UN-WOMEN'S OPERATIONAL RESPONSE IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION

Photo: UN Women Europe and Central Asia/Rena Effendi

Roll-out of the Agreed Conclusions of the 67th Commission on the Status of Women: Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

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Photo: UN Women Moldova

CONTEXT

- Women and girls in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region have been disproportionately impacted by a number of challenges and humanitarian crises.

- An estimated 5,914,000 internally displaced Ukrainians and nearly 8 million Ukrainian refugees in neighbouring countries and across Europe (90 percent women and children).

- Türkiye earthquakes. 11 provinces with a population of around 14 million affected. Women and girls make up half of this population.

REGIONAL DIGITAL OVERVIEW

- The expanding prevalence and importance of digital spaces during and after COVID-19 has fuelled another emerging challenge: online violence against women and girls.

- Women's participation in ICT and STEM jobs is limited. In most parts of the ECA region, fewer than 40% of ICT jobs are held by women, and those jobs are more likely to be of lower status and with less decision-making power.

- Basic ICT skills are becoming a prerequisite for accessing services and employments, as well as participating in public life.

BRINGING/AMPLIFYING REGION'S VOICE TO INFLUENCE AND INFORM CSW67 DISCUSSION

Member States emphasized the following priorities:

Central Asia

1. Continue digitalization of public **gender-responsive services** for citizens and businesses

2. **Reengineer** existing procedures

3. Determine **effectiveness** of current levels of digitalization

Western Balkans and Türkiye

1. Build a community of practice to **address underrepresentation** of women in ICT sector

2. Ensure **substantive and meaningful participation of women** as agents of change in innovation and digitalization strategies, policies, and programmes

3. Acknowledge **transformative potential** of gender equality in digitalization

Ukraine

1. Expand women's access to digital skills and affordable technologies for their **access to decent work**

2. Unlock financial resources to sustain and scale-up **women's businesses**

3. **Boost digital solutions i**n promoting women's empowerment, particularly in the areas of economic empowerment and access to income-generating activities

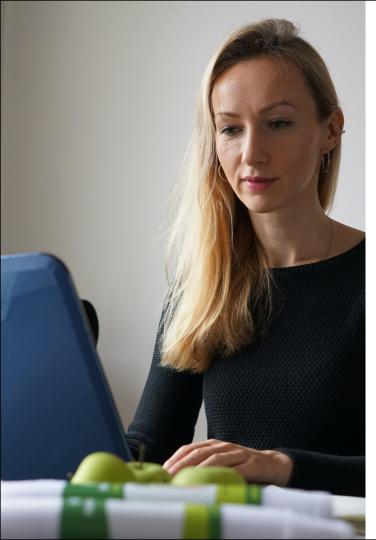# ADVANCING CSW67 AGREED CONCLUSIONS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS IN THE REGION

1. Prioritizing digital equity to close the gender digital divide

2. Leveraging financing for inclusive digital transformation and innovation towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

3. Promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership, as well as full employment, of women in technology and innovation

4. Adopting gender-responsive technology design, development and deployment

5. Enhancing data science to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

6. Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, including gender-based violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technologies.

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PRIORITIZING DIGITAL EQUITY TO CLOSE THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

- An in-depth assessment following the rapid assessment assessment "[Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on specialist services for victims and survivors of violence in the Western Balkans and Turkey: A proposal for addressing the needs](#)" launched three years ago, is under way.

- The follow-up assessment will:
  - Appraise adaptation of essential services for survivors of violence to emergencies and crises
  - Evaluate responses to old and new challenges, including safety in the digital sphere and online violence
  - Map most pressing needs in the coming years

- Foster **partnership with ITU** to further address the digital gender gaps across the region, stemming from the 2021 study which covered eight countries and evaluated trends in the participation of girls and women in the ICT sector and its dynamics.

- Mobilize new **public-private partnerships** with tech companies, building on the previous work with Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency, Vodafone Albania, etc.

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LEVERAGING FINANCING FOR INCLUSIVE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION TOWARDS ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS
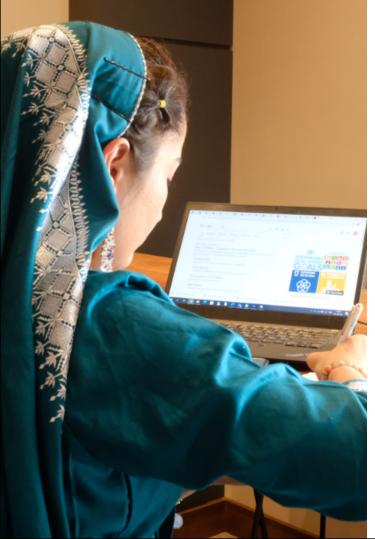
- Cooperation with **Women in Tech** – a leading global community that fosters inclusion, diversity and equity in STEM - to advocate with governments, private sector, development partners and other stakeholders for creating enabling legislative and policy frameworks for increased engagement of women and girls in technologies in the region.

- Undertake and support initiatives for **financing** of gender-responsive digital policies and regulations. This includes measures to address online gender-based violence, protect women's privacy and data security, and ensure digital platforms and services are inclusive, safe, and non-discriminatory

Photo: UN Women/Daria Komleva

PROMOTING THE FULL, EQUAL AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP, AS WELL AS FULL EMPLOYMENT, OF WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

- A digital chapter of the regional flagship Women's Entrepreneurship Expo that will provide women - including those from marginalized groups - with access to networking and mentoring opportunities informed by a comprehensive gender analysis of the entrepreneurial ecosystem for women.

- Building capacity of women and girls in ICT-related fields and a mentorship programme in partnership with Women in Tech will be launched.

- New partnership with the European Commission was put in motion and brought to fruition a new regional programme, kicking off in 2024 and covering Western Balkans and Türkiye. The programme will work to increase women's economic empowerment - notably in managerial and leadership roles - and encourage more women and girls to enter STEM, green and digital fields.

- Partnership with the Ukrainian Ministry of Digital Transformation and their Diia.Business initiative to support displaced and refugee Ukrainian women to start up or rescale their businesses through the provision of blended entrepreneurial, digital and financial literacy trainings, business consultations, financial assistance and access to markets.

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ADOPTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE TECHNOLOGY DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT

- Development of a regional youth engagement road map involving 40 youth activists, organizations and leaders from over 22 countries under the Generation Equality Europe and Central Asia Youth Forum will be another entry point for advancing digital priorities and commitments.

- Supporting the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia's initiative on "UN Digital Development Toolbox: Guidelines, frameworks, and tools supporting the UN Development System delivery on digital in Europe and Central Asia.

Photo: UN Women Kazakhstan/Zarina Assanova

ENHANCING DATA SCIENCE TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

- Exploring big data to generate new evidence and knowledge on emerging gender equality issues to help closing the gender data gaps. For this, we will partner with data and social science experts to explore:
  - o The human sources data such as social media, internet forums to estimate femicide in Central Asia countries
  - o The sentiment and emotional analysis based on social media content to assess the phenomenon of online gender-based violence
  - o Monitor gender equality and women's empowerment agenda at sub-national level in Albania

- Continuing to pursue new efforts in monitoring femicide by using digital tools and leveraging data science to provide comparable and higher-quality data on VAW to inform policy and programming.

PREVENTING AND ELIMINATING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE, INCLUDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THAT OCCURS THROUGH OR IS AMPLIFIED BY THE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES

- An **action-oriented research on online violence** against women and girls in 12 countries of the ECA region to:
  - Investigate its nature and scale
  - Explore women's experiences
  - Develop a greater understanding of its consequences
  - Produce strategic recommendations for prevention and response

The research will be launched during the international annual campaign - 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

- The EU-funded regional programme, implemented in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, will:
  - Strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders in the referral system, including government, policymakers, the judiciary, the health sector, and civil society organizations, to provide quality, coordinated services for survivors of violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technologies.
  - Support women and girls to have the knowledge and tools to recognize and report online violence or violence amplified by the use of technologies.

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Photo: UN Women/ Eduard Pagria

THANK YOU