Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance – Report of Activities 2009

The Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance (Gender DC) undertook several activities in 2009, including at the 2009 IGF. This report gives a summary of the activities undertaken, the issues discussed and the action points decided upon.

1. The Gender DC endorsed the IGC Statement on human rights, read at the 2009 IGF planning meeting in Sept 2009, with additional statements on the particular importance of issues raised in it for women.

2. Members of the Gender DC organised two workshops at the 2009 IGF, which provided a critical centering of gendered and feminist perspectives on the issue of internet governance. They were:
   - The Internet and Citizenship: Applying a Gender Lens.
   Report:
     http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/index.php/component/chronocontact/?chronoformname=Workshopsreports2009View&curr=1&wr=32
   - Content regulation, surveillance and sexuality rights - Privacy, Agency & Security.
   Report:
     http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/index.php/component/chronocontact/?chronoformname=Workshopsreports2009View&curr=1&wr=93

3. Members of the Gender DC engaged in informal outreach at the 2009 IGF and succeeded in broadening the Gender DC's membership base, in particular achieving a better balance between representatives of the different stakeholder groups active in the context of internet governance.

4. In the course of the 2009 IGF, the Gender DC convened one informal preparatory meeting on November 15 and one formal meeting on November 18. The action points agreed upon were as follows:
   - to set up a proper Gender DC mailing list;
   - to apply for permission to utilize parts of the web space at www.genderIT.org for introducing the Gender DC and its topics of concern;
   - to intensify the liaising with the DCs on Privacy, Rights and Principles, and Freedom of Expression;
   - to generate information primers on topical issues, starting from a broad approach and addressing a general public;
   - to generate issue statements designed to facilitate advocacy on specific policy issues;
   - to build a database on Women in Information Technologies and explore the possibility to do this jointly with ICANN At-Large;
   - to keep promoting the IGF as a valuable space for exchange, but to urge the IGF to distinguish itself from technology-based scenarios by explicitly promoting a rights-based framework for its deliberations and a social discourse rather than a technological one;
   - to encourage the IGF to issue recommendations that would facilitate public policy debates at various levels of governance;
   - to insist that the IGF promote a gender-balanced representation of men and women in IG scenarios including IGF, particularly as speakers;
   - to encourage the IGF to facilitate the capacity building for women in the area of internet governance, for instance by encouraging women to respond to calls for applications to capacity building in IG, like Diplo courses, SSIG, and others.
   - to develop a common platform that unites feminist engagement in forums such as IGF, the gender community of expertise at UN GAID, and the Commission on the Status of Women as a way of harnessing resources and sharing knowledge. Internet Governance is a multidirectional and multilayered set of issues so the Gender DC regards future activities in that light

5. The Gender DC submitted a statement to the "Taking Stock and Looking Forward 2009" session at the 2009 IGF.
   Copy of statement: http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/index.php/component/content/article/82-review/476-list-of-written-statements-for-taking-stock-and-looking-forward

6. Members of the Gender DC did live reporting through twitter and blogs about the 2009 IGF, thereby informing the larger feminist constituency about what was happening there and making public a feminist interpretation of the IGF proceedings. This is also planned for the upcoming IGF.

7. Members of the Gender DC are also working at further incorporating IG issue-areas and points of concern in their teaching curriculum, in higher education and research institutions. A long-term plan for the DC is to be active in educating and sensitising future generations of internet users and researchers not only IG issues in general, but also how these pertain to gender equality, women's rights, and inclusive education and cultural diversity principles.

Central concerns raised by the Gender DC in 2009 and not covered in the above are as follows:

- The marginalisation of the debate on broadband is deplorable in view of the newly found excitement about mobile telephony, which instead of enabling women's equal access to the emerging knowledge paradigm constructs their capability and communication rights within pre-given, market led models where their contribution as citizens and as technology shapers is not accounted.
- The public policy role of the IGF as mandated by the WSIS has not emerged clearly. What this means is that for national governments there is no clear direction and mandate to address Internet governance in a way that promotes women's empowerment and rights.
- Since the inclusion of marginalised women is predicated upon public finance, as is evident from many good practices across the developing world, we need the IGF to take a more unequivocal stance on this.
- An urgent need to have a good set of research and documentation of critical gender issues commissioned before the next IGF in order for the last IGF to be able to take on board the concerns in respect of gender from the vantage of marginalised women. This needs special efforts and needless to say, proper budgets.
- The future of the IGF is a matter of deep concern and its present structure and processes, for all its imperfections with regard to inclusive participation, at least has over the years accommodated the social discourse of technology. The independence of the IGF secretariat emerges as a key concern for the future of gender discourse within this space. And change in this in terms of a going back to more technocentric structures and processes will be detrimental to women's interests.