



## International Taskforce on Women and ICTs

**September 3, 2009**

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### **IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD IN MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The International Taskforce on Women and ICTs (ITF) congratulates the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) for operationalizing its commitment to gender as one of its key areas in its 2009-2010 Action Plan adopted today at the Global Forum on ICT and Innovation for Education being held in Monterrey, Mexico.

Based in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), GAID reiterated its commitment to mainstream gender issues across all its activities in adopting the Action Plan. The Global Alliance underlined the importance in its mission for the forthcoming year of mainstreaming gender as a key global challenge in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The third MDG calls for promotion of **gender equality and empowerment of women** by elimination of gender disparity in all levels of education.

ITF Chair Dr. Gloria Bonder, a member of the GAID's highest body — the Steering Committee — said “we are very pleased with the inclusive agenda UNDESA-GAID has adopted. This is a significant step forward for women. The International Taskforce for Women and ICT is proud to support UNDESA-GAID and looks forward to working across our global partnerships and regional nodes to advance, engage and mainstream girls and women in the knowledge society. When women are empowered and have the opportunity to develop to their full potential in the knowledge society, communities across the globe benefit”.

ITF is proud of its consultative role as a GAID Community of Expertise working closely with GAID to secure the inclusion of gender and ICT issues in the Action Plan. The Gender Community of Expertise, comprised of ITF and IT for Change, has been among the most active of the Communities collaborating with GAID on the development of the plan.

Among the specific gender-related activities in the plan is mainstreaming ICT into high-level United Nations policy debates on gender. This is particularly important in order to bring the ICT and the gender policy communities together since in the past both have suffered from lack of awareness of the other. In 2010 GAID, assisted by the Community of Expertise of Gender, will organize a panel on ICT and gender at the Economic and Social Council Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), which has chosen gender as its focus, to be held in Geneva in July 2010. ITF expects to work with GAID in the preparatory activities for the meeting and in the preparation of a paper on Gender and ICT for presentation to the AMR.

GAID has also outlined its support to the Communities of Expertise in the Action Plan, including involving the Communities as resources for the preparation of white papers on ICTs and the MDGs and helping the Communities to establish partnerships among each other. This is particularly relevant for the Gender Community, as gender cuts across the other communities.

ITF wishes to express its appreciation to UNDESA-GAID for ensuring the strong participation of the Community of Expertise on Gender in the Monterrey Forum and meeting of the Strategy Council where the Action Plan was adopted. ITF Steering Committee member Dorothy Gordon, a member of the GAID Champions Network and Director-General, of the Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT moderated the opening discussion at the Forum on 2 September on the State of ICT Development – A Global Perspective. Gloria Bonder, Chair Holder of the Regional UNESCO Chair on Women, Science and Technology in Latin America, opened the plenary session on ICT and intercultural innovations in education. GAID also supported the participation of ITF and IT for Change members from developing countries to the meetings of the Steering Committee and Strategy Council and the Forum and awarded ITF a site in the iMarketPlace, one of the Forum's parallel events.

The International Taskforce on Women and Information and Communication Technologies is a community of expertise of organizations, institutions, academia, businesses and individuals working to increase economic, social, and educational opportunities for women and girls in the knowledge society in a measurable way. Its vision is an information society for sustainable global development that fosters the potential for success of all its members. Its overarching goal is to ensure women's full participation in an inclusive information and knowledge-based society as leaders and creators as well as users of ICT.