



Outcomes: Gendered Digital Divide "Digitally Empowered Generation Equality in the Wake of Covid-19" 9 March 2021, Virtual

The session "[Gendered digital divide: Digitally Empowered Generation Equality in the wake of COVID-19](#)" was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) and EQUALS. This event took place virtually on 9 March 2021 from 10:00 – 12:00 CET and was held within the framework of the [2021 UN Regional Forum for Sustainable Development for UNECE Region](#) and the [ITU Regional Forum for Europe on Meaningful Connectivity \(8-9 March 2021\)](#). Over 300 participants from more than 15 countries viewed this special session. This virtually held event and supported by captioning and live streaming on both [YouTube and Twitter platforms](#). The full agenda and presentations can be accessed [here](#).

This special session launched the "[Digitally empowered generation equality report: Women, girls and ICT in the context of COVID-19 in selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries](#)". The study focuses on the digital divide occurring in 5 Western Balkan states (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and 3 Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova). The study identifies key factors and trends in the participation of women in the digital sector in education, career, and entrepreneurship at the national level. It concludes into country specific recommendations to develop a set of national initiatives fostering participation of women and girls in the ICT sector. Youth representatives from countries mentioned in the report shared key points and recommendations as well as personal stories at this special session.

The event identified the significant digital gender divide that has been exacerbated by COVID-19. It has now become urgent to have a more equal, just, and secure future for all to accelerate action towards achieving gender equality by 2030. Technological change is not gender neutral; women and girls face higher exposure to violence and abuse in technology-enabled spaces, which needs to be considered. Concrete initiatives and best practices were shared in stimulating girls and women towards initiating and staying in ICT related careers by the governments of Slovenia and Georgia as well as representatives of the private sector and academia. Steps towards achieving gender equality were identified including access to high-speed broadband, ICT awareness, digital public service delivery and digital skill building and trainings for all. Speakers called for putting in place commitments that are translated into action and the creation of long-term sustainable solutions to achieve gender equality. All participants echoed the importance of engaging meaningfully in international processes and initiatives such as the [Generation Equality Forum](#), [EQUALS](#), [Girls in ICT](#), as well as regional initiatives that aim to create equal opportunities for all, especially for girls, youth and women, in the digital space.