Internet Governance & Womens Rights Session

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Women are not a homogenous group

1. Age
2. Race
3. Class
4. Identity – LGBTI/Ideology
5. Educational levels
Reality check

- **Access.** Women in the developing world (specifically, in urban poor communities of Africa, Latin America and Asia) are 50% less likely to have Internet access than men. Cost is one of the significant factors contributing to the lack of access for women. The cost of the internet is a higher financial burden for women given pay disparities around the world.

- **Education.** According to the World Wide Web Foundation, women are 1.6 times more likely than men to report lack of skills as a barrier to being on the Internet. Education is a strong determinant of Web literacy and internet use. Consider that urban poor women with at least some secondary education are six times more likely to be online than their peers without secondary education.

- **Harassment.** Women in particular are targets of cyber-harassment and violence across a range of online platforms, and this leads to mistrust and retreat from the Web. With this in mind, it’s not surprising that women are 52% less likely than men to express controversial views online.
Existing Laws and Regulatory Frameworks

- Sexual offences and anti-pornography laws
- ‘feminist’ internet is about an internet that enables more women and queer persons to enjoy universal, acceptable, affordable, unconditional, open, meaningful and equal access.
- mechanisms that address inequalities that exist in the web’s architecture (ICT policy & access issues)
Analysing Women's Use of the Internet in Africa

- News Commentary
- Social Commentary
- Political Commentary
- Religion
- Gender & Sexual Minority Group Rights
- Sexual Expression
Trends in usage

- Global increase in the number of frontline women in the internet ecosystem
- Internet is not devoid of sexism and patriarchal attitudes
- Censorship & safe spaces
- National ICT Policy Revision/Implementation
Recommendations: Practice

- Internet Governance Forum (equal partnership between sectors)
- Civil Society Internet Rights Watch/Forum
- Private Sector, moving from profits to...rights, accountability,
- Online Regulatory Policy (consultative process)
- Regulatory Institutions- one stop facility? Clarity of roles/mandates.