



United Nations
Office of the Special Coordinator For
Africa and the Least Developed Countries



KAMPALA DECLARATION

AFRICA LAUNCH OF THE DIGITAL DIASPORA INITIATIVE

5-7 May 2003, Kampala, Uganda

The Digital Diaspora Initiative on Bridging the Gender Digital divide through Strategic Partnerships was launched at a Regional Meeting hosted by the Government of Uganda and organized by UNIFEM in collaboration with UNDP, the UN ICT Task Force, the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships. The meeting brought together ministerial representation from eight African Countries, the private sector, NGOs and the Global Advisory Committee for the UNIFEM Diaspora Initiative, members of the Digital Diaspora Network for Africa, the UN System and the NEPAD Secretariat.

To achieve the Millennium Development Goals and implement the NEPAD framework for innovative partnerships with the private sector, the Digital Diaspora Initiative recognizes the valuable talents and contributions of the Africa Diaspora to make a difference in women's lives through the use of information technologies. The Plan of Action adopted at the Kampala Meeting stresses the need for an inclusive approach for ICT-related training, employment, entrepreneurship and market access, with the support of African ICT entrepreneurs in the Diaspora.

Recognizing:

1. The importance of market access, infrastructure development, including transport and energy, in promoting the objectives of this initiative;
2. ICT as a powerful tool for social transformation and gender equality, and the reduction of poverty for African women;
3. That NEPAD as a programme of the African Union has identified ICT as one of its top priorities;
4. The need for strong political commitment in order to achieve the potential of ICT as a tool for equitable and gender responsive development;
5. The critical need to foster dialogue and cooperation between gender advocates, particularly women's national machineries, and IT structures in government on the engendering of technology, infrastructure and regulatory frameworks;
6. The need to foster women's participation in technology business and professions, particularly at the higher level of the ICT industry;
7. The value of using ICT and Digital Diaspora experiences to enhance women-led initiatives in all aspects of social, political and economic spheres, including conflict resolution and peace building initiatives;

8. The WSIS scheduled for December 2003 in Geneva and 2005 in Tunisia is discussing a plan of action for an inclusive information society and offers an opportunity for promoting gender equality principles;
9. The great potential for social and economic development in the rural areas through ICTs;
10. The critical need to have convergence of new and traditional technologies, such as radio and video to help bridge the gender digital divide.

We the Participants at the Digital Diaspora launch in Kampala, representing African governments, the UN system, NEPAD, the WSIS Gender Caucus and the Digital Diaspora alliance commit ourselves to work jointly to:

1. Actively advocate for improved market access and infrastructure development for African countries;
2. Support and enhance existing government policies and initiatives to use ICT tools and to create an enabling environment for women to realize their full potential as users and producers of technology;
3. Tap into the expertise of the African ICT Diaspora to inform the process of ICT policy making at the national and international levels;
4. Organise National Advisory Teams on Women and ICT with government, private sector, civil society and academic representation.
5. Utilize the African ICT Diaspora Talent Bank developed by ECA to facilitate technology transfer and matching skills with needs, linking with databases of ICT projects seeking support;
6. Develop a Consortium of ICT Diaspora Teams to provide assistance to country initiatives. Initial focus on nine pilot countries: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Uganda;
7. Showcase Centers of Excellence on Women and ICT in Africa as ‘best practices’.
8. Develop a Portfolio of Women and ICT projects for potential financing by the Diaspora, corporate or philanthropic partners.
9. Establish strategic partnerships with the private sector and foundations (national and international), governments within the NEPAD framework, civil society and the UN System to benefit Women and ICT projects in the selected pilot countries.
10. Identify sources for a venture capital fund for financing innovative ICT business initiatives for women.

We urge the UNICT Taskforce to recommend to WSIS that gender equality in the information society be included as crosscutting principle. We further urge the UNICT Taskforce in its continuous contribution to WSIS to:

- (i) Disseminate the results of the Kampala meeting.
- (ii) Provide an opportunity to showcase African ICT initiatives and success stories in its planned meetings in preparation for the WSIS.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to H.E. President Yoweri Museveni for his unwavering support to this initiative and for his commitment to bridging the gender digital divide in Africa.