IGF 2017 Report

- Session Title: Fast-tracking Digital Dividends for Women in Central Asia and(CASA) South Asia

- Date: 21 December 2017

- Time: 10:40 – 12:10

- Session Organizer: Maria Beebe

- Chair/Moderator: Maria Beebe

- Rapporteur/Notetaker: Shabana Mansoory

- List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:
A. Country Speakers:
Tajikistan - Zuhra Halimova and Mavzuna Abdurahmanova, Open Society Institute
Kyrgyzstan – Zarina Chekirbaeva, American Chamber of Commerce
Afghanistan - Shabana Mansoory, TechWomen @TechNation
India - Amrita Choudhury, CCAOI
Nepal- Dikchya Raut, Center for Law and Technology
Pakistan – Sidra Jalil, Code for Pakistan

B. Resource Speakers:
Ankhi Das – Facebook
Joseph Gattuso – US Department of Commerce
Kristopher Haag - Afghan Wireless Advisor
Yannis Li – DotAsia
Maike Luiken - IEEE
Benita Rowe – Ustad Mobile
Nilmini Rubin- TetraTech
Meliisa Sassi – Microsoft

- Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):
1) Foundations for a digital economy tend to be at the emerging and transitioning level of digital development at the CASA countries; 2) The gender gap rank of the CASA countries is an indication of the lack of gender equality in technology development; 3) Access to information, communication, and knowledge technologies is uneven throughout the region; and, 4) Women need a forum where women can come and exchange ideas, knowledge about what they do, and help each other.

- If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each presentation:

- Overview of FastTracking Digital Dividends in CASA (Maria Beebe): The workshop purpose was to explore collaborative ways of fast-tracking digital dividends in Central Asia and South Asia (CASA). CASA includes: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. By digital dividends, we mean impact on economic growth, creation of paid jobs, and new kinds of services (such as, e-health, e-agriculture, other socially relevant applications), consistent with the World Bank Development's 2017 Report. Digital dividends occur depending on the level of digital development of a country which can be characterized as emerging, transitioning or transforming and whether the foundations for a digital economy are in place. These foundations include (1) regulations and public policies of national governments that allow firms to connect and to compete, (2) digital skills that are needed to leverage uses of technology, and (3) institutions/organizations that are capable and accountable.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=re1Zt6MAAi8 Please scroll all the way down
  https://igf2017.sched.com/event/777b3df8592a5a1956599d660fad10be?iframe=yes&w=100%&sidebar=yes&bg=no

India (Amrita Choudhury): India has the second largest Internet user base. Government initiatives include a national broadband plan, digital India mission, initiatives for women. However, gaps remain. For example, the male to female use is 88% vs 12% in rural areas and 62% vs 38% in urban areas. In a study on addressing the digital gap between women, we found that women do not find role models to follow. A collaboration will allow women to come together and exchange ideas. A newsletter, capacity building together and sharing of best practices may help women from the south to have their voices heard.

Pakistan (Sidra Jalil): Government of Pakistan established a government institution to ensure a policy framework that works with local software houses and start-up communities to listen to their concerns and help resolve their issues. Investment policies, hardware development, tax exemptions are some of the incentives being provided, along with partnerships with government. Examples of start-ups in e-agriculture, e-health, and e-education are promising. Focus on open data, open source, and open content; these are areas for collaboration.

Nepal (Dickhya Raut): Liberalization has opened the telecommunications market to competition which has led to more affordable prices. This is part of the government plan to make a smart city, which includes an electronic payment system. Institutions, including the police are providing training in cybersecurity. There are women in Nepal whose husbands work outside the country. For these women, the Internet allows them to access the market price of agricultural products.

Afghanistan (Shabana Mansoory): Mobile technology is the main device for information. There is an urban-rural divide (with only 9% in the rural area) and gender divide (with only 7% women with access to the Internet). There is a need to strengthen regulations that

ensure businesses, citizens, and government are adapting skills both for business and for citizen's empowerment.

Tajikistan (Zuhra Halimova and Mavzuna Abdulrahmanova): Post-civil war required rebuilding of economic development and intellectual development. M-Gov efforts have resulted in 100 percent mobile penetration and about 20-30 percent Internet use. Successful projects include eTax, eCustoms, eVisa although we face city-rural, age gaps when it comes to digital. There is a need to create local/regional platforms and digital development skills; provide empowerment programs and encourage women and youth to join the mobile professional workers; Encourage women and youth to join global professional networks (Google Developers, GirlsWhoCode) and contests (Technovation Challenge); and Apply Interdisciplinary approach in institutionalization of ICT curriculum/courses. Presentation uploaded. Please scroll all the way down https://igf2017.sched.com/event/777b3df8592a5a1956599d660fad10be?iframe=yes&w=100%&sidebar=yes&bg=no

Below are one sentence summaries of what resources are available from various institutions that could be tapped by target countries. (Please note that there is no CASA region initiative except for the World Bank's Digital CASA Initiative but no representative made it to the panel discussion.)

- Ankhi Das (Facebook) – "She Means Business" helps women entrepreneurs use social media platform to build brand recognition and to develop market access. "Skills Hub" helps women learn social media marketing strategies.
- Joseph Gattuso (US Dept of Commerce) – Funding for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Able to suggest connectivity and infrastructure, open business opportunities, educational opportunities, e-commerce.
- Kris Haag (AWCC) - AWCC has over 4 million subscribers with services in etelemedicine, eHealth, mobile banking – case studies and lessons learned from other countries will help the Afghan government come up with the right regulations.
- Yannis Li (dotAsia) – Launch of Mobility Index which will identify the policy gap, including the gender gaps in order to advocate for policy changes.
- Maike Luiken (IEEE) - IEEE supports education from the ground up, for example, tryengineering.org, trynano.org and special interest groups on humanitarian technology
- Nilmini Rubin (TetraTech) - Integrate gender into ICT and integrating infrastructure
- Melissa Sassi (Microsoft) – Grants at Microsoft.com/airband for ISPs who want to expand Internet connectivity and energy access in underserved communities.
- Omar Ansari (TechNation) - Soft launch of TechWomen.Asia; a network of women in technology in Asia and the Pacific
- Benita Rowe (Ustad Mobile) – Blended learning: mobile soft skills training in Afghanistan <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODlvkEz-CcY&feature=youtu.be?> Presentation and video uploaded. Please scroll all the way down

https://igf2017.sched.com/event/777b3df8592a5a1956599d660fad10be?iframe=yes&w=100%&sidebar=yes&bg=no

- Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session (3 paragraphs):

The presentations about the country situations and how the resource persons can help fast track digital dividends for women fulfilled the workshop purpose of exploring collaborative ways of fast tracking digital dividends for women in Central Asia and South Asia.

- Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways (3 paragraphs):

1. There is a need for a regional forum where women can come and exchange ideas, knowledge about what they do, and help each other. Collaboration beyond country borders at a regional level is important.

2. The conclusion from the presentation of Tajikistan is a good summary of next steps:
    a. Create local/regional platforms for networking and empowerment of women in STEM;
    b. Integrate youth and women empowerment programs in Tech in strategic local and regional projects (such as Digital CASA)
    c. Encourage women and youth to join global professional networks (Google Developers, GirlsWhoCode) and contests (Technovation Challenge);
    d. Apply Interdisciplinary approach in institutionalization of ICT curriculum/courses.

3. Announcement of TechWomen.Asia soft launch which is an outcome of the TechWomen: Driving ICT, Innovation & Collaboration in CASA held at the IGF 2016 and FastTracking Digital Dividends for Women in Central Asia and South Asia (CASA). TechWomen Asia is a **NETWORK AND LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN IN TECH IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC** initiated by TechNation Afghanistan.

Gender Reporting

- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session: around 49 people

- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session: 90% of the participants

- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment? The whole topic of the session was about gender equality and women empowerment, where participants from different member countries from the CASA and resource organizations emphasized their plans and activities that can enhance the lives of women in the region.

- If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:
The key takeaways summarized above bear repeating in this section on gender reporting.

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