Girls and the Internet

Situation

• Global Internet use is expected to increase to 50% by the end of 2019.
• The other 50%, 3.8 billion people, will remain unconnected and unable to access the social and economic resources available from the expanding digital world.
• In Africa, 75% of the population is not using the Internet; in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States 58% are non-users. (ITU)
• Those excluded from access to Internet are predominantly women and girls. (Web Foundation)

Barriers

• Lack of Internet connectivity is the major impediment in Internet infrastructure in least developed countries. (ITU)
• 41% of countries have no or out-of-date broadband plans. (A4AI)
• Access to Internet remains unaffordable to most because of poverty, income disparities and gender inequalities.
• An additional issue of affordability is that it is currently has a data allowance of 500 MB a month, which allows a viewer to watch two minutes of high-quality video. (A4AI)
• Many national ICT plans have no concrete, measurable gender equality targets supported by resources. (Web Foundation)

Internet and the Empowerment of Girls

• Early and ongoing access to Internet offers academic enrichment and provides vital information to girls on issues such as human rights, sexual and reproductive health and violence against girls.
• The Internet offers new opportunities for education and employment in the digital economy.
• Girls can interact and learn from girls in other places and cultures.

Actions to Close Digital Divide for Girls

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• Promote public access solutions- subsidized access in schools, local centers, public WiFi, community networks- to enable more girls to benefit from broadband connections. Ensure that those gender-specific considerations are incorporated into each locale.

• Information on girls’ rights and services should be made available through the use of websites, Short Message Service telephone, social media, Interactive Voice Response telephone hotlines and community radio broadcasts. Material should be easy to find, updated regularly and available in all local languages.

• Advocate for national legislation and appropriate court follow-up to penalize ICT-based and on-line harassment of girls.

• Support the extension of national policies to offer scholarships and grants to girls to encourage increased access, training and use of Internet and related fields of science, technology and business.

**UN Sustainable Development Goal 9c**

• By 2025, all countries should have a funded National Broadband Plan or strategy or include broadband in their Universal Access and Service definition.

• The UN Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development has lowered its existing affordability threshold from 5% to 2% of monthly gross national income per capita to enable access to broadband to a much greater number of people by 2025.

• By 2025, Broadband Internet user penetration should reach: 75% worldwide, 65% in developing countries and 35% in Least Developed Countries.