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A NEW INTERNET ERA

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MERGER 4
GENDER AND ACCESS

    >> LIZA GARCIA: Good morning everyone. Thank you for coming
to this session. We're starting a little late, but there are many
people, so welcome again to this Merge session on Gender and Access
that is organized of Media Alternatives from the Philippines.
    Let's talk about access. Access to the Internet whether it's
to mobile phones and other means of communications facilitated by
technology. Is of course, significant. Even researchers and
policymakers have identified that the center of improving empowerment
to women and other marginalized communities. We know that access is
also an enabler of rights. It enables people to exercise their right
to information, enables them to express, participate, and associate
with other people.
    It also allows women the means to, for instance, run businesses
with the help of their mobile phones. Young women are able to -- because
they're more informed when they make decisions about their sexual
and reproductive health. And I'm sure that we in this -- in this room,
as well as those who are joining us remotely can think of cases that
demonstrate the ICT potential for women's empowerment. Access to the
Internet plays an important role in the economic, social culture,
and political development in societies, but access is not -- it is
often not what it seems. When you simply have access to the Internet,
it does not necessarily mean that you can achieve social justice and

development outcomes.

In this workshop, we'll examine the issue of access using a gender lens in order for us to see beneath the surface, to look beyond achieving access for the next billion thirds, the empowerment of the next million.

And in this session, when we talk about gender and access, we're not just talking about women. We just like to clarify that.

The framework that we're using for this session would include the real access framework which utilizes the following answer points. It's just physical access, appropriate technology for the ability, capacity, relevant content, sociocultural factor, stress, legal and regulatory frameworks, socioeconomic development, macroeconomic development and political will.

And we will also utilize the APC framework which focuses primarily on freedom of expression but has an access component. You can read more on that in the literature.

Now, when we talk about like Goal 5, for instance of the sustainable development goals makes specific reference to the need to enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular, ICT to promote the empowerment of women.

And Goal Number 9 significantly increases access to information and communication and strives to provide universal and affordable access to Internet in least developed countries by 2020. So clearly you can see a multidimensional perspective here in understanding access as being essential to realize the potential -- in realizing the potential of the Internet for development and equity.

We would also like to mention that this session is part of the best practice forum of the IGF. Last year it was Online Gender Violence. So this year it's gender and access. And Jac of APC here will talk about that in a bit. Yeah.

So aside from Jac, we are joined by three ladies here. Women who are very active. They're activists actually in promoting rights of -- human rights. They will help us unpack the issue of gender and access, help to us better and more comprehensively understand the issue.

So we have Ritu Srivastava. She will talk to us about the sociocultural and challenges for women to gain access, especially in India, and how alternative models can improve and enable women to learn technology and Internet.

And then we have Jelen Paclarin who will help us unpack the meanings in addition to marginalized groups especially in the Philippines and this will include women in the LGBT group, right, and those who are digitally excluded.

And we also have Nighat Dad who will discuss the cultural issues as well as bias to women's access to ICT. And Jelen on how to access the issue of gender and access.

So we will be giving each of our speakers seven minutes to do their presentation, after which we can start taking in questions.

Please note that this -- since this workshop is livecast we can take questions also from remote participants. And both remote and online participants who want to post questions anonymously can also do so by joining at Slido.com, the event is Gender and Access. Actually we already have some questions here posted anonymously.

Okay. So Jac, may we hear from you first?

>> JAC SM KEE: Hello? Good morning. My name is Jac from the Association for Progressive Communications. I'm also co-coordinating the Best Practice Forum on Gender and Access as part of the Internet -- the Global Internet Governance Forum process. But it's the BPF, or the Best Practice Forum. Since 2014, IGF community -- the Internet Governance Forum community from different stakeholder groups have come together to discuss key emerging issues between Internet policy and governance. Topics have ranged from things from creating an enabling environment for the development of local content, online child protection, IPv6 meaningful multi-stakeholder mechanisms and last year the BPF and Gender looked at online abuse and gender abuse violence.

So the work of the BPF is carried out throughout the year and it's shared -- and I guess the outputs of the work is shared at the global IGF every year. How the thematic topics are decided is that at the multi-stakeholder advisory group meeting or the MAC meeting there is a report back on activities, and based on the commitment and interest of the BPF community new topics are proposed. So the same topic doesn't always appear every year. It changes from year to year.

So this year we proposed that gender be a sustained topic for the BPF, and to look at specific issues related to gender from year to year, unpacking the different dimensions within gender.

So the BPF and gender decided to focus on the thematic issue of access. The reason for this as shared by Liza is also that it links closely to the sustainable development goal, Goal Number 5, and that the sustainable development goal is a big thematic thing from the global IGF this year to look at.

So what this BPF will do is really to engage broader stakeholders whether these are researcher, government activist, people from the private sector, civil society, technical community, intergovernmental organisations like the ITU, and UN women to really participate in this discussion and to contribute your knowledge and thinking about this issue. And this workshop, where the workshop organizers kindly and generously to link with the BPF is one of the efforts to broaden up the engagement to this process.

And a focus on Gender and access at the level of Asia Pacific is really critical. So maybe I can start with some stats because that's are quite nice, no? So globally, at the moment -- this is the statistics that just got released by ITU, I think, early last week. Globally, right now 53% of the world is not connected to the Internet. In Asia

Pacific 58.1% of the population is not connected. Everywhere in the world there are definite -- there are more men, too than women who have access to the Internet. In Asia Pacific the ratio is that 9.5 women versus 47.5 of men. So if you think about how often you go online and the range of things that you use the Internet for -- for learning to just playing to falling in love, keeping in touch with friends, working, finding out about stuff that is both frivolous and important, to participating in public, political, cultural, and economic life. It's really a critical enabler to living and to human rights. And it really has a massive potential to address also issues of discrimination and inequality. And nothing is more basic on the issue of discrimination and inequality than gender, so it really makes a lot of sense that we also look at this just from that very first primary basic lens.

So what are the specific barriers that women face to access to Internet in this region? Existing gender disparity always acts as a backdrop to disparity and access. For example, if there is a gender gap in basic literacy this affects how useful access to the Internet will be. Difference in income when it comes to gender will also affect affordability of data and devices. Specific culture and social norms that discriminate against women will also have an impact. So for example, restrictions in movement, not having time because of multiple roles of caring for the family as well as working, controlling the social life of girls, gender-based violence that women in all of our diversity face, and so on.

These are the sum of the issues we hope to gather through the conversation that will help feed into the BPF that will help inform policy development and strategies by different stakeholders. And the other part of this is what have been some of the more innovative approaches undertaken by community, by organisation, by companies and the government to address some of these barriers. We would also like to find -- find this out through this process.

So I'm really looking forward to listening and learning from the speakers as well as from a robust conversation with participants both here and online. Thanks.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Yes. Thank you, Jac, thanks for the statistics on people who are not connected. And also for informing us about the Best Practice Forum. It's good to know that Gender and access is one of the thematic issues in the Best Practice Forum from the IGF. From here, from the APrIGF we can engage further and contribute to a broader understanding of the issue and Gender and access.

So I'd like to call Ritu now to do her presentation.

>> RITU SRIVASTAVA: Hello. It's bad to hear your own voice. So thanks, Jac, for giving us insights about what gender disparity in the overall world. I would like to specifically focus on India. And before I come to gender disparity, I will talk about overall access issues in India.

So in India 70% of population is living in Northern India. 31% of population of rural India does not have Internet access points. And 70% of the population in India is accessing Internet through Cybercafes. Internet population in India is about 375 million which is 28% of total. Internet penetration is about 9%. Women Internet penetration is about 17%.

Let's talk about the female literacy which is average about 53.7%, and apparently India falls in a gender index gap is 132 out of 186 countries. We are also below Pakistan. Yeah.

So some of the challenges which Jac has mentioned, the challenges and social and cultural challenges which are making the existing gender gap much below than what it is. There is one study which has come out, the lack of awareness is one of the major hindrance in the accessing the Internet specifically among women. 38% of women population does not want to -- does not feel like to go to and surf the Internet. They do not feel like they have -- they want to surf the Internet and whether it will fulfill their requirement. That also shows that there is a lack of awareness as well as capacity that what Internet is meant for them, how they can use Internet for their betterment of their lives.

I was just reading yesterday about some of the things, and it was an interesting study when I came through. There are 26% of female workforce say that we do not have a time to go and surf the Internet, so that shows that women has other major priorities like taking care of their family, taking care of their entire livelihoods, and that also reflects whether they want to really access the Internet. And access Internet is the least priority, and why they would like to access the Internet.

On a social and cultural, there are challenges like this plays a major role in talking about making the gender gap wider and wider when we talk about Internet access issues. There are sudden communities where men have given the power, and men have been given the power to access mobile phones and certain things, but women have been said that if they are using mobile phones or Internet access, they are not goody, goody kind of people. There are those kind of challenges also reflect on those things.

Girls and mobile phones -- girls are using mobile phones is like in some of the communities is a taboo. Like if you're using a phone, that books like you are trying to provoke, you are trying to be encouraged, that you are trying to be like you are out of your community rules and regulations.

Religious barriers and such kind of a thing, like there is -- I will talk about -- want to mention about that there is a group of girls, those who are using Internet for just to promote their folk music. And they have a religious group has raised something against them to not come on the Internet because it's not the right thing for them to be on the Internet and it's not good.

So these are some of the challenges which I feel like that is all among in Indian culture which follows into the social challenges which also again lead to access and affordability of the Internet. It is difficult is the real one major of the challenges, like they cannot afford Internet. The accessing the mobile phone and accessing any devices, man is given more preference than women. In a family, a man who is the first person who wants to access the technology. And women is like, they can use a second-hand phone, a feature phone, and why is it meant for them? What will they use it for? So those are some things which is increasing the gender gap.

When we are talking about the alternative models of Internet and accessing, we have also seen the lack of awareness is because 50% of the female is the average literacy rate. If you talk about the literacy in India, it's very dynamic that a person who can use switch on and switch off the computer, he knows digitally the trade, which is a vague term because they do not even know then how to use certain kind of an operating systems.

So and mobile phones is the same way. But what we have also seen that in the coming trends, because mobile phones is becoming one of the major tools in India to access Internet, so some of the alternative models is what we have used. Let's talk about India is considered to be an older society. So having a missed call is also considered to be an older communication. So what we have seen is that if women has a mobile phone and they want to communicate to their family members, and they want to know whether -- and they're in a field and want to know whether their children has arrived to home, they give one missed call. When they have taken or went to coaching and certain things, they give two missed calls before leaving the home. So those kind of a communication things are also being alternative models which is helping in India. Which we have tried that because one call is about 150 paise -- to not that -- 150 paise specifically in India. So what they do is giving a missed call instead of talking on the phone, so that's something which is an alternative.

Another alternative model is that most -- like even if they are in the trade, what we have tried to do then, the mobile phone has specific digit, 1, 2, 3, 4. So they don't try to learn A, B, C, D, E. They try to learn, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

One time we press 1. It's A. Two time it's a B. So they try to learn it, so those kind of things which is more not to try to make them completely literate, but just make them and bring them with some alternative solutions that they can learn about these technologies.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Yes. Thank you, Ritu, from a prospective in India. It's very interesting to know about the different barriers that you shared, which I suppose also exist in the other countries. And it's really interesting to learn about alternatives that you mentioned, using missed calls. I think we also do that in the Philippines and having code, you know, so that women can use it, even

women who are not really literate can use the mobile phones. That's very interesting to learn. Now may we now hear from Jelen about the Philippine experience.

>> JELEN PACLARIN: Good morning, everyone. My sharing today will connect with what Ritu has already started. I would start first my presentation by saying what is the meaning of access? And when we speak of access, whose access are we talking about? I think there is a question in terms of when we say gender and access, do we only mean women? I think this is not just an issue of we're talking about a gender divide referring to men and women, but this is an issue of how different groups of women are marginalized and excluded because of varying contexts.

And when we speak of this marginalized groups of women, access has a different meaning for them. So my organisation, the Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau have been working with marginalized groups of women for the past two to three years. We're working with women living with HIV/AIDS, just as a context now. Women living with HIV/AIDS, domestic workers, and women migrants, marriage migrants, LGBT, bisexual or trans women, and so on and so forth, no.

So when we talk -- and IP women, when I speak to issues referring to access of marginalized groups of women, I'll be more contextualizing it more on these marginalized groups of women.

So when we had a discussion WLB and FME had a discussion on women and access last year -- last December. Some of the issues that was raised is similar to what Ritu has been saying. Number one is the lack of infrastructure. Most of them -- and when you speak of ICT or technology, they're more familiar with cell phones rather than Internet because infrastructures is highly centralized in urban areas.

Second, is the issue of affordability and accessibility, similar to what Ritu also shared. We also do that, with the missed call because we don't want to spend money. I mean, even I do that sometimes, too. If I don't want to spend -- I also do a missed call and then that person knows that I've been trying to call that person.

Another concern that has been raised by this marginalized groups of women is the lack of support from government, particularly the marginalized groups. Why? Because sometimes government looks at the issue of access as a homogenous -- an issue that is gender neutral, as if there are no specific needs and concerns between men, women, and other kinds of women.

Digital literacy is also another issue because as I've earlier mentioned, we have smartphones. And not all women are familiar with smartphones. So they're more familiar with the basic cell phones and they're not even familiar with the use of Internet. So if let's say the government will provide infrastructures in rural areas, how do you now convince these women to go to that area to access Internet if they don't know how to use the Internet?

One women, or Muslim women talks about lack of digital and areas

in areas. You have issues conflict in the southern part of Philippines
and you're talking of infrastructure, so how they will go to that
area if conflict is happening on a nearby street? I think I've been
talking about marginalized sectors now intimidated with technology
and ICT, but the real problem, why governments services sometimes
does not address the real context of women, of these marginalized
groups of women is because the lack of sex segregated data, which
at the same time, looks at the context of these women. Women have
varying needs. Women from the IP community have different needs with
more women, be LBT women, and other different kinds of women. You
don't look at these women as if they are homogenous.

     So I think what are we appropriating? What the group in that
conference was appropriating? If we're talking of access, it should
be inclusive. So we want ICT to include the concept of digital inclusion.
So what do we mean by digital inclusion? Number one is accessibility.
Services should be designed to meet all users needs, including those
dependent on assistive technology. When I speak of assistive
technology, I'm talking of women with disabilities. Women with
disabilities, like women with low vision or deaf women have different
kinds of technology. And that has to be addressed also. They have
different needs with those who can hear and those who cannot hear.
And sometimes the access to assistive technology is very difficult
and sometimes very expensive.

     IP and rural women in areas even women in the context of disaster
has a physical problem when it comes to accessibility. When we speak
of accessibility, it has different meaning. Different meanings
depending on what context are we talking to.

     The second point, when we speak of digital inclusion, we also
have to look at connectivity and access to the Internet. People need
the right infrastructure, but that is only the start. Sometimes when
we talk of accessibility, we focus so much on infrastructures, and
after providing that infrastructure, that's the end. So what this
woman also were saying is that's not the end. That's the start. Because
they have to learn the capacity, they have to make use of the Internet
or the technology to use them in their favor.

     Next is digital skills, I think it's connected with connectivity.
Being able to use computers and the Internet. So if you're poor and
marginalized, skills are important. My second -- my last point is
how when we speak of digital inclusion, we also have to address the
needs of the marginalized groups. What info do they need? So for
example, domestic workers, they need information or information that
focuses on rights and freedom for abuse. Sometimes they're not
available on the Internet. If their employers are trying to abuse
them, where will they get those kind of information? On the other
hand, LBT women who is not ready to tell the world who they are, but
trying to explore about themselves and trying to understand their
identities, so also how do you do that? Where do you get that

information?

Women with disabilities have been discriminated also because they think that if you are physically -- if you have -- if you are physically disabled, or let's say if you are psychologically disabled, you don't have the right to have sex or to have a partner. Mind you, there are women with disabilities in the Philippines who are into cybersex and they're not selling their body, but they are actually having sex in the Internet because they feel beautiful. When they go out and try to find someone to have their partner, they are being maligned. When they go to that particular website in the Internet, they feel sexy and that's how they were able to explore their bodies and able to get their pleasures.

The same also with psychological disability. How do you treat a woman with a down syndrome and the likes, even men, don't you think they also have the right to love or to explore their body? But sometimes parents are very, very protective. So some of them even find pleasurable things in the Internet. But how do -- how does society look at them? So when they speak of addressing the needs of the marginalized groups, it's very broad, it's very specific depending on the needs and requirements of these marginalized groups.

Now, I would like to end my point by saying, when we speak of the SDG, SDGs and Goal Number 5, we have to interrogate how gender has been used to exclude women. It's not just talking of ICT access in terms of infrastructure, but we have to consider those points, those experienced by marginalized groups of women.

Thank you very much.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Thank you, Jelen. Thank you for talking about the experiences of marginalized groups of women. Yeah. Thank you for giving us some recommendations as well and how we can further include women and not exclude them. It's always interesting to know that women really get benefits from being online, from being able to access ICT, even those with disabilities. They're able to get, not just information, they're able to express themselves. They're able to explore their bodies and get pleasure from using the Internet. That's good to know.

So from the Philippines, we now move on to Pakistan, so Nighat Dad will share the perspective from Pakistan.

>> NIGHAT DAD: I think through Jac and Jelen has set a really good foundation for the discussion, and while listening to Ritu, I felt that we are facing the same challenges when it comes to access and gender and access to ICTs.

And while working on online violence against women, I think that there are like lots of challenges that -- that are hindering women's access to Internet and technology. It's the connection, the literacy, economic condition, and culture. And while working on -- while addressing the challenge of violence when women face harassment while using Internet and mobile phone, I feel that when they -- there is

a lack of awareness and education, and women don't know how to fight back. When they don't know how to fight back, they sort of detach themselves from technology and Internet because that's the only solution that they see.

There is also, when it comes to government -- I mean, also one of the challenges is there is no sex segregated data. There is a lack of research when it comes to gender and ICTs. Although me have a woman and she won award by UN Women last year, it's very sad that we also need to see -- we always talk about that we should have woman at the decision-making position, but we also need to see that what kind of decisions they are making and how much role they are playing in making those decisions.

So there is -- I don't see like really prominent initiatives by the government in addressing these challenge, but then there are community initiatives. For instance, we are doing Hamara Internet programme. It means our Internet, and we are going to the universities and colleges and talking to young women and girls and telling them that access to technology and ICTs is also their fundamental right. It's a human right. And when they face violence, you know, there is this notion that if women are using Internet or mobile phone, and they are facing harassment. This is a kind of package which comes with the Internet. And it's very important to make them realize that harassment on Internet is a form of violence and that it's not only the woman who are facing violence and need to fight back but also, you know, the traditional human rights organisations or women rights organisations need to play their role.

So right now there are like really, really initiatives addressing these challenge, and I guess it's also -- it's one of the reasons is the lack of education among -- even educated people that how they can address this challenge and be part of the campaigns. So under Hamara, we go to universities and college, talk to young women and girls, and we try to make it a safe space where they can talk about the violence that they face and then we tell them how they can use these spaces safely and securely and can fight back.

Another challenge that I see is the role of the law enforcement authorities who are -- who are responsible to deal with cybercrimes against women. It's a lack of legislation is one thing, but also you know how these law enforcement agencies respond to these challenges when it comes from woman. And in some of the cases, we were told that while complaining to these agencies, they faced victim blames and slut-shaming, that why are you sharing your picture, why you are sharing your data with your partners. So, you know, these kind of issues are also very important and there is a lot of need of education among -- and capacity-building among law enforcement, and empathy and compassion, which I feel is a real advantage when it comes to Pakistani Society. So this is one community initiative that we are doing.

Another one is where woman is also using Internet and technology

to the economic gain. I mean, my friend is here, Maria who is doing this Women's Digital Lead Programme in the very least-developed areas in Pakistan. And she is going into the -- into the universities and colleges in least-developed areas and telling women how they can use technology and Internet and make money. And, you know, find economic opportunities. So these are the really community-based initiatives which I feel that the government also needs to, you know, look into and do it on the massive level.

And I think one thing that -- when we talk about online violence against women, there is an important role of companies as well, that how they respond to -- what they are doing about the harassment and violence happening on their platforms. Because most of the time when woman come to us and complain, they say oh, we have reported this but Facebook is not getting back to us. And I think the only solution that I can see is to just shut down my profile and don't use Facebook or the platform.

So, you know, these are the other challenges that I feel that companies also need to address while making their policies, while making their community guidelines. So yeah, I think I feel that the cultural barrier is and lack of awareness and education are main challenges when it comes to women and women's access to ICTs in Pakistan.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Okay. Thank you, Nighat, for sharing the perspective from Pakistan. You can see that there are really similarities in the barriers and challenges in the three countries that were represented here. Nighat also mentioned to us about the role of government in promoting access, and we should also be mindful of the role as well of law enforcement agencies, especially when they deal with cybercrimes relating to women. And it's good to know about the Hamara Internet Initiative from the CSO and teaching women how to fight back, especially when they are harassed in providing a safe space for women to discuss. And she also mentioned about the economic gains that women can get by using ICT, and perhaps Maria later can share with us about their experience in how women are able to use ICTs for their economic gain. Yeah.

So now we open the floor for questions. Yeah. And -- we also have -- wow, we have 12 questions from participants who logged in at Slido.com. So unless there is a question from this room, we will go to the different questions that were posted by -- I don't know if they're participants from here as well or remote participants. Yes?

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> Thank you, Nighat, for the very kind mention. I wasn't expecting that. Thank you. But my question is that Internet is still in its infancy if we look at the broader scheme of things. To Pakistan it came around 1998 that we started getting access to the Internet. So a lot of us are just exploring the whole sphere.

So along with traditional education, don't we feel -- I'll pose

the question to Nighat and probably Ritu as well because we belong to similar questions or cultures. That along with regular education, we should also have mandatory Internet education in schools as a subject that teaches kids of all age. I'm not just talking about at elementary level. I'm talking about even college level. Just teaching them what the Internet can do for you, how empowering it is, but at the same time, what are some of the safeguards that you need to have. As a civil society, we are going into colleges and universities and telling people how to remain safe online, but shouldn't this be a, you know, an important part of our educational system as well?

>> Yeah. I mean, while doing these sessions at universities and college, I feel it's very important that children from their school level, you know, they should know that what exactly Internet is and how to use technology to empower themselves, but also how they can use it safely and securely. I think this is a very important part. But as I said earlier, that you know, government also needs to realize that what role they can play in initiating, you know, these initiatives. And I think some of the governments are doing it, but I think it will take -- you know, it will take some time to -- for governments to realize that it's a really important subject and it needs to be part of our regular syllabus or our textbooks. Yeah. So I think, from my side, I feel that, you know, these are the initiatives that the government's should take and, you know, as I said, the small community initiatives are doing, my organisations and some others are doing in Pakistan, I think, you know, there is a gap between the civil society initiatives and the government's initiatives and the lack of trust between he CSOs and the government. So especially in these case, the need to join hands together and ask the experts who are already in the community and how they can enhance these initiatives.

Especially in a country like India, access is one of the major challenges. The first thing when they come online, how they realize what is the world outside of community as well. Lack of access is definitely one of the challenges, but it definitely is providing them security and safe guidance is another layer of awareness. First layer of making them aware about what and how Internet can be used for their betterment of life, to talk about their issues, rights, what exactly right they have in a family.

In India, it is said that man is running the family, man is the owner of that particular family. But it is not that, women is also running the family side-by-side as well. Women who manages the workload as the man is the same in the workforce area as well.

So why is it that access to technology come when access to anything is coming up. It's coming to the man. The first owner is coming to a man. Even if purchasing a bicycle or anything, it's first the man is given the priority.

Lack of awareness is one of the biggest challenges in India that we have been talking about when we are talking about why equality

has to come from both sides and any kind of technology should be neutral. In some communities we are doing certain kind of CSOs and the online violence that Nighat has mentioned about it, but it is also run through by all three of us, CSO, government, and private all have to come together and talk about the safest space of Internet and safest space for those issue because these are the things which are making gender gap more viable in this scenario. Like even we don't have a -- first, we have a social challenge. Second, we have a challenge, and then we don't have access to it, and then you are making dangerous space for us. But even if we are coming, you are making and giving us a speech and doing dangerous things. Then how can we access it? This is not only a challenge of awareness, but it's also from government as well as well as from private stakeholders. Because they have to understand that 50% of the population who are users, they are going to be women. 50% is a marketing strategy should be thousand make women online. But how to make women safe online, that should be their marketing strategy.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Yes, thank you Ritu and Nighat for responding to the question of Maria. So we have another question here.

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> Hi. --

>> LIZA GARCIA: Can you please identify yourself first?

>> I'm Smita from Point of View in India. I just wanted to make a quick comment. Gender and access is a very important issues, especially right now. But I think it's also important to remember that it's not just access for the purpose of empowerment and information alone. It's also access to using the technology for pleasure. You need to remember that it's important to remember that when you're allowing women access to technology, you can't just tell them that you need to use technology for looking up information about, you know, women's empowerment or trains or how to better manage a house or how to go to work safely. You should also allow -- they should also be encouraged to use the technology for exploring their sexuality, exploring things which they actually enjoy doing. And I think that is something that many, many organisations -- some organisations which work on access don't really focus on because it's not -- it doesn't come on the priority list, right. If there is a hierarchy, that doesn't come on the priority list per se. So I think it's important to keep that in mind also like when we're speaking about access. That's all. Thank you.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Thank you, Smita. I think Jelen also mentioned about that. The exploration of one's body. It's good there are comments like that coming from the floor. Yes. We have another one. Question?

>> More of a comment. In Sri Lanka, more opportunities and the youth actually, those who are employed are the ones who use Internet. Even when it comes to students, females use the Internet in their

universities instead of other spaces because Sri Lanka provided
something called E-Nano sellers, which is a place for people to come
and use the Internet, but it has been found that there are aren't
many women accessing these spaces. Why we need to make a safe space
online, I think we need to make a safe space offline as well for women
to come and actually access these spaces. I think that is something
that is important, too.

     >> LIZA GARCIA: Yes. Thank you for that comment -- for creating
safe spaces, not just online but offline as well. So any more questions
from the room? Otherwise we will go through the different questions
that are posted at Slido.com. So let's go through the first question.
So encourage the men who are also in the room to join in the discussion.
So we have some -- would you like to? Yes. Yes. Please. No? I
thought you were raising your hand. Yeah. You can.

     (Laughing).

     Mr., you have this book, perhaps the topic of gender and access
can be included in the book that you're writing, anything.

     >> (Speaking off mic).

     >> Look into -- okay. My question is, APrIGF, at that right now
we have a human rights track on the website. We have a full entry.
First one is those human rights and gender. The second one is a gender,
this title, gender and the Internet. Now a third one is privacy. And
the fourth one we are coming up is minority and the Internet. What
is the with the disability. We are sort of changing to the minority,
minority means the senior, people that are 90 years old or 100 years
old, or the children, handicap, or the economically handicap, and
then possible you are discussing many of those issues, I'm saying,
commenting. So does it make sense to have those four from your
perspective? Because we are going to reprise sometime? Are those
four entries proper, or are we missing something? Or should we shrink?

     One of the concerns I have here is why gender and the Internet?
Because what you're discussing here is exclusively women on the Internet.
You're not discussing the male on the Internet at all. And so that's
my question. And then many issues that you raised here is sort of
overall minority and the Internet. And looking into this session,
APrIGF, yes, we do have those agenda on the Internet but we don't
hardly have any of those on minority and the Internet. And it seems
to be in the best position to address this issue. What you're saying
is gender and the Internet is not good enough. We need more. And
so you could address those minority issues, and if you have a good
idea, please send it to me as we want to reprise APrIGF. And also
on the history, we want to add probably one chapter on all those issues
you are addressing, so if you have a good idea, let me know. Convert
a timeframe of about one year to develop a chapter with three or four
sections, all together more like 50 pages. Would you like -- even
if it is there is an article just let me know. Probably you may start
with what we have in Asia Pacific. Thank you.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Yes. Thank you for that. So there is an open invitation for us to improve by the book by putting more gender into that. Yeah. Anybody would like to comment?

>> JAC SM KEE: I think it would be really great, if as part of the effort of the book, and as part of participating in this conversation, that you will be able to assign some of the right that is in your book to unpack and understand the dimension of access, you know, rather than to kind of say that -- you know, since you guys are talking about it, you guys can do it.

And I think -- I think that the beginning is saying that -- making space for it is fantastic, yeah. The first step is to really think, okay, this is kind of important, maybe we should think about this. But I think the more people that come and interrogate this question, the better our understanding would be.

And then the second point is also to say that women are not a minority. I know. But sometimes we talk about it as if it is, right. Because we are talking about disparity and discrimination, and as if there is something that -- that there is something that resonates with minority issues. And that I think is also one of the primary problematics can frame this question because really women are not minorities, at least half the population, and in some places more than half.

So why then do we get less access to resources? Why then do women and girls all over the world, whether developed or developing, have less control over resources and less money, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

So I think that's one of the questions that every time we think about the gender issue, we bring to the table that this very fundamental basic inequality is just not really acceptable.

And thirdly, I guess every time we talk about gender issues -- less so now, but sometimes the question of what about men sort of comes up. And the reason why this comes up is because, I think, men -- it's true -- I think we also tend to focus quite a lot about unpacking the issues that face women and don't really unpack the contribution that men make in perpetuating this sort of discrimination, right. Apart from using terms of patriarchy that nobody really understands, maybe to put it simply, men is like the -- it's like the invisible golden standard.

So when we talk about everything in relation to this invisible golden standard, this invisible golden standard is what applies to -- you sort of construct the whole world and Internet and policies based on this kind of invisible golden standard. So that's why we have to make this invisible golden standard visible to show how it is actually not responding to the diversity of people and the need faced by different people. And gender is just the first step, really. And that's why you're saying, you know, look at other sorts of intersexuality and other sorts of people living with disability, et

cetera. And as Jelen raised, all kinds of other kinds of intersexuality even in other categories, for example, women living in disability, women in rural area, trans women, so on and so forth, they do face very specific and different kinds of challenges.

And I think it's great that when we first talking about one of the specificity, which is just the basic difference between men and women, we already start to open our eyes to look and more and more forms of specificity. But I think it's both unsustainable, unfair (Laughing), and not very useful if we just look to women's rights to start solving some of these issues. I think it will really definitely be a lot more, what's the word? It will be a lot more -- it's not even -- it's just like we're trying to solve a problem together. We're all concerned about access issues, no? We all are trying to solve this problem and address it because we really see the value of the Internet. It's right here. But then we kind of solve it like that, and then we sort of say okay, but this part just small group of people do it. I think it helps if all of us just kind of do this and participate in every session like this rather than sort of expect just sort of half of the room to do this. That's also very -- you know, something weird about the way we approach this, I guess.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Okay. Yes. Another question? Comment?

>> Could I comment a moment? Yes. I was hesitant when I waved my hand, when I was just waving my hand to sort of say hello because a lot of these issues I find difficult to break between ICT for D and where the Internet Governance aspect comes in. And I find that quite often with a lot of the subjects now in the Internet Governance Forum broadly, so that's one reason I'm hesitant to comment because I don't know quite where the division is. And having done a lot of work that looks at things like early work of the Grameen Bank and so on where they were doing the earliest work in empowering women and handsets and early mobile phones into various parts of Bangladesh at the time. That was interesting.

But I'm interested -- one thing that sort of struck me is how are things being -- how are these technologies being abused and how can we counter that abuse? And one thing that I'd heard particularly about, but this was in an African context, of women who were being offered jobs online, particularly through texting services. And it's a scam, basically. Basically sexual predatoriation. People were being offered jobs in other country, taken to the country without the appropriate visa, and finding they were ending up as sex workers because they were exploited in that way.

So scams that exist offline that are moving online and other ways to counter that. And is there work being done on that type of abuse? That is something that I thought was quite interesting. It's something that I heard about quite a lot in an East African and other context.

>> For the Philippines, I'm not very much familiar with how Internet

is being used to recruit women in sex trafficking. But one comment, problems, or experiences was more on the migrant women who wanted to work abroad, but eventually they were -- they were paid to work abroad, but eventually they didn't know that they were carrying drugs. Okay. And one particular case that I'm referring to is migrant worker still in Indonesia. Her name is Mary Jane.

So I think that's a common problem. I think that's one thing that we also have to contextualize when we speak of access, a poverty issue. That having a cell phone or Internet eventually will not -- maybe in a way it will help contribute to at least elevating poverty, but poverty will still remain. So how do you now connect the use of ICT for poverty. In the case of Mary Jane, for example, there are a lot of Mary Janes in the Philippines through Internet were asked basically -- I'm not being racist here, but mostly from African countries asking them to go for a trip, actually in Southeast Asia, for a free trip in Southeast Asia. For someone who hasn't been to Southeast Asia, who hasn't been on travel, you would like the idea of free traveling. Free travel, of course. It's really free travel, and at the end of the day you will be carrying drugs and you don't even know they're drugs. In some cases, there are those that carry drugs and have to swallow the drugs, no? That's the first kind of drug mules. You don't carry them, you put them inside their body, and at the end of the trip you have to do something, you have to poop so you can release all the drugs. There is a lot of women. Most of them, majority of them are women who are being paid to bring all those drugs to another country as either domestic workers or as women migrant workers.

What you're saying is more the issue of Internet being used to -- that eventually they will end up as prostituted women is mostly happening inside the country. I mean, they recruit, especially in conflict area, actually. When typhoon happened there were a lot of women recruited, domestic worker in the Philippines, but actually ended up as prostituted women. There are also in conflict areas now where you don't even need to have a cell phone, but prostitution is already happening in evacuation centers because of lack of money, because of poverty issue.

So what's the response? What's the answer? I think in that -- because it's very systemic, I think there is a need for government intervention. Women's groups or NGOs can only do so much when it comes to addressing those needs or concerns. So usually -- what we usually do is to advise them through Internet if they're very far, or we call them through cell phones and refer them to concerned government agency or partner NGOs.

But I think a lot of things has to be done when it comes to the government must do something to really stop this kind of practices. But I think this is still an ongoing challenge and I don't know when will it end.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Yes. And now we have more questions from the floor. Who is first? Maria and then Smita.

>> Thank you. How much can the Internet help with economic empowerment and how can it break the poverty cycle? We have yet to see. So in my experience, what I've seen is that online it doesn't matter what you look like. It doesn't matter what your sexual orientation is. It also doesn't matter where you are from, and you can work on anything from anywhere. For example, in the real life if you're a Pakistani and you have just moved abroad to work and you're looking for work, you'll have far more problems finding a job.

Online nobody cares. Online anyone -- people just care about the service that you're providing at the cost which you're providing and the quality with which you provide it.

Secondly, for women to go out and find work in a place like Pakistan, it's really, really difficult. We have three big cities and those are also big cities compared to other parts of Pakistan. Not really metropolitan cities or what you can call cities at the bigger level. So we have Karachi, Lahore and that's it. It's semi-urban. It's an urban/rural mix. You don't find work. That's where the economic empowerment comes. A women -- a young girl who gets a training online and starts working online doesn't have to get married to the first person that comes to ask for her who is twice her age because her father doesn't have to worry about feeding her because she can do that now and can also pay for sibling's school fee. That's one thing.

Another young woman, I don't know what examples to give, doesn't have to hide the fact that she's on a wheelchair and there is no facilities in Pakistan for wheelchair-bound people like you have these special ways for -- pads made for wheelchair-bound people and special facilities. We don't have any of that. We don't have that kind of infrastructure for them. So what happens to them is that they become a burden on society, they don't have any money of their own, they can't spend on anything that they want for their health issues or whatever. That's where economic empowerment through the Internet comes in and helps them.

And also for the skilled women workers living in rural areas who have lots of middlemen coming in and buying their exquisitely embroidered clothes, for example, for peanuts, and then selling them at international exhibitions for hundreds and thousands of dollars. Now she can sell online on platforms similar to Etsy, if you're aware of Etsy.com. You can sell online. That's where the priority -- they can actually sustain themselves living off just $50 a month. So that's where it comes in. It starts somewhere.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Thank you, Maria, for that intervention. We have another one from Smita and then we'll go to the other questions that were posted online.

>> When you were working, conducting research as far as working in access on rural areas and even urban for that matter, did you speak

about cost or did cost come up as a barrier or thing in between? Can you tell a little on that, please? Thank you.

>> I'll use this word, unpacking because India is full of diversity as you know. Religion, then there is a cost, and then there is an in the family there is a priority within a circle of this one. And when we were doing research and when we are conducting research, it really comes out that women -- women who are from a lower cost or what we call a cost or tribe, they have minimal access to this technology. What happens is that I was doing -- I was reading certain things and we were talking to them. We figured out that we do not have a time to go to -- even if we have spare time, we don't access it because the phone or the Internet -- the mobile phone most of the time is the female member, and the cost becomes also a major priority that. It's like when you have a well, it's only accessed by a majority community. Okay.

And what we have even seen is one of the center -- we have placed one center in the community as well. Women who were minorities and invalids they were not entering as well. You do a social challenge as well, a person who is there as well, and center coordinator who is teaching and trying being aware and is a male. So we have to change the center person and coordinator person to a female that women can be coming as well as attend classes as well. So these kind of challenge is always there. How do bring those kind of gap is sometimes what we do. We sit with their family members, we sit, especially with women family members, and how to tell about how using it. It's really interesting to see when we were there that they really do not want to explore Internet for livelihood. They want to explore for entertainment and for their sexuality as well.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Thanks, Ritu. We were actually looking at the different questions posted here. There were some specific questions to our three speakers, but I think some of the questions here have also been responded to already. Can we go to the last question here? How do you deal with protectionist approach of different group when is it comes to women and girl's use of the Internet. Would anybody want to respond to that? Is it really a protectionist approach?

>> RITU SRIVASTAVA: I have been working in India, and like my first few years of my job was to just visit rural side of India. It's interesting to see that. I am trying to protect my girl and women female members because if they access Internet, they might get into trouble. They might -- they are trying to -- what it is? They are not such kind of good girls in terms that of situation.

And so I think we have already covered this question, but the approach of accessing Internet is also coming from that we are trying to protect our child. We are trying to -- not only female, but also male child as well. Like not giving -- giving a male -- female members a mobile phone or a certain kind of technologies. They're allowed to access certain things at a certain particular time period, especially

when everyone has used it because one person -- one family has one mobile phone. Or one, maximum two mobile phones. Who is owning that mobile phone? Is firstly the man and then male child, and then once it is done by everyone, then it comes to women who can access it either a mother or sister. That's the way you access it.

>> NIGHAT DAD: I also feel it's not only the, you know, the community or the society or the family that has the protectionist approach, but also the state has this protectionist approach when they make legislations or polices. And for instance, that's something that I have witnessed with cybercrime bill, most of the time, and it's a very problematic legislation that are going to be enacted. And most of the time, activist also is woman goes on TV, gives interviews about the legislation, he says our daughters and sisters are facing a lot of harassment on Internet and we need to save them. And that's why they are bringing in really big and ambiguous provisions, which are from the outset it feels like they are protecting Internet user, but the ambiguity has the space where people can abuse this legislation and violate freedom of expression and access to information. So it's the protection of the approach is a wider approach starting from our families to our state where the state try to -- tries to act as a nanny.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Yeah. Thank you. Before we proceed to the other -- same question? Okay. Very quick.

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> I actually put the question back. I wanted to know like how to work with the women's right groups which who works on gender violence and protectionist approach. Like they only think about Safehouse and stuff. So like the whole issue around Internet and gender, how do you do that? Like whoever has done that in your country? How have you been doing it?

>> I will try to connect your question with this question. WLB started its work in 1991 post March law, we started on violence against women. I think that's the challenge, especially not only for women's human rights groups but even government. It's easy to look at strategies which will criminal identifies, penalize negative actions other portals or violence against women. But it's difficult to comprehend, to understand, or even come up with a programme or policy if we're talking of positive rights. Although I don't want to use positive right, but when we speak of rights of women, particularly how do you use ICT to empower women, or let's say to speak about sexuality or to explore about one's sexuality. I think that has been the challenge because it's embedded in our -- I mean, it has been there for so many years and I think that has been the ongoing challenge. Not only of women's group, but all groups as well, men, women, and even LGBT. So before we cannot even mention the LGBT IQXYZ and now we can at least mention them. We now can now I'm lesbian, blah, blah, blah or blah, blah. I'm women with disabilities, I'm trying to explore my

body. Before you cannot say that because it's the bull. And if you ask government, they will never put programmes which will address or promote those kinds of things because it's not morally good. It's not accessible.

So how do you challenge not only women's human rights groups but even child groups who says -- who is saying that children should be -- what? That you should use protectionist approach. One thing we're trying to develop right now in WLB is how do we marry the concepts or principles of -- when we speak of children's rights, girl children, I'm not talking of girl children of 5 years old here. The problem with the convention under rights of the child, when we speak of children we're talking of below 18. I'm not talking of 7, 8, 9, 10. It's a little bit challenging. I'm talking of the teenager who is trying to know more about their body, sexuality, to be more about love and so on and so forth. No?

When we try to protect them and we invoke the rights of the principles of the CRC, the convention and rights of the child, whose best interests are we talking to? The best interests of the parents or the best interest of the child? And then the CRC also says that participation of the child. So if you're actually looking at the participation of the child, why are you imposing policies -- or let's say, why the government imposing policies or even the parents imposing rules if you're considering participation?

And why when we speak of participation and best interest of the child, the best interest of the child is different with the best interest of the child of a girl and a woman -- a boy child and a girl child. So you will see there is really no single one when we look at the protectionist approach. The protectionist approach is deeper when it comes to girl children compared to boy children. And why? It's still because of our culture.

So we have lots of things to do, lots of works to do. And I think I will agree with Jac, this is not just the work of women's group, or groups working on gender equality. When we speak of gender equality here, we're not just talking of equality or gender equality in relation to ending violence, but also how do we use -- how do we promote gender equality so that women, lesbian, bisexual, transgender women, will also enjoy these rights. Thank you.

>> LIZA GARCIA: Thank you. I think we're running out of time. I'll just wrap up a bit. We've been discussing that the key users of ICTs are actually women, but a lot of women, when we talk about the general population, a lot of women are still not included naturally. We talked about the similarities and the barriers and the challenges that women and LGBT Qs face when it comes to the use of ICT. This is sociocultural and patriarchal challenges, violence, and digital execs collusion. There are also initiatives being done -- got mentioned about the initiative of Hamara Internet.

When we talk about gender and access, we're not just talking

about women here. And we should also -- all be involved here. And some recommendations came up, like including Internet education in schools, providing secure and safe guidance, to be taught -- and they should be -- CSOs, schools, and governments should be part of this. And access should not be thought of as not just a means to gain information. Technology can also be used to explore sexuality to gain pleasure.

And then we talk about the digital inclusion. We have to bear in mind that different sectors have different needs and requirements that also have to be addressed and governmental social will help us address the different issues. We also talked about the digital literacy and the skills which women can use for their economic gains.

So we actually have questions here. There were 13 question, but we couldn't discuss them anymore here. So what we'll do is just to give the questions to our speakers because there were specific questions here directed to specific speakers. Perhaps we can just continue the conversation outside and through whatever means as well. So thank you very much everyone for coming to this session.

(Applause).

(session completed at 9:39 p.m. CST)

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