ICTD use through diverse regional and country-based initiatives. In line with its corporate

commitments and strategies, UNDP has aimed to mainstream gender across its ICTD interventions. The commissioning of this report indeed constitutes part of an effort to critically review UNDP's own work with a view to deepening its knowledge of the gender dimensions of ICTs and further refining and strengthening its strategies and programmes. The partnership with UNIFEM, a UN agency devoted to the advancement of gender equality and tasked with supporting the UN system in mainstreaming gender within UN policies and programmes, has ensured that the preparation of this report draws on the best available specialized expertise on gender and ICT both globally and within the CEE/CIS region.

The report is not exhaustive nor does it pretend to offer comprehensive in-depth analysis of the complex issues. In compiling the report, the authors were constrained by a scarcity of gender-disaggregated data as well as by the limited relevant experience or examples of good practice in the region. Yet in drawing attention to these very obstacles, and in formulating questions that call for further research, the report aims to spur wider debate and to mobilize increased attention as well as support for further action in this area.

Overcoming the 'gender digital divide' will require policy changes for both ICTD and gender – and their intersection. Concerted efforts by governments, civil society, including women's organizations and gender and ICT advocacy groups, as well as the international development community will be necessary to ensure productive participation in policy processes. As the first its kind, compiling a substantial body of information and commentary on gender equality in the information society in the CEE/CIS region, including references to other resources, relevant web sites and contacts, UNDP and UNIFEM hope this report will both provide practical guidance as well as inspire innovative action by stakeholders across the region.



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Acronyms

APC-WNSP	Association for Progressive Communications – Women’s Networking Support Programme
AWID	Association for Women’s Rights in Development
B.a.B.e	Be active, Be emancipated
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DEVNET	Development Network International
DG	Directorate General
DOT-COM	Digital Opportunity through Technology and Communication
EC	European Commission
ECDR	E-Commerce and Development Report (UNCTAD)
EGM	Expert Group Meeting
ENAWA	European and North American Women Action
ESIS	European Survey of Information Society
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
EP	Framework Programme (EU)

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

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