GENDER ADVOCACY AT THE
WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY
Preliminary Observations [*]

M. I. Franklin

University for Humanistics
Postbus 797
3500 AT Utrecht
The Netherlands

tel: #31 30 2390-139
fax: #31 30 2340-738
email: M.I.Franklin@uvh.nl

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   Overview

This report is based on an initial study of *gender advocacy* at the United Nations' *World Summit on the Information Society* (WSIS) [*]. WSIS, a three-year series of multilateral consultations about future directions for the so-called *Information Society*, is being held under the auspices of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The first preparatory meetings and summit, WSIS I, took place in 2003 (Geneva, Switzerland). The second phase, WSIS II, will culminate in November 2005 (Tunis, Tunisia).

The WSIS initiative can be regarded as a crystallisation of an increasing number of UN-sponsored initiatives that focus on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), both as an overarching issue-area and within UN agencies with respect to their respective mandates and constituencies [1]. WSIS also marks some key shifts in how the UN agency hosting these consultations, the ITU, regards multilateral policy-making for the 21st century.

The first WSIS phase in 2003 attracted attention from a wide range of NGO's, both large and smaller grassroots organizations, working in the area of Media/ICTs and "social justice advocacy" (broadly defined). The main reasons for this interest were that

  ➢ the WSIS mandate explicitly frames ICTs as a *social,* people-centred, rather than a technical issue

  ➢ participation rights (accreditation) have been extended to include non-governmental and non-expert submissions, from private sector interests as well as 'civil society' groups; a *multi-stakeholder* participatory model

  ➢ "ICTs for development" (ICT4D) priorities of the WSIS have been explicitly linked to the UN's ambitious goal of drastically reducing global levels of poverty; as laid out in the 2000 *Millennium Declaration* and *Millennium Development Goals*

The research findings and ensuing discussion focus on how *gender*/gender equality (as a precept for ensuring an *equitable* "information society") and *women*/women's rights (as

---

[1] See specific ICT-focused programmes in agencies such as UNIFem, UNESCO, UNDP. More general initiatives include; the *UN ICT Taskforce*, which began in 1997; the more recent *Global Alliance for ICT Development* initiative (2005). The ITU has had an *ITU Working Group on Gender Issues* and "ICTs for Development" (ICT4D) are also one of the *Millennium Development Goals*

various interlocking issue-areas pertaining to women as a group in R&D and policy-making) are being *rendered* at the World Summits on the Information Society. It investigates the conceptual issues and advocacy practicalities entailed in *gender-sensitive* approaches to the WSIS aims of establishing socio-economically and environmentally viable ICTs for "all humankind". Gender-ICT advocacy at WSIS lies at the intersection of work being done by various intergovernmental organizations, funders, grassroots and/or women's NGOs and civil society groups during preparatory meetings (*PrepComs*) for the two WSIS Summit events and how these are revealed in official WSIS output (declarations, action plans, working group reports). On the ground and online scenarios are two other focal points.

Understanding how the terms, *gender* and/or *women*, operate at WSIS means looking at their

> ➢ analytical - meaningful - content (what do such terms mean for - and to the topic in hand effectively)
> ➢ empirical weight (how often they appear and when)
> ➢ substantive contribution (where and does this matter) to WSIS output
> ➢ interpersonal, everyday renditions on the ground at the point of input into WSIS proceedings; between and within participating individuals and groups

More than just buzzwords, in principle, *gender* and/or *women* (and derivative phrases) as key terms of reference are an important expression of the practical and symbolic worth of the WSIS events for women's advocates. Their placement, visibility and meaningfulness have implications for how "ICTs for Development" are translated back as best practices in the field and made relevant and meaningful to the respective constituencies - "clients" or "end-users".

1.2   Aims

With this in mind, the report

> ➢ provides a (re)introduction to the main streams of feminist scholarship on *gender* and/or *women*; an interdisciplinary literature resource for funders and practitioners on the ground. This rich and complex debate across the whole disciplinary spectrum in the Social Sciences and Humanities has been synthesized for easier digestion (see Appendix 1).
> ➢ presents a range of perspectives on WSIS as a *gender-sensitive* or *gender-blind* process from civil society participants in order to gain a preliminary overview of how the terms *gender* and/or *women* (and their various permutations) are being rendered - or not - there; as output, on the one hand, and input through the work of women /gender-focused advocates on the ground, on the other.
> ➢ traces the relationship (synergies and/or "disconnects") between on-the-ground activities and communications (face-to-face, grounded locations) with respect to

their operation online (websites, listservs, Internet-based mobilisations). Participants' experiences and perceptions are integral to grasping this interaction.

➢ makes some observations and suggestions for further discussion and as part of ongoing evaluations of WSIS participation and strategies by civil society delegates

Conversations with members of the *International Women's Tribune Centre* (IWTC), the *Association for Progressive Communications* (APC), along with other WSIS participants and observers, have provided important insights into the how "Gender and ICT Advocacy" at WSIS has been unfolding, either under the auspices of the *WSIS Gender Caucus* or elsewhere [2].

1.3   Findings

Preliminary findings are that:

1. Both terms, *gender/women*, have gained a place in official WSIS output and are integral to Civil Society contributions to these documents. As *key* terms of reference the way they are used, or operate incidentally at certain points (as synonyms, or in contradistinction to each other, or as catchphrases) point to

   o different moments and room for manoeuvre in submission and drafting processes
   o significant differences in how they eventually appear in WSIS official statements (as stand-alone terms) vis-à-vis civil society/gender advocacy ones (as various word pairs - collocations).
   o a tendency amongst gender and/or women's advocates to assume that either or both terms is self-explanatory to other delegates. Or, to settle deeper differences amongst themselves by including both in close succession. Conceptual focus and operational potential can be affected accordingly, particularly with respect to the way other WSIS keywords have been rendered in WSIS official output; like *governance*, *ICTs*, *public financing* for instance.

2. Many gender / women's advocates note that the framework along the road from WSIS I in Geneva, 2003, to WSIS II in Tunis, 2005, has become alarmingly deficient in either "gender-sensitive" or particularly women-friendly formulations

   o WSIS II main themes, *Financial Mechanisms* and *Internet Governance*, are missing the mark for a number of advocate groups; feminist expertise or women's representation in these working groups are in the minority and the arcane nature of these issues leave non-experts at a loss

---

[2] See Appendix 2 for more on method. I would like to thank all those people I interviewed and spoke to for their candidness. My thanks also to the IWTC for their hospitality and work in organizing and facilitating meetings.

- o indifference and hostility to gender-aware modes of thought and work practices within and beyond the Civil Society Caucus, identified negatively as feminist political platforms in some quarters, are masked by a "PC" (politically correct) use of either term, or, complete indifference to their presence

- o Focuses on women's rights or "gender equality" both in corporate and government submissions and WSIS I output are mainly in terms of "capacity building" where (all) women - as a group - end up being framed as ICT labour forces, (computer) illiterates, or children.

3. The dearth of women in WSIS II decision-making bodies or input into more technical discussions is evidence of

- o circumstance, or lack of woman-power, but also the nature of ITU working culture where committees are dominated by men and/or people with financial or IT expertise alone.

- o gender/women's advocates' own technological blind spots, activity preferences, ICT expertise Internet/Web-based knowledge gaps or comfort with the same. The personality and political differences endemic to any grassroots political or social activism are taken as read

4. The emergence of a "gender fall-out" since WSIS 2003 indicates

- o limits of a zealously adhered to multi-stakeholder model whereby civil society at large has still had to struggle for full participation in practice and uninhibited spaces to confer. Delegates have experienced WSIS working culture as too restrictive and bureaucratic. Governmental interventions into and disruption of sessions are part of these impediments. This criticism of the ITU/WSIS top-down "delivery model" is a bone of contention for other advocacy groups as well

- o political differences between those gender advocates able, or happy to work with corporations and/or government officials and those who are wary of other stakeholders' true intentions at WSIS. These political/strategic differences are also evident in WSIS civil society at large and not particular to feminists/women advocates

- o how, for women coming from Media and ICT activism at the *UN Beijing Conference on the Status of Women*, the WSIS process as a whole comes out poorly against these traditionally women-centred and socioculturally focused events. However, at the Beijing summits a certain "unwritten hierarchy of women's issues" has seen ICT and Media issues fade from view. Beijing +5 in 2005 was marked by the scrapping of Section J from the Beijing Platform for Action (where Media and ICTs were to be addressed). This double-bind needs to be considered for future advocacy planning in both WSIS and Beijing events

- o how much work is down to a few dedicated individuals or small groups working with limited time and resources. This is coupled with a deeply felt need to create spaces for lateral skill and knowledge exchange within WSIS civil society, and beyond to other practitioners and research communities in related areas.

5. Questions asked by many at this stage (early to mid-2005) include

- o how to render *gender* and/or *women* more effectively from within the WSIS II consultations. At an operational level and in terms of how best to "gender-sensitise" both civil society at WSIS and the second phase's agenda-setting

- o how to make WSIS a public issue; raise awareness of the socio-political and economic stakes. Combating the low profile of WSIS is related to awareness that ICT/Internet issues are no longer hot topics.

- o how to improve online, web-based forms of networking and education. This is coupled with a call to think in terms of analogue multimedia rather than just digital, Internet ones

- o how, despite severe reservations about the whole initiative, a commitment to continue impacting on the WSIS process from the inside. How to shift the mode of action to a proactive as opposed to reactive one. This is particularly pertinent to gender advocacy as a broad platform and a specific one focusing on various women's needs and which intersects with other WSIS issue-areas.

How the term *gender* and its corollary, *women*, operate at WSIS, then, is worth more than a passing glance by anyone interested in ICTs as sociocultural issues in general and this summit in particular. The main reasons, truisms to all intents and purposes, being that

- ➢ the inclusion and deployment of either, or both terms of reference in WSIS proceedings indicate, at the very least, a recognition that equitable ICT futures cannot afford to ignore glaring "gender inequalities". Women as a group are over half the world's population, are over-represented in negative indices for poverty, and exclusion from basic ICT access and use. Women also predominate in unskilled and unprotected labour-forces in ICT manufacturing and service sectors the world over.

- ➢ evidence of whether WSIS is managing to do more than pay lip-service to its own declaration of principles can be gauged by looking at it through a "gender lens" [3], argument being that "gendered" approaches avoids over-generalizations or stereotypes about "all" women or "all" men.

- ➢ Evaluations of WSIS II underway in some quarters note that "gender-sensitive" ICT issue-areas are fading from view. Civil society impetus gathered at WSIS I appears to be stalling in the lead-up to Tunis.

---

[3] See Peterson and Runyan (1999)

1.4   Organization

After this Executive Summary, the report has been organized into four parts. Part Two sets the scene; what is WSIS, who are the main players and what are the main issue-areas for social justice and/or gender advocacy around ICT themes. Part Three looks at renderings, as (1) official WSIS output (documentation), (2) input as negotiations and interventions on the ground during drafting processes and sessions, (3) in online contexts in light of the previous two areas. Part four draws conclusions and makes suggestions for further discussion and research. Part Five is comprised of two Appendices. Appendix One is an overview of conceptual issues around gender/women within feminist theory as a self-contained field and as it emerges in other fields. Appendix Two covers the main methodological parameters of the research underpinning this report. The Bibliography also includes a section for further reading, over and above texts cited here.

II   SETTING THE SCENE

2.1   Welcome to the World Summit on the Information Society

The *World Summit on the Information Society* (WSIS) is the third major international meeting about Information/Communication issues in the post-World War II period. Roughly 25 years after the landmark 1980 MacBride Report, *Many Voices, One World*, it is a summit that has taken nearly a decade to get off the ground. Originally put forward in the mid-1990's as a UNESCO initiative, one that failed to get the necessary support from UN member states, WSIS has finally taken place as an ITU sponsored event. This shift in UN agency, from the socioculturally focused educational platform for action of UNESCO to the complex technical, expert-based working culture of the ITU, is integral to understanding the WSIS process.

Several other historical factors have a bearing on how WSIS operates, both as a UN sponsored undertaking, if not for concrete action, then as a high-level forum for multilateral debate about technology and society:

> ➢ Since 1980, national and international regulatory and institutional climates for policy-making have dramatically changed. So have the very terms of reference and technologies at stake; telephone and telegraph/telecommunications; mass media/multimedia; Internet/World Wide Web; digital/ new media; IT/ICTs.

> ➢ There have been several swerves, if not u-turns, in the last half of the 20th century along the road of macroeconomic policy-making at the domestic, intergovernmental and multilateral financial institutional levels. Foreign and domestic investment climates and attitudes towards public sector responsibility for the financing and shaping of the Media-ICT R&D of the day have also changed dramatically in the last thirty years.

> ➢ A stress on the inevitability and requirements of "techno-economic globalization" has predominated since at least the 1980's in policy-making circles and research literature. Nonetheless, a commitment to "national interest" (in the case of the USA) and/or regionally-based Hi-tech Research and Development and competition strategies (at the European Union level) continue apace

> ➢ The privatisation of national (publicly-owned) telecommunications operators and techno-corporate mergers and alliances between telecom operations and services with corporate IT and Media sectors by the turn of the 21st century have meant that not only have the actual information and communications technologies (ICTs) and media landscapes significantly altered across the board but so also have core ownership and control relationships.

> ➢ In particular, the rapid uptake of *Internet* technologies in the 1990's by middle-income users in OECD regions for everyday communications (email and world-wide web), the dot.com boom and bust later in the decade, are contributory elements to the socio-economically complexity of ICT/Media policy debates. Corporations' interests in market creation, the moral imperative of closing the

'digital divide' and the practicalities of public-private "partnerships" for long-term investment all jostle for attention

➢ The predominance of the United States' Federal Government in all matters pertaining to (global) ICT policy issues, its role in the development, and functional overseeing of the Internet, along with the dominance of US-owned Media, IT and Telecommunications is undisputed

This is the political economic and geopolitical setting for the first set of WSIS meetings in 2003 to which non-governmental organizations were invited to attend (once accredited).

Enter, stage-left, a host of social activists in ICT issue-areas; women and community media groups, freedom of the press, human rights activists, free/open software advocates, along with representatives from small and medium business (women's) organizations from countries in the 'global south' and many others. These "civil society" groups have been very active participants at WSIS events form the outset, "creatively appropriating" older ideals about inclusive and equitable communications orders in what is now an Internet-dependent context for action [4]. Given their specific work, and broader aims for equitable and inclusive "ICTS for Development" (ICT4D) platforms for action, the opportunities offered by the WSIS participatory model, participants' perceptions and experiences of WSIS events are important gauges of the process as a whole. Feminist and women's rights advocates within this "civil society" (CS) cluster - or "family" in WSIS-speak - are allied, at least in principle, to those working on social justice and communication rights issue-areas.

Whilst comprised of diverse interests and political stances to *ICTs*, *Development*, on the one hand, and the United Nations as a high-level forum for effecting social change, on the other, civil society participants at WSIS have had a clear impact on the official output of these deliberations. Practitioners' successes and failures in effecting change in official communiqués, agenda-setting *inter alia* have meant that they are well placed to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the underlying assumptions of WSIS, the performance of its host agency, the ITU, and (on reflection) the limitations of their own technical and conceptual "tool kits", lobbying tactics and strategic choices. Whilst the jury is still out at time of writing, ongoing evaluations amongst this stakeholder cluster have been questioning the political and techno-economic effectiveness - and legitimacy - of WSIS.

---

[4] Pascal Preston, speaking at the WSIS Stakeholders' Roundtable, ICA Annual Conference, 2005 (see Appendix 2).

Has it been

> ➢ a truly inclusive model for participation and consultation?
> ➢ the appropriate forum for debate about any future "information society"?
> ➢ an effective multilateral working culture with a sufficiently culturally sensitive filter through which to examine and shape ICTs?
> ➢ a summit that has a coherent, communicable focus, clear set of precepts and vision for the future relationship between ICTs and (any) society, which can be translated into a legitimate plan of action?

A number of ICT and social justice activists, feminist and women's groups in particular, who have participated in WSIS to date have become quite sceptical about the sustainability of WSIS itself, and their participation in it, in the longer term. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that private sector stakeholders are also sceptical about the "talk-shop" dimension to the summit, let alone about the urgency for them, as ICT corporations, to come to this particular negotiating table. Governments' representation across the board and respective delegations' input has also been patchy at best and, as in the case of the WSIS II hosts, Tunisia, overbearing at worst.

These reservations notwithstanding, as a new, multilateral forum at the UN level for framing and influencing debate on all matters concerning ICTs in an, arguably, "post-internet era", civil society participants concur that WSIS has been an opportunity not to be missed.

2.1.1 WSIS Output

➢ **Box I**

> We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled … for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life. [5]

o **Box II**

> The common vision and guiding principles of the Declaration [above] are translated in this Plan of Action into concrete action lines to advance the achievement of … internationally-agreed development goals … by promoting the use of ICT-based products, networks, services and applications, and to help countries overcome the digital divide. [6]

▪ **Box III**

> We, women and men from different continents, cultural backgrounds, perspectives, experience and expertise, …, considering civil society participation as fundamental to the first ever held UN Summit on Information and Communication Issues, … , have been working for two years inside the process, devoting our efforts to shaping people-centred, inclusive and equitable concept of information and communication societies. Working together both on-line and off-line …, practising an inclusive and participatory use of information and communication technologies, has allowed us to share views and shape common positions, and to collectively develop a vision of information and communication societies. At this step in the process, … our voices and the general interest we collectively expressed [during the Geneva phase] are not adequately reflected in the Summit documents. We propose this document as part of the official outcomes of the Summit. [7]

---

[5] *Declaration of Principles: Building the Information Society: A Global Challenge in the new Millennium*, Document WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-E, Section a: pgh.1, 12 December 2003, available at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html, accessed 10 Feb. 2005

[6] *Plan of Action*, Document WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/5-E, Section A: pgh. 1, 12 December 2003, available at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/poa.html, accessed 10 Feb. 2005

[7] *Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs: Civil Society Declaration to the World Summit on the Information Society*, Civil Society Declaration to the World Summit on the Information Society, 8 December, 2003: 2, available at http://www.un-ngls.org/wsis--about.htm, accessed 2 August, 2005.

The WSIS 2003 *Declaration of Principles* and *Plan of Action* (see Boxes I-II above) encapsulate the official outcome of the first phase (WSIS I). As such they remain important foci for ongoing evaluation, and longer-term analysis of WSIS achievements to date. In the lead-up to the second phase (WSIS II), these two documents have become overlain with another set; the *Political Chapeau / Tunis Commitment* and reports submitted for WSIS II by the two working groups responsible for framing the agenda for Tunis: *Financial Mechanisms* and *Internet Governance* [8]. Each of these declarations are the end result of their own set of drafting processes, meetings, online discussions, and struggles between various participatory interests. Advocates of "women's rights", "gender equality" and "gender justice" in all areas of the WSIS agenda have been active too at these various entry and exit points.

Along with the official output of WSIS, the various versions of which are available on the WSIS website (http://www.itu.int/wsis), one other document (see Box III) is especially pertinent to this study. At the end of the 2003 December summit, the Civil Society Plenary issued a dissenting declaration. Entitled *Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs: Civil Society Declaration to the World Summit on the Information Society* [9], this Civil Society Declaration of Principles expresses - in its tone, turn of phrase, and substance - another vision of the future *Information Society* [10]. The way in which the key terms for this investigation (*gender*, *women*, and - by association - *social*) figure in this document calls their use in official WSIS output to account; the way *women* vis-à-vis *gende*r (and their derivatives) have figured especially.

---

[8] The *Political Chapeau* is available at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/pc2/off3.html, accessed 11 February 2005. These two reports are entitled *Financing ICTD: A Review of Trends and an Analysis of Gaps and Promising Practices* (December 2004) and *Report of the Working Group on Internet Governance* (June 2005) respectively. See the links to the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) and the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) at http://www/itu.int/wsis/preparatory2/index.html, accessed 4 August 2005. For the Preliminary and Background Report of the WGIG, see also http://www.wgig.org, accessed 4 August 2005.

[9] This dissenting declaration was issued on behalf of the WSIS Civil Society Plenary, 8 December 2003. Not available on the official WSIS Portal but locatable on the WSIS Civil Society sub-site (run by the UN-Non-Governmental Liaison Service) under "Official Documents and Reports", at http://www.un-ngls.org/wsis--about.htm, accessed 2 August 2005. Four clicks and you're there. By web-surfing standards where 2-3 clicks are a rough limit for most users before giving up, this is relatively far removed from documents from the WSIS main site.

[10] Many participants and informed onlookers have been very critical of this key term but, for the sake of argument, have resigned themselves to it, tweaking the term accordingly. See the Civil Society Declaration (op cit), page 2, note 2; "A Gender Perspective to ICTs and Development: Reflections Toward Tunis", Anita Gurumurthy, ITforChange, available at http:www.worldsummit2003.de/en/web/71.htm, accessed 2 Aug. 2005

By the same token, there is evidence of a comparable tendency to "fudge" these same terms (women/gender) by their advocates, variously applying them as self-explanatory, inseparable if not interchangeable terms of reference. These renditions need to be looked at more closely for they underscore some very real practical - political and logistical - difficulties inherent for feminist/gender or rights-based/social justice and ICT advocates working in a UN setting that has not been set up as a either a specifically women's arena for intervention, or particularly society-focused one either [11]. These difficulties also apply to a number of related terms held dear by WSIS Civil Society participants - *communications rights*, *human rights*, *public good*, *free software*, and so on. The waxing and waning of key words point to where and how participants have been able to actively intervene in WSIS discussions and policy-shaping process.

2.1.2 WSIS Input

Ongoing definitional and practical differences within, and between activist and academic communities about the usefulness of preferring *gender* as a term to that of *women* notwithstanding (see Appendix 1), it is a moot point for some WSIS civil society participants (when asked) as well as for some onlookers (again, when asked) as to how *gender* actually does - or should - operate in the WSIS setting. The tendency to use both, if not in tandem then in close succession, hasn't allayed a certain scepticism about "gender being a euphemism for women", a term of interest only to feminists, their deployment in texts a form of "political correctness" that, in essence, has little substantive impact in decisions taken further down the line.

Gender (and other social justices and ICT) advocates working with, and intervening in the production of texts like the three cited from above, are well aware of these sorts of linguistic hazards. However, in an era of political "spin", buzzwords and sound-bites and with keyword searches a prevalent form of meaning-making and location in an electronic age, semantics do matter. By the same token, language games at this level of intensity have been signalled as tiresome and fatiguing for those looking to effect concrete change on the ground. With locating available funds an ongoing struggle, the strictures of the ITU/WSIS format have been experienced more as a form of bureaucratisation, policy closure and muffling as opposed to an opening-up of key areas of debates or "empowerment" in the field.

---

[11] The Beijing Women's Conference and Declarations, UNIFem, UNESCO, UNDP are traditional UN arenas for "women's issues". Gender and ICT advocates have cut their teeth there. For these practitioners, entering the WSIS meant a change of venue, style and attitude towards their key focus; women as a group.

Whether WSIS itself (used here as a rubric for the summits' consultative policy-making processes and a focal point for activism around ICTs and society) is worth all the time and expense anyway is a burning question in some civil society quarters and for other observers as well [12]. Overshadowed by higher profile international concerns, activist forums and UN initiatives (the 'global war of terrorism', the *World Social Forums*, and UN *Millennium Development Goals* being respective cases in point), the whole WSIS project has been suffering from a severe public image deficit. Not only with the public at large but also amongst official delegations in the tripartite stakeholder model themselves; governments (public sectors), ICT and media corporations *inter alia* (the private sector), and 'civil society' (NGO's and anyone else able to get accreditation). Established UN watchers, Media and ICT researchers, and some women's groups echo these reservations.

With respect to the WSIS stress on tripartite participation at all times, a point needs to be made about the two other "stakeholders" permitted to intervene at WSIS, government officials and private sector - industry - representatives. Already well-acquainted with ITU / UN working styles, the interests represented by these two sorts of participants are, to all intents and purposes, more clearly identifiable; one by their nation-state status as UN member states and hence a preoccupation with "domestic" or "national interest" concerns; the other by their commercial interest in creating more markets for ICT manufacturing and service delivery.

Civil society at WSIS, on the other hand, is comprised of a wide, and relatively random range of interest groups, ICT and/or Media foci and techno-political standpoints. Their geographical (Global North to Global South), ethnic (Anglo-American/western to non-western) and gender distribution (male to female) is also *ad hoc*. Once accreditation is gained, and participation financed, these "citizen-based" delegations have had to work hard to gain scarce speaking rights at plenary sessions, access to key information, working group sittings, and the ears of the broader ITU and international community. Language used and visions of the future "information society" can differ widely. Political views, socio-economic backgrounds, cultural assumptions and, most importantly, levels of ICT/IT expertise likewise.

---

[12] This was a clear theme at the *Incommunicado* conference in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, June 2005; a symposium organized by, and for WSIS Civil Society participants to reflect and assess in time for the last *PrepCom* (September, 2005) and November, 2005, Tunis Summit.

2.2 Advocating Gender at WSIS

2.2.1 What is "Rendering"?

An examination of how terms of reference, *gender* and/or *women* in this case, operate in these sorts of events involves spending time with

- ➤ text production - as process and output
- ➤ participants as they interact on-the-ground (or online) in their discussions, their responses to interview, off-the-cuff comments and moments of reflection
  - ○ experience and perception are also more interpersonal and interactive renditions of gender; as demographic, organizational position, relative power and influence
  - ○ how women involved in earlier and more recent WSIS events experienced meetings and summits can shed light on the complexity of women's issues and/or gender advocacy at WSIS from the ground up.
- ➤ How different advocacy groups perceive and use ICTs for their own purposes within and beyond WSIS consultations can have not only gendered edges but generational and geographical, socio-economic ones as well.
  - ○ websites, content and layout, are also indicative of varying web design skills and attitudes to web-based communications.
  - ○ both formal and informal articulations are also evident in online scenarios; listservs and newsgroup discussions
- ➤ How researchers and those working with UN women-focused agencies (UNIFEM, DAW) and others have taken an interest in WSIS during and since the Geneva phase reveal another level in the longer term.

These different voices have made themselves heard in three, overlapping WSIS spaces:

- ➤ WSIS proceedings and documentation
- ➤ In the *WSIS Gender Caucus* input and output during and between sessions and with respect to the *PrepComs* (three preparatory meetings before the two summits), as part of WSIS II Working Groups' consultations for their respective reports. The Gender Caucus is the main body focusing on specifically gender and/or women's issues and concerns at WSIS.
- ➤ Online, as evident on WSIS/ITU portals, WSIS sub-sites like the WSIS Gender Caucus website, and linked websites such as the APC, APC-WNSP, IWTC and a host of others. Online discussions, such as that of the WSIS Gender Caucus listserv or Civil Society, also show the various ways gender/women are rendered in everyday ways by practitioners.

Clearly, these criteria frame a much more in-depth, longer-term research project than this research period has permitted. For the purposes of this report, Part Three below will focus on the first two areas; WSIS documentation (text production) and perceptions and experiences of WSIS from practitioners, taken from discussions on the ground. The third, important and overlapping arena of *online-offline* renditions requires more systematic

research. Initial observations taken during work in the first two areas are used here as illustrative, as open-ended material. Conclusions drawn in the final section's discussion are based on these initial findings. As such they may need to be adjusted by further research. Above all else, the World Summit on the Information Society is, still, an ongoing process rather than a finished product, or an end in itself.

2.2.2 Impacting on WSIS: From the Ground Up or Top Down?

The very categories - *civil society*, *gender advocacy*, *internet governance* activism, *private sector* stakeholders - point to multiple and, at times, conflicting interests, actions and techno-political agendas. From the point of view of WSIS official deliberations, logistics, resource and time pressures, civil society at WSIS has had to work quickly and present a united front. Added to this is the need, as in all UN events, to organise and bureaucratise in particular ways. The level of protocol, centralisation and hierarchy that characterises the ITU in particular has not sat well for participants who work at grassroots, community levels or who work with horizontal, organic forms of organization and mobilisation.

To reiterate, civil society at WSIS is neither comprehensive (representative) nor a monolithic voice. That said, the range of concerns and social programmes that have come to be identifiable with CS concerns at WSIS are not modest ones. In this respect, any consensus has had to be worked at, not assumed. Key differences have been consciously laid aside (see Box III above) in order to create a sort of "social conscience" for predominantly technophile and bureaucratic discussions. This is no small achievement and has meant a sharp learning curve for many of the smaller organizations taking part in WSIS. The same goes for gender advocates working within, and beside, the official forum and voice for "women's" or "gender" issues at the summits; the *WSIS Gender Caucus*.

Some other points to note in terms of how the above dynamics have played out in WSIS scenarios are:

➢ Shifts in language and framing of the issues are in lead-ups to WSIS II in 2005 (PrepComs 1 and 2, with 3 pending) are indicative of a changing political and sociocultural climate within the summit and abroad. WSIS is happening under a different set of political circumstances than the 1960's/1970's era of civil and women's rights, Cold War nuclear politics and, pre-Internet international communication regimes.

➢ Furthermore, the Tunis Summit (WSIS II) has become a highly contested one, in terms of venue and interventions by the Tunisian government to date. Here human rights and women's rights issues intersect with freedom of speech issues.

Where they intersect was made painfully clear at the *PrepCom* I meeting in Tunisia in 2004.

➤ For women's rights advocates, WSIS is also a very different summit to their preferred UN events, the Beijing summits being a case in point. Moreover, to make matters more exasperating, ICTs as a distinct issue-area in the latter have lost serious ground of late.

➤ Face-to-face interactions and on-the-ground networking, both of which are seen by many grassroots practitioners as the basis of effective intervention, are being overtaken by a shift to Internet-based networking and web-based communication and information distribution. These shifts to online are having a particular impact on (feminists') organization and networking styles as well as creating some differences in approach and priorities between "feminist", "women's movement" and "gender" advocates, at WSIS and in the activist community at large.

2.2.3 Who?

Women - whether they be younger or older, politicised in the women's movement of the 1960's-1970's or coming of age in the 1990's era of "grrl power", hi-tech or lo-tech focused, rural-based or inner-city, nominally "feminist" or not - have been present in all areas of civil society interventions in WSIS deliberations. Under-represented in numbers and predominant in the gender/women's advocacy area, it is true. Be that as it may, *gender* advocacy at WSIS encompasses a range of viewpoints about the position of women in society at large per se, let alone on how women, or groups of women in different locales, stand to gain or lose vis-à-vis access to "traditional" (analogue) media (radio for instance), the Internet, ICT labour markets and "capacity building" criteria.

Gender advocates at WSIS come from all corners of the feminist activist and research universe and with varying degrees of involvement in UN summits and ICT-related hands-on expertise (website design, in listservs, networking techniques or online publishing etc). There are also geographical, ethnic, sociocultural and economic power differentials in play (for instance; middle-class or urban women's relatively privileged access to the Internet vis-à-vis lower-income and/or rural women's access) about key issues at stake for improving the status and position of women; whether or not these are seen in global or local terms. Different opinions about which sort of ICTs are the key issue-areas (community radio or the world-wide web for example) are another distinguishing feature.

The same holds true, needless to say, of Free (Libre) and Open Software advocacy groups (FLOSS), or of those groups and individuals who are working in debates around Internet Domain Names, Privacy [13]. Likewise for small and medium-sized businesswomen or UN agencies looking at "ICT capacity building" for non-ICT saturated societies like

---

[13] See Mueller, Kuerbis and Pagé (2004); Mueller (2005); Weber (2004)

Uganda, Sierra Leone, Ghana for instance, or small island developing states (SIDS) like Samoa, Fiji, or Trinidad and Tobago; largely rural and subsistence-based agricultural economies where "universal access" to the Internet is uneven, to say the least. As for translating issues about the future of who owns ICANN or who finances infrastructure development into "gender/social justice" modes, this is new terrain for the first WSIS generation of gender and/or women's movement advocacy groups by their own admission.

2.2.4 "Gender" or "Women"?

There are also broader sociocultural, religious, racial and ethnic differences between how women from the Global North (the heartland of liberal feminist politics in particular) perceive women's rights issues to those from other parts of the world. This is an ongoing, rich vein of debate within practitioner communities and UN summits such as the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 and its two follow-ups since then. It has also been grist to the mill of many a debate in feminist theory and research in academe. Further to this last point, feminist activist and feminist academic research communities also take different stances to women's issues; stances that point to an uneasy divide in some instances as to how women as social agents - actors - are studied or "empowered" and what "being a woman" (or "a man" for that matter) means, for interpersonal, social and political power relations. In-between are those, in both activist and academic communities, who subscribe to various degrees of "gender essentialism", "gender relativism", "gender scepticism" or, and this exists, "gender indifference" (Appendix 1).

To make a seemingly obvious point; not all feminists agree with each other about the nature and extent of women's socio-economic position since the legislative and consciousness-raising success of Women's Rights/Women's Liberation movements in the 1960's-1970's. They agree even less (when asked or taking time out to muse about conceptual issues) about the pertinence, indeed the political usefulness of the term *gender*. Or whether its predecessor, *women*, should have been so thoroughly dismissed as empirically - and politically - unviable.

Substituting *women* for *gender* (especially at the UN level where the latter is now favoured as "gender mainstreaming") is, for many feminist and women's rights activists, seen as a neutralisation of endemic forms of techno-economic and political structural exclusion of women across the board; limiting most women from being fully-fledged social actors, at home or abroad. From these practitioners' standpoints and hands-on experience, given the way women are both under and over-represented in global demographics of ICT uses and access, the one-size-fits-all inclusiveness of *gender* as a

term of reference, its seemingly endless applicability, masks a cold, hard fact. Namely, women, statistically speaking, are consistently disadvantaged; excluded at an infrastructural and institutional level from full participation in decisions about the "information society". On the other hand, women and "girls" are the predominant workforce in offshore forms of ICT manufacturing and service delivery.

To take this argument further; if *gender* cannot be used as a synonym for women-as-a group at the grassroots level, then of what practical use it as a key term or catalyst for policy actions? Convenience? Political Correctness? Coyness about *women* being too "political" or too blunt a term? The result of a backlash against the women's movement? The impact of "academic feminism"? Is not *gender* part of Anglo-American linguistic dominance (it being a peculiarly English-language term)? By the same token, an over-emphasis on framing "women" as passive recipients of policy, hapless victims of circumstance or, as a monolithic demographic category means that differentials in socio-economic and technological or educational privilege are overlooked. Be that as it may, gender advocates at WSIS point to how *neither* term is having an easy time being taken on seriously by other (civil society) programmes.

If nothing else, shifts to and from using the terms "women" to "gender" *and back again* indicate different ways of apprehending the problem; different ways of distinguishing between a demographic category and an analytical, relational one. As one WSIS participant notes, "gender is about power relations". As such it is a term that only really operates when coupled with other categories of socio-economic inclusion or exclusiveness - race, class, ethnicity, educational levels, income. This is both the strength of more abstract terms like "gender". But also its weakness in terms of operationalization and concrete applicability in everyday political and social scenarios; scenarios where to talk about "women" has more actual substance on the ground (see Appendix 1).

Boxes IV-VI below epitomise the slippery definitional terrain that characterises gender advocacy, and women's advocates work at WSIS; on both the unspoken and explicit level. These three samples, for all their similarities at first sight, illustrate a range of practical and analytical assumptions which, in turn, have implications for perceptions and strategic decisions. It is often only at the point of stress and conflict that these differences become apparent; in practitioner and academic communities alike.

Box IV: A Definition of *Gender*

> "Gender is the term used to refer to the socially constructed relations between women and men in a particular society. These relations, and the roles women and men may assume, are culturally and institutionally embedded. Biological sex refers to being male and female: gender as a social identity changes over time (historically) and space (geographically). Therefore the gender roles of men or women in one society may differ from those in another, and they may differ even within one society, depending on other socio-economic criteria. The concept of gender recognises that women and men are not homogeneous groups. Differences in age, class, race and ethnicity, and disability status cut across human society and affect status, power and access to resources." [14]

Box V: Gender as a Synonym for *Women*

> "In the field of ICT for development, where much of the community work is led by women, it is hard to imagine progress without their engagement and empowerment. From a business view, ignoring the potential of women to contribute to creation of wealth is absurd. Finally, governments have an obligation to provide all citizens with equal educational and work opportunities in the area of ICT, in addition to equal access to technology. … Gender equality advocates [at WSIS] have been actively organizing around the process in two groups: The WSIS Gender Caucus, a multi-stakeholder group, …[works on] mainstreaming gender into the WSIS process…. An NGO grouping, the NGO Gender Strategies Working Group, has also been active in educating women's NGOs about WSIS and related processes. …. Women and women's groups must work together with business partners and governments to create gender conscious policies and, more specifically, to promote gender equality in the ICT sector by providing support, opportunity and empowerment to women. Gender must become a universal consideration in policy-making related to ICT infrastructure, access, training, education, and entrepreneurship initiatives. " [15]

---

[14] Taken from *Gender and Agriculture/Rural Development in the Information Society (GenARDIS): A Small Grants Fund to Address Gender Issues in Information and Communication Technologies for Agricultural and Rural Development in Africa. The Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP Countries)*, 2003 WSIS Gender Caucus, at http://www.genderwsis.org/196.0.html, accessed 10 February 2005. ICTs are then also carefully defined in this document.

[15] *The World Summit on the Information Society: Creating Your Own National Gender Programme - A Practical Guide*, Version 1, 7 August, 2003, 2003 WSIS Gender Caucus, available at http://www.genderwsis.org/sourcebook, accessed 26 November, 2004: 2, 9. See also, *Panel 1: Integration of Gender Perspectives in Macroeconomics*, written statement by Jayati Ghosh, submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women: Forty-Ninth Session [Beijing +5], New York, 28 Feburary - 11 March 2005: pages 1-2

Box VI: Women and/or Gender

> "ICT use is increasing everywhere. In particular, women are using ICTs to strengthen their organization and movement building at the local, regional and global levels. ICTs, however, can also pose a potential threat to women. ICTs can be used in ways that replicate or perpetuate gender stereotypes and biases, and can have unintended negative impacts. Gender evaluation methodologies, therefore, can be used to investigate whether ICTs are being used in ways that change gender biases and roles and do not simply reproduce and replicate existing ones. As more and more of today's development work and money is channelled into projects that employ ICTs, their effects on women are of great importance. " [16]

Any understanding of how gender is being rendered at WSIS, then, needs to bear in mind these conceptual issues as well as the aforementioned demographic, attitudinal and psycho-emotional distinctions between women, and men - as individuals and advocates - at WSIS (not all men are "gender blind" or hostile to feminist political goals; not all women identify as feminists). These include differences between

- ➢ women's rights activisms at WSIS and other interest groups
- ➢ within gender/women's advocacy clusters
- ➢ between those from the Global South and the Hi-Tech North, and within these respective realms
- ➢ between interests identified as "male-dominated" or "techie" and those considered "women's issues".

These important on-the-ground nuances also relate to how other WSIS stakeholders, including civil society participants, perceive gender advocacy priorities amongst all the others vying for air-play at WSIS. WSIS advocacy platforms that focus on media/ICTs and "social justice" all have their own axes to grind. What makes gender advocates take a higher moral ground in many cases is that they point out that women-as-a-group comprise more than half the world's population, the vast majority of which are living under the poverty line and/or are excluded from the benefits of "ICT4D". The point being that no mention of gender, let alone women, at all in WSIS output indicates a huge oversight.

---

[16] *Programme Work Areas*, APC-WNSP, at http://www.apcwomen.org/work/index.html, accessed 14 February 2005.

2.3   Input into WSIS: Where and How?

UN proceedings are characterised by an enormous output of written text; drafts, preliminary and final versions of reports, meeting agenda, minutes, dissenting opinions and endless addenda. WSIS output is no exception here. Official and related websites are bulging with texts, with internal and external links leading on to other document sets. Official documents are the product of long and disputed discussions, drafting and redrafting; end-products whose silences and syntax can speak volumes over and above their explicit content. The (un)happy medium is often reached by the most general of prose, the finest expressions of intent. For seasoned participants at these sorts of events, though, text production, UN protocol savvy and bureaucracy navigational skills go with the territory. Stronger still, official communiqués - as process and products in the public domain - are *the* way to make a difference.

Hence UN declarations are more than a question of semantics or politically correct uses of buzzwords of the day. Their various standings in international law mean that these statements both reflect and "frame the world" of political action and opportunity in subtle and significant ways [17]. It matters what gets put in, what the 'spin' is, where and how often. It matters symbolically, personally and professionally, and further down the line in high-level or national decision-making settings. Written texts, especially in multilateral political settings, are also expressions of power relations, influence and access, presence and absence at key moments.

For instance, take another look at the three excerpts from Boxes 1 - III above:

In the **2003 Declaration of Principles (DoP)** its all about "enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life."

In the **2003 Plan of Action (PoA)** its now about "promoting the use of ICT-based products, networks, services and applications, and to help countries overcome the digital divide."

In the **2003 Civil Society Declaration** its about "shaping people-centred, inclusive and equitable concept of information and communication societies."

Enabling potential, *shaping equitable*, *inclusive concepts*; these turns of phrase in the DoP and the CS Declaration point to a different set of priorities to those *promoting the*

---

[17] See Bøås and McNeill and other contributors (2004)

use of ICT products and services (the PoA). Whether all these goals are compatible with one another can be a bone of contention between, and within civil society delegations.

Appearance, how often and where, matters in this context. In this respect word-counting is an elementary analytical tool. A blunt instrument, to be sure, for it is context, syntax and location that frame meaning and impact, not just appearance. Various sorts of quantitative content analysis or interpretative discourse analysis are more elaborate methods to assessing the policy documents as meaning-making. Nonetheless, digitised word searches facilitate some preliminary indications of just how much language matters. Activists also refer to appearance as a measure of (relative) success or impact on WSIS at the output level. For example: In the case of three key terms in WSIS civil society advocacy - *social* justice, *gender* equality, and *women*'s rights a simple keyword search points to some interesting distinctions, and "wobbles" within these three samples (Boxes I-III):

In the **2003 Declaration of Principles**, the word ***social*** appeared nine times
      In the **2003 Plan of Action**, it appeared only once
          In the **2003 Civil Society Declaration**, it appeared 39 times

In the **2003 Declaration of Principles**, the word ***women*** appeared three times
      In the **2003 Plan of Action**, it appeared eleven times
          In the **2003 Civil Society Declaration**, it appeared 25 times

In the **2003 Declaration of Principles**, the word ***gender*** appeared once.
      In the **2003 Plan of Action**, it appeared five times
          In the **2003 Civil Society Declaration**, it appeared 14 times

Despite the thin presence of the term, *gender*, in the first two, official, pronouncements vis-à-vis its more prominent role in the third document above, all these appearances are the direct result of gender advocacy input at WSIS.

This is rightly regarded as a clear, if qualified, achievement for women's groups and their allies in civil society given the technocratic working atmosphere of the ITU alone. This achievement is a powerful opening up of the WSIS discourse; whatever has happened along the road since Geneva as a result of political and professional differences, ambivalent attitudes to the socio-technological issues at stake (around the Internet in particular) and changing alliances within and between women's groups on the ground.

That said, there is a practical and analytical conundrum here; inclusion of either or both terms is not in itself sufficient. It is a start, not an end in itself. At this stage in the WSIS process, one in which ongoing participation by some NGO's who figured in the first round is being reviewed or halted for lack of time or funds, women's rights and gender justice

advocates are faced with their own definitional crisis; how to render "gender" and/or their respective ICT-related issues as a feasible, concrete element in WSIS II deliberations. In short, there is not a clear gender/ed consensus within women's activism at WSIS, and beyond for that matter, about what *gender* actually means as the preferred term of reference beyond being, in practice, a synonym for women's socio-economic and political exclusion from the "information society".

To sum up so far:

- At the practical coalface of events like WSIS, neither term - *women* or *gender* - have had an easy time getting into the official proceedings. They have had to be rendered in their most basic form; as sound-bites, strategic interventions based on protests, or calls to action by civil society official dissenting briefs. From the basis of these preliminary investigations, the need to spend a lot of time with definitional nuances [18] has been overtaken by the urgency of getting the "gender-sensitive" terminology on the official agenda at the very least.

- With the lead-up to Tunis in 2005 and the emergence of the two working groups' main reports, this "first base" level of intervention is challenging women's and gender advocates to come up with more specifics; considered in some discussion as a "must-do" in order to ensure that arcane issues like public accounting and other international financing mechanisms, the mysteries of internet route directory files or Domain Names are made more "gender sensitive". Or, to put it another way; the more "techie" issues being broached at WSIS II could allow (feminist) delegates to think more about the need to address their own technical lacunae and, more importantly, to the operationalising of their own key terms of reference beyond normative formulations of good intentions. Different renderings of "gender" point also to different renderings of "ICTs" or "social justice" in many respects; and vice versa.

- This high-level of paperwork along with the obtuseness of ITU/UN communicative bureaucracies and the restrictions to frank and open discussion in UN plenary sessions that are governed by diplomatic niceties have not been lost on civil society delegates. Those whose work is based on face-to-face networking and awareness-building at local levels, far away from affluent, wired-up cities like Geneva, Paris or New York have expressed severe reservations about the style as well as the organization of WSIS public forums and participatory access in the meetings.

- For these activists, working on action-oriented and community-embedded ICT issues, WSIS so far has been experienced as alienating, frustrating, expensive, and exhausting; a networking extravaganza for UN professionals, would-be IT consultants, or corporate executives looking for new market openings. That said, many CS participants also admit that WSIS has provided an open forum opportunity, and educational hook, that is too good to miss. Moreover, decisions being taken there could well have direct knock-on effects at the very local levels at which they work, or not as the case may be if funds or political will are deployed elsewhere.

- How ICT and society issues are formulated at and beyond WSIS once it establishes itself as part of the UN community of initiatives and "discursive

---

[18] Definitions and discussions of central terms abound in both the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM), 2004-2005.

constructions" [19] along with the mechanisms that are put into place to finance and govern ICT development agenda are seen as having enormous implications [20].

➢ A look at how *gender* is being rendered in WSIS as output and input can say a lot about the limitations of UN ICT-focused initiatives as top-down interventions; both on its own terms and vis-à-vis higher-profile initiatives such as the *Fourth World Conference on Women* (Beijing) and follow-up summits (Beijing+5 and Beijing+10) or the 2000 *Millennium Summit's Millennium Development Goals* and 2005 *Millennium+5* Summit. If "women" and "gender" are not simply interchangeable terms/collocations, then they are used in tandem and in abundance. Both this slippage between the two, and careful distinctions made between them are indicative of the complex issue-areas and scope for action in WSIS deliberations.

The nature of the Tunis agenda (Finance; the Internet) and preparatory meetings point to a degree of "gender fall-out"; literally and with respect to the sustainability of participation, strategic and organizational decisions amongst gender/women's advocates who attest to various levels of disenchantment with the WSIS process.

In the **2005 Political Chapeau** (Tunis Commitment)

the term ***social*** appeared once

women three times

and ***gender*** not at all [21]

---

[19] See Sarakakis (2004)

[20] This view was reiterated in various ways by two separate roundtables on WSIS at the 2005 International Communications Association Conference in New York; the session on the "World Summit on the Information Society: Government, Business and Civil Society Dialogue" on Saturday, 28 May in the morning, and the "Feminist Dialogue on the World Summit on the Information Society" in the afternoon of the same day; different panellists, audiences but a clear consensus about the need to continue.

[21] See Annex 1 of the *Report on the Work of the Group of Friends of the Chair*, available at http://www.itu.int.wsis/docs2/pc2/off3.html, accessed 11 Feb. 2005

PART III   GENDER RENDERINGS AT WSIS: FROM GENEVA TO TUNIS

3.1   Gendering WSIS Output

3.1.1. General Appearances and Disappearances

Decontextualised keyword searches are not enough on their own. To get to grips further with WSIS textual output as strategically significant "discourse" (as written texts and meaning-makers), the average appearance of terms, per page and on average throughout the document, needs to be assessed. WSIS documents range from nine pages to 120 pages hence absolute figures are limited and if taken at face value can imply more airplay than is actually the case. A closer examination of the three keywords from Boxes 1-III above (*social*, *women*, *gender*) in nine major documents - issued as official output since the WSIS 2003 Geneva Summit [22] - throws up some interesting dynamics:

First; The *Declaration of Principles* (DoP) and *Plan of Action* (PoA) from WSIS 2003 - documents which are core references for all working group reports thereon in - show that all three terms - *social, women*, *gender* - do well to get a mention every 2-3 pages, if at all. The appearance of the term *social* once a page in the DoP stands out in these two early documents. The PoA mentions *women* considerably more often (once every 1-2 pages), which is better than either of the other two terms (not at all). In both the DoP and PoA the term *gender* barely appears.

Second; the *Political Chapeau* - the focus for much criticism from gender advocates and the tone-setter for WSIS II in Tunis. All three of these terms start to drop out of sight on average; *women* remaining relatively steady at once every 3 pages, followed by *social* barely getting one mention at all, and with *gender* disappearing altogether.

Third; the *2005 PrepCom2 Report* - an interim document on the road to Tunis. By now, only the term *social* manages to stay viable - barely (once in the 25 page report, which is a negligible amount).

Fourth; the two Working Groups' Reports for Tunis; the *Task Force on Financial Mechanisms* (TFFM) and the *Working Group on Internet Governance* (WGIG):

   o TFFM: In this long, comprehensive report (120 pages), the term *social* reappears on average every 4-5 pages; *women* get a slightly better airing at every 2-3 pages; *gender* hardly at all, once every 30 pages (four times in total). The TFFM's *Executive Summary* (more likely to be read at 13 pages)

---

[22] *2003 Declaration of Principles; 2003 Plan of Action; 2005 Political Chapeau / Tunis Commitment; 2005 PrepCom-2Report; 2004 Task Force on Financing Mechanisms Report; 2004 Task Force on Financing Mechanisms Report: Executive Summary; 2005 Working Group on Internet Governance Preliminary Report; 2005 Working Group on Internet Governance Report; 2005 Working Group on Internet Governance Background Report; The 2003 Civil Society Declaration of Principles.*

sees only *social* doing any better once every 3 pages. **Women** - barely, and **gender** has become invisible.

- o WGIG: In the final official report (July 2005), **social** appears once every 6 pages on average; **women** and **gender** only appear once each throughout the whole document (19 pages). It bears mentioning that the *WGIG Background Report*, where definitions are treated in depth and nuances in opinion are nominally stressed, **social** and **women** come out much better; every page (at least once) and once very four pages respectively. **Gender**, again, has disappeared from view. That said, the final report was a definite improvement from the *WGIG Preliminary Report* on all counts.

To sum up, out of the total 236 pages that comprise these nine documents, the terms *social* and *women* get roughly the same amount of airplay: about once every 3-4 pages on average. The term *gender* (and any derivatives) is lucky to get a mention every 20 pages or so, assuming the document is that long. In a textual setting where many interests have to be articulated and many terms of reference, issue-areas and constituencies vie for strategic placement in these core documents, it would be safe to say (tentatively) that once every page on average is a definite achievement; every 2-3 pages quite respectable. Deletion or revision in these scenarios are expressions of persuasive power, indirect influence and lobbying efficacy. They are also instruments of power and strategies around "preferred placement" [23].

That said, contrast these findings with the *Civil Society Declaration of Principles* (Box III). A quite different picture emerges:

> *social* features nearly twice every page
> > *women* are mentioned at least once a page
> > > *gender* - most often as word pairs - appears once every two pages.

Overall, this dissenting document renders *gender* (in various forms) twelve times more visible than all WSIS output to date; *women* as a key word is rendered 3-4 times more frequently; *social* as an adjective pointing to notions of inclusiveness and equity, appears 6 times more frequently on average.

These findings endorse perceptions and experiences of those involved in various stages of the drafting processes as well as others engaged in parallel discussions about this output at the time. Bluntly put, *gender* is a term which marks the difference between Civil Society renditions of the terrain and official WSIS versions.

---

[23] See Rogers and contributors (2000)

What the above findings mean in strategic terms requires discussions with participants as well as more research. This look at the numbers, in light of on-the-ground accounts (see 3.2 below) are offered here as initial insights rather than a definitive judgment of success or failure. To reiterate, multilateral agenda-setting at this level "frames" the possibility for action, legal, symbolic and morally in terms of "rights". Hence, the relative survival of *women* as a key term in these texts, in lieu of *gender* (and derivatives) is interesting. A resistance that is despite its empirical bluntness and lack of sufficient nuance (which women, where?) having been one reason for the shift to gender/ed formulations in recent years (Appendix 1).

3.1.2 Closer Up: Specific Interventions

To illustrate the level and intensity of interventions by gender advocates (as input) in the textual production of WSIS, here are two snapshots from the above documents' drafting and consultative processes.

One is from 2003 and one from this year, 2005.

> ➢ 2003
>
> We are concerned that all references to gender, particularly paragraphs 11-A and 15, have been struck from the current draft of the **Declaration of Principles of the World Summit on the Information Society** [DoP]. We face the danger that if gender concerns, and women's empowerment, are not addressed, the WSIS process will fail in addressing the development needs of women, who constitute more than half the world's population, and will miss a real opportunity to contribute to gender equality, We therefore reiterate out support for paragraphs 11-A and 15 which state; "A focus on gender dimensions of ICTs is essential not only for preventing an adverse impact of the digital revolution on gender inequality …, but also for enhancing women's equitable access to the benefits of ICT and to ensure that they can be a central tool for the empowerment of women and promotion of gender equality." We also call on delegates to retain the text on empowerment and inclusion that are stipulated in paragraphs 13 and 14. [24]

The final version of the *Declaration of Principles* saw a reworded version of the contested paragraph. Paragraphs 13 and 14 were retained. [25]

---

[24] "Call to Governments: Prepared by the NGO GSWG", WSIS Intersessional, July 15-18, 2003, Paris, available at http:www.genderit.org/resources/Call-to-governments.htm, accessed 14 Feb. 2005

[25] *WSIS Declaration of Principles*: Paragraphs 12-14, at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html, accessed 1 Feb. 2005

➢ 2005

'The Gender Caucus is deeply concerned that the [2005 *Political Chapeau*] does not contain references to gender equality and women's empowerment, We cannot consider the Political Chapeau finalized until our concerns are addressed, Our recommended language is inserted in bold and italic letters below.

"Annex 1: **Political Chapeau / Tunis Commitment**: … We reaffirm our desire and commitment to build a people-centred, ***gender equitable***, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, … so that ***women and men*** [instead of the term "people"] everywhere can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, to achieve their full potential and to promote sustainable development, to improve quality of life, to eradicate poverty and to attain the internationally-agreed development goals of the Millennium Declaration…."' [26]

Paragraph 11 and its two alternatives, 11A and 11B referred to above talk of the "role and particular needs of children, young people, women, marginalized and vulnerable groups of society … "; thereby placing over 50% of the world's population in the same category as children. The WSIS Gender Caucus lobbied for the deletion of this syntactical "slip" in 11B and for including the term *gender equality* in 11A. However, *people* has remained the preferred term throughout the Political Chapeau

It would be easy to see this level of intervention as splitting hairs. However, in light of the complexity of the issues and the political and economic stakes riding on these core documents, the above achievements are not insignificant. Whilst all participants can make submissions at the drafting stage, the struggle is seeing a result in the final document; as borne out by overview in the previous section.

Gender advocates are currently assessing their successes and "strategic errors" in this regard. They are also starting to talk to each other about ways to create more synergy, knowledge-sharing, and not least of all, inspiration to carry on with what is, admittedly, a dry, bureaucratic process in WSIS II. The concern being that to stop now would be premature. The question now, with the final *PrepCom* due in September, 2005, is how to intervene as effectively as possible in the WSIS II phase, regain the momentum of Geneva 2003 in sessions that seem to be more technocratic and technically complex than ever.

---

[26] *Statement and Suggestions by the WSIS Gender Caucus, DAWN, AMARC Africa, IT for Change concerning the Political Chapeau / Tunis Commitment*, 20 January, 2005, Section 1 with corrections. See also *Political Chapeau / Tunis Commitment*, Annex 1, Document WSIS-II/PC-2/DOC/3-E, Section 1, 11 January 2005, available at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/pc2/off3.html, accessed 11 Feb., 2005

3.2   Input and Output On The Ground

This section focuses on perceptions and experiences of practitioners themselves; based on interviews, observations of, and participation in meetings (Appendix 2). Gender advocacy in civil society at WSIS has, on the ground and in certain moments online, undergone its own set of internal changes and realignments. This is the second dimension to rendering; at the level of input into WSIS by activists, their experiences of events and self-evaluations. This dimension needs to be taken seriously as WSIS II in Tunis moves forward and civil society delegations assess the personal, professional and financial sustainability of the summit process.

To illustrate from everyday life, take a look at this excerpt from a newspaper report of a recent IT congress in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

> '… Margit Nikolaidis [an Austrian software developer] doesn't need long to think about why women should take up a career in computer programming; "It pays a lot better than anything else". … A quick glance at the crowd [at TechEd Europe, a Microsoft-sponsored annual trade fair for IT specialists, held in 2005, in Amsterdam] doesn't exactly back up her opinion, however. At a very rough estimate, the ratio of male to female participants is about forty-to-one. … The absence of women in IT is part of a much larger problem currently facing the computer industry [in western hi-tech countries]. IT recruitment is by and large extremely difficult. Young people are turning their noses up at computer programming even though they spend day and night on the Internet and appear to be joined at the hip to their mobile phones. … [According to figures released in June, 2005, by the Information Technology Association of America - ITAA] … the percentage of women working in programming (old-fashioned data-entry typing pools excepted) has dropped from 33.4% in 1996 to barely 25% in 2004.
>
> … The branch still suffers from a massive image problem, says Carol Wapshere, a systems programmer from the London Business School; 'Computer programming is dominated by men, who still look askance at women in their midst. I develop the most complex of computer networking systems but I still have to constantly work at reassuring new clients about my credentials.' A British colleague, originally from Iran, endorses her experience; "I'm young *and* I'm a woman *and* I also have an accent. When I enter a room I can see the men thinking, 'she can't be for real, although she looks alright.' Opinions differ on how women in IT should deal with these prejudices. Olga Londer, a Russian systems engineer at Microsoft, also had difficulty finding her feet in the beginning; 'I was employed for a charity project. No-one else - no man - was willing to take it on. It took a long time after that before I was treated as a fully-fledged IT specialist. My advice is this: learn to live with these sorts of prejudices. When I'm giving a presentation, it only takes 10-15 minutes before the men have changed their tune.' Margit Nikolaidis, a 15-year veteran of IT events like TechEd, adds that 'very little has changed'. Her daughter, just turned 10 years old, has shown little interest in pursuing a technical direction. …' [27]

---

[27] Peter van Ammelrooy, "Petticoat Rebellion against the "Computer Nerd" Bulwark: The computer industry continues to turn its back on women, already few and far between in the field" ["*Zachte rebellie tegen het bolwerk van de 'nerds'*"], excerpts from a report in the Dutch Daily newspaper,

Note above the different ways in which women working in the higher-income brackets of the ICT industry express their experiences of outright prejudice, or of being in a numerical minority. And how they concur about the practical - and petty - challenges they face being taken seriously as *female* IT experts everyday. In other words, women's experiences in ICT sectors, "gender analyses" of the latter need to account for a complex set of perceptions, identifications, interpersonal and group dynamics. At any one time, these intersect with geographical, ethnic, socio-economic differentials, and a host of other ones (see Boxes IV-VI).

Comparable contours are evident for gender advocates on the ground at WSIS sessions.

During the 2003 preparatory meetings and summit two distinct women/gender advocacy streams were active. The WSIS *Gender Caucus* and the *NGO Gender Strategies Working Group* were both aiming to create "gender-sensitive" policy formation. The WSIS Gender Caucus has described its brief as one of promoting

> "gender equality in the ICT sector by providing support, opportunity and empowerment to women. Gender must become a universal consideration in policy-making related to ICT infrastructure, access, training, education and entrepreneurship incentives". [28]

The *NGO Gender Strategies Working Group* (NGO GSWG), saw its brief in similar terms but focused more explicitly at the time on providing *women's* spaces at WSIS meetings and, online, mapping

> "the many meetings - both WSIS and other - in which women have participated which have made - or will make - input into the 'Draft Declaration and Action Plan' for the World Summit on the Information Society. ... In addition to these 'face to face meetings' there have been several online discussions which have also fed into the process. " [29]

---

de Volkskrant, Economics section, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Thursday, 7 July 2005: p. 7. My translation.

[28] *The World Summit on the Information Society: Creating Your Own Gender Programme - A Practical Guide*, Maja Andjelkkovic, WSIS Gender Caucus, Version 1 (7 August, 2003): page 9, see http://www.genderwsis.org/sourcebook. See also *About the NGO Gender Strategies Working Group* and related links, at http://www.genderit.org/about.htm, accessed 11 February 2005

[29] Taken from an introductory statement to a timeline of *Women's involvement in the WSIS process (and related events) from May 2002 to December 2003* on the NGO GSWG site, circa March 2003, at http://www.genderit.org/wsis/wsis_process.shtml, accessed 11 February 2005. The overlap and ongoing working relationship with Gender Caucus-based advocates can be seen in a *Call to Governments* to "follow through on their commitments to gender equality", prepared by the

Whilst the inaugural *Gender Caucus* worked within the WSIS multi-stakeholder model, the *NGO GSWG* arose out of a need at the time to create a more autonomous, less rigidly controlled venue for ICT advocacy focusing on women's issues at the community level. It also was an expression of email "battle fatigue" by delegates looking to restore a more personal, measured interactions in the wake of intense online discussions. This working alliance of smaller women's groups, with the *International Women's Tribune Centre* (IWTC) as a core member, was an *ad hoc* response to these organizations' discomfort with some of the WSIS working practices and assumptions. More specifically:

> ➤ Feeling restricted in their ability to discuss issues and strategies that would not necessarily be favoured by private sector, or some governmental delegations

> ➤ being required to work according to preset organizational procedures: the way in which issue-areas were organised into vertical "families" was experienced as particularly prescriptive and ineffective for horizontal communications

> ➤ the language and style of debate in larger plenary sessions and the heavily email/web-based level of consultation within the Gender Caucus (listservs and discussion forums) were also indicated as another reason for setting up a working group based on "more personal", face-to-face interactions.

> ➤ a growing sense of a lack of "ownership" of WSIS as a grassroots process as civil society participants were hindered in being able to contribute fully to core decisions about procedure and agenda-setting. Having to resort to reaction and response to arcane and abstract documents rather than more proactive modes was experienced as unproductive and disheartening

Whatever their differences, these two clusters did work together in intervening actively in both drafting processes and civil society official criticism of WSIS I output (see Box V). By 2005 remaining members of the GSWG still active at WSIS were working within the Gender Caucus, which had also undergone some key personnel changes and organizational consolidation. By 2005, the WSIS Gender Caucus had established itself as the main gender/women's voice in preparations and document drafting in preparations for the Tunis Summit.

Where and how these working relationships and impetus has been (or can be) maintained in the lead-up for WSIS 2005 has been the subject of online debate and internal reflection on the part of these participants. WSIS 2005 is a very different summit to that of 2003 anyway; the socio-political and economic climate, both closer to home-bases and internationally, less favourable - increasingly indifferent - to treating ICTs as a social or political issue. Other, more pressing matters have been grabbing public and media attention.

NGO GSWG which underscores concerns raised by the *Civil Society Declaration* as well (see Box III). See http://www.genderit.org.resources/Call-to-governments.htm, accessed 14 February 2005

Some other, related factors unfurling on the ground during WSIS II that bear mentioning:

> Some troubling issues around the approach taken by the WSIS II host, Tunisia, shifted the attention of civil society groups to human rights issues. Incidents where the "gender card" was exploited by delegates suspected of being from Tunisian government-sponsored NGOS (GONGOS).

> Civil society participation in the Tunis Summit was called into question in the aftermath of incidents in this first *PrepCom* meeting for WSIS II in 2004 and strong objections to the Tunisian government's poor press freedom and human rights record.

> Another set of perceptions relate to some sharp difference in opinion within civil society towards the 'gender question' in the TFFM and WGIG working group deliberations.

> Not only was WSIS at large being experienced increasingly as an indifferent, if not hostile environment to feminist platforms (however these be construed) but so were some working areas (online and on the ground) in civil society sessions.

"Civil society spaces at large are not necessarily gender-sensitive. ... There are as many 'gender allergies' amongst groups from the Global North as there are in the Global South." [30]

3.3   Outcomes

At the output and input levels, gender advocates have been signalling a number of "disconnects"; between ideals and practicalities, different political economic analyses, and conceptualisations of the core issues.

> The first disconnect is about the need, at all, to substitute *women* for *gender* most of the time; whether as an analytical focus or strategic aim for civil society activism at this summit. Its appearance and use as a synonym for women being both a cause and effect of a host of official and informal attitudes. That women's groups (whether they identify themselves as feminist or not) have had to deal with a certain disinterest, if not outright hostility, to advocacy and focus on women *or* gender (as a necessary term for inclusion in all communiqués and action plans) from other civil society groups is no secret.

> Another one is how this situation is not helped by a certain amount of lip service being paid to either, or both terms from private sector players; gender/women here rendered in terms of the need for "capacity-building" or, more to the point, as a pointer to women's employment in ICT corporations' manufacturing and service industries offshore [31].

---

[30] One evaluation of on-the-ground practicalities at WSIS event around getting gender issues on civil society groups' agendas.

[31] See McLaughlin (2004). More than several of the *Incommunicado* conference in Amsterdam plenary sessions and workshops brought these issues up as well with respect to corporate sector interests in a number of interlocking issue-areas; women in the ICT workforce, Free/Open Source Software, ICANN and other Internet infrastructural issues.

- From the point of view of certain political regimes represented at, or as in the case of Tunisia, prominent in the organization of the summits and preparatory meetings, liberal notions of gender equality are not taken as read. Likewise for western, liberal understandings of justice, human rights, freedom of speech and so on. Add to this potent mix, the tendency for UN agencies to set up gender/women's ICT taskforces that are expected to run on a shoestring budget and few resources. Inclusion here, literally and figuratively, is not always translated into appropriate levels of legitimacy and participatory "clout".

- From the other end of the telescope; for some, too much focus on "gender" is done at the expense of concrete and intransigent ICT issues that affect *women* as a disadvantaged and disenfranchised group across the board. Hence *gender*, as the key term is neither necessary nor sufficient. For others, gender's inclusion of men and women, by definition, ensures that cross-cutting forms of exclusion or privilege; education, religion, income, social power and so on are not reduced to "battle of the sexes". Many other power differentials and exclusions are not only in play but also more to the point; income or social caste for instance. In this view, gender is a term that, by definition, implies "equal participation of women and men" in ICT futures [32].

- WSIS and UN top-down approaches to policy-making are seen as miles away from the daily realities on the ground. Attempts to have the latter cases, and success stories "scaled up" has been met with some clear scepticism about what this implies in practice, and principle. That said, civil society at WSIS is divided here.

- Another disconnect in the issue of financing. Approaches to this issue are sharply divided into two camps; as a public, multilateral funding goal or a predominantly private sector one. The TFFM Report in particular swings between these two views. Gender and women's advocates support the *Digital Solidarity Fund* initiative and are currently looking at an *E-Quality Fund* for African women. Others are sceptical about these initiatives given the UN track record in this area (good intentions, little concrete outcome).

That said, there is general consensus about the decreasing visibility of gender and/or women-related issue-areas since WSIS I and that this trend needs to be reversed if WSIS II is to have any social/cultural legitimacy abroad.

At this stage, the research findings here suggest that, all the problems with the WSIS process notwithstanding, the way forward lies at the door of gender advocates and their prominent spokespeople/strategists, who, like all feminist activists and researchers at some time or other, need to deal with their own set of "container terms", their own technological blind-spots, their own need to share expertise and information across the spectrum of gender and ICT advocacy and to enrol appropriately tune into experts of their own [33]. A recognition that terms like "gender" - or "social justice" or "governance" - cannot be taken as read, the arguments for the empirical and rights-based forms of ICT

---

[32] This is one way a respondent summed it up on being asked about their views.

[33] An insight reiterated in meetings between gender advocates and the WSIS related panel on feminist issues at WSIS at the 2005 ICA conference.

inclusion and action they presuppose not assumed to be accepted. In this respect, some have articulated the need to start thinking about how Civil Society at WSIS can be, indeed needs to be "gender sensitised" in turn. Moreover the arguments about what "gender" actually means in practice have to be made rather than assumed. Without this sort of groundwork, chances are that the technocratisation of WSIS II deliberations (which affects other advocacy platforms such as media/communications rights, or public financing) signalled by a range of civil society evaluations of WSIS will continue by all accounts.

3.3   Online-Offline Spaces

This section can only touch upon some points pertaining to the "interface" of online (Internet-based) communications and applications of ICTs and offline/on-the-ground ones. Civil society advocates' own ICT practices, preferences and skill bases vis-à-vis each other, other WSIS stakeholders, research and funding communities have an immediate albeit diffuse impact close to home but also afar. Many websites are in fact no-go areas for not only computer "illiterates" in the Third World/Global South but also for users within Hi-Tech societies. Incompatibility with "older" software packages, for both word processing and website design, being closely matched by many a website being lamentably out of date in terms of its content, "About Us" pages, and onward links.

This is another, more complex, "disconnect" which is intra-gendered, ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic. The privileging of Hi-Tech forms of everyday communications within OECD countries has social and cultural implications, when translated into both *Financial Mechanisms* and *Internet Governance* action plans, for those societies that communicate in "lo-tech" ways. The right *not* to go online, log in, or log off is not clearly articulated at all at WSIS [34]. Gender advocates are not unaware of these dimensions to delivery models for ICTs and/or Development writ large. The following observations are put forward for further consideration, evaluation and assessment at the intersection of online and offline applications of ICTs:

➢ The WSIS is, to all intents and purposes, about the *Internet* even though the term, ICTs, is supposedly a broader rendition of the technological terrain as such. WSIS summit events and meetings are intrinsically Internet / World Wide Web dependent. Listservs, live web-casts, online archives, websites, and the ubiquitous lap-top totting delegate (who *has* to check his/her email, mobile voice-mail, at all

---

[34] See Wyatt, Thomas, and Terranova, (2002) for some insightful observations based on research into why people choose *not* to go online, email, surf the web and other Internet-based activities.

times and in all places) are all part and parcel of the communicative culture that this summit is both about and beholden to.

➢ In this respect, social movement advocacy has, in the last years, seen a comparable shift in the way grassroots advocacy and work practices operate. Networking has shifted from face to face to online modes. These shifts also mark some clear differences amongst NGO and grassroots communities; between those who embrace these new forms of digital, web-based networking and those who do the minimum whilst retaining tried and true methods. The need to create, design and maintain a viable, and attractive, web presence and the way in which emailing has come to dominate the everyday working life the world over have created another sort of communicative imperative.

➢ This shift that has not gone unnoticed, either by practitioners themselves or researchers [35]. That some activists are not as comfortable as others with email as the primary means of mobilization or networking, or with websites as the main way in which to reach the funding community, or with listservs and online discussions as the principle means to garner momentum or get things done in the drafting process, is not simply a question of "capacity-building" per se. In many cases this "digital divide" - and its generational/class/gendered permutations - closer to home goes to the heart of the whole "ICTs for Development" project of the WSIS. As such it intersects directly with women's and community media advocates who are lobbying to have "traditional" - non-digital - media not fall off the bottom of the WSIS agenda. It also underscores differences in strategic thinking about ICT futures.

➢ That said, advocates who acknowledge the need for lateral forms of knowledge exchanges and skill-based support are also aware that practitioners ignore Internet based forms of advocacy at their peril. The fact that "route servers", ICANN intricacies or how free or open-source software actually operate in computing terms are a lot less "sexy" (and here, this gendered term is used advisedly) than social justice, rights-based forms of ICT advocacy is also evident within civil society discussions. These knowledge-gaps are not just fixed by getting in technical expertise; the latter also has to have a social and cultural dimension. This is another rendition of conversations about finding ways for communities on the ground to "own" ICTs at the point they are conceived, designed and then implemented. Homepages and various sorts of "toolkits" are examples. They are both used as success stories but also need to be assessed a lot more closely, in their own terms and from end-users' and community points of view.

➢ In a complex, (mostly) male and/or expert-dominated ("techie"), hierarchical working environment like the ITU-run WSIS, participation for some smaller, grassroots/women's NGOs is the start of a long, arduous and very expensive undertaking. In terms of personal and professional time and energy, online, internet-based networking are seen as more time-consuming and not necessarily more effective. The emphasis on web-based consultations in and around inter-sessional events aside, gaining speaking rights in plenary sessions (few and far between) let alone being taken as equal discussion partners in online or offline working group consultations is also hard to sustain without a clear focus. Advocacy in issues concerning women on the one hand and ICTs or media on the

---

[35] See Deibert (1999), van Aelst and Walgrave (2001), Rodgers (2003) amongst others. See also a report by Anriette Esterhuyzen of the APC in which she evaluates WSIS I from the viewpoint of Civil Society organizations' strategies. Here, echoing insights from this study, and drawing on research done elsewhere (Surman and Reilly 2003; see also Franklin 2002, 2004), Esterhuyzen notes the need for NGOs, large and small, to think more creatively about their own technology uses, needs, and thereby, strategies closer to home. See "History of APC: Whose 'Information Society'?" at http://www.apc.org/english/about/history/english.shtml?cmd%5B384%5D=x-575-17983, accessed 14 Feburary, 2005

other demands a broad knowledge of complex and shifting terrains. Differences in working styles, facility with Internet (email and web-based) communications, and language use within ICT/gender advocacy groups can be used as solidarity building and skill-sharing.

➢ There is a need to look more closely at the online experiences and backgrounds of practitioners as well as their "clients"; especially those working from limited resources and other entry points into the ICT/WSIS debates, into account. The gap opening up between plugged-in/wireless ICT adepts in WSIS civil society working groups and those who are not has implications not only for these practitioners' use and application of ICTs for their own purposes but also in the field. Email or web-based communications tend to be seen as an either/or scenario to print or analogue mediums. In practical and advocacy terms, computer-web design skill bases and on-the-ground experience should not have to reside in the same person, or expected to be available within an organization.

➢ The time needed to design and sustain any web presence is often vastly *under*-estimated by many, even those working in Media and ICT and social justice advocacy. A homepage, whilst now seen as imperative to keeping a profile and attracting interest and funding, is also an expression of organization and goals; a working culture where on-the-ground relationships can be translated into online/web-based forms. This is a lot of basic footwork that is not necessarily met by either a willingness or ability to cross the (by now relatively low and software-enabled) threshold of website setting-up skills. In this respect, there are comparable psychological and attitudinal entry-level hurdles and unwritten hierarchies to Internet-based uses and mobilisation within advocacy communities from the Global North to those from the Global South.

Some suggestions for further study, and assessment on the part of ICT advocates as practitioners in and end-users of ICTs themselves are:

➢ when initiating a website; think about the relationship between design, skill-bases, compatibility and relevance to the organizations' own needs, as well as its advocacy goals and target group's needs.

➢ the *sustainability* of any website, or portal, beyond the immediate moment. In terms of

  o information gathering and up-loading as ongoing needs

  o lateral, onwards links to other online places; and vice versa.

  o interactivity and compatibility as hand-in-glove aspects

  o multiple forms of accessible user interfaces (how the screen looks - layout) that are neither infantile nor reliant on high production values alone (multimedia plug-ins for instance)

➢ various ways of working, interacting and communicating online that are more than text-based. Visuals don't need to be based on the high-production values of video streaming or "Flash Player" functionalities (not always available for all users everywhere and dependent on broad-band transmission). Homepages can gain from simpler design features that include previous generations of user interfaces (text only, for instance) and operating systems as a matter of course.

➢ time and resource allocation over the longer-term: E.g. who is responsible for maintaining the online face of the organization? Does content match format and vice versa?

- ➢ Increased IT knowledge and skill-base goes together with comparable amounts of time online, practice and regular use. Hence it may be unreasonable to expect this sort of input when time and energy is needed elsewhere; on the phone, face-to-face or in the field for instance.

- ➢ The focus on knowledge-sharing evident amongst Civil Society advocates working on gender/women's issues can include looking to enlist the ICT skill-bases of other Civil Society advocates; those in the Free/Open Source Software and/or Governance areas often have a large amount of technical expertise. Lateral skill-sharing can be a way to inform and educate each other about respective concerns. In that respect, "capacity-building" can begin at home, on civil society participants' own terms.

- ➢ Work begun on more detailed assessment of case-studies and ICT projects that are used as "best practice" cases need to be supported and put into place. Results can be disseminated online and in more traditional, conference paper/academic journal article forms. And in the classroom. This educational "disconnect" has been echoed more than once during internal evaluations.

IV   CONCLUSIONS

4.1   Provisional Findings

1.   Both terms, *gender/women*, have gained a place in official WSIS output and are integral to Civil Society contributions to these documents. As *key* terms of reference the way they are used, or operate incidentally at certain points (as synonyms, or in contradistinction to each other, or as catchphrases) point to

- o   different moments and room for manoeuvre in submission and drafting processes
- o   significant differences in how they eventually appear in WSIS official statements (as stand-alone terms) vis-à-vis civil society/gender advocacy ones (as various word pairs - collocations).
- o   a tendency amongst gender and/or women's advocates either to assume that both terms are self-explanatory or "acceptable", especially to other delegates, or to settle deeper differences amongst themselves by including both in close succession. Conceptual focus and operational potential can be affected accordingly, particularly with respect to the way other WSIS keywords have been rendered in WSIS official output; governance, ICTs, public financing *inter alia*

2.   Many gender / women's advocates note that the framework along the road from WSIS I in Geneva, 2003, to WSIS II in Tunis, 2005, has become alarmingly deficient in either "gender-sensitive" or particularly women-friendly formulations

- o   WSIS II main themes, *Financial Mechanisms* and *Internet Governance*, are missing the mark for a number of advocate groups; feminist expertise or women's representation in these working groups are in the minority and the arcane nature of these issues leave non-experts at a loss
- o   indifference and hostility to gender-aware modes of thought and work practices within and beyond the Civil Society Caucus, identified negatively as feminist political platforms in some quarters, are masked by a "PC" (politically correct) use of either term, or, complete indifference to their presence
- o   Focuses on women's rights or "gender equality" both in corporate and government submissions and WSIS I output are mainly in terms of "capacity building" where (all) women - as a group - end up being framed as ICT labour forces, (computer) illiterates, or children.

3.   The dearth of women in WSIS II decision-making bodies or input into more technical discussions is evidence of

- o   circumstance, or lack of woman-power, but also the nature of ITU working culture where committees are dominated by men and/or people with financial or IT expertise alone.
- o   gender/women's advocates' own technological blind spots, activity preferences, ICT expertise Internet/Web-based knowledge gaps or comfort

with the same. The personality and political differences endemic to any grassroots political or social activism are taken as read

4. The emergence of a "gender fall-out" since WSIS 2003 indicates

   o limits of a zealously adhered to multi-stakeholder model whereby civil society at large has still had to struggle for full participation in practice and uninhibited spaces to confer. Delegates have experienced WSIS working culture as too restrictive and bureaucratic. Governmental interventions into and disruption of sessions are part of these impediments. This criticism of the ITU/WSIS top-down "delivery model" is a bone of contention for other advocacy groups as well

   o political differences between those gender advocates able, or happy to work with corporations and/or government officials and those who are wary of other stakeholders' true intentions at WSIS. These political/strategic differences are also evident in WSIS civil society at large and not particular to feminists/women advocates

   o how, for women coming from Media and ICT activism at the UN Beijing Summits on the Status of Women, the WSIS process as a whole comes out poorly against these traditionally women-centred and socioculturally focused events. However, at the Beijing summits a certain "unwritten hierarchy of women's issues" has seen ICT and Media issues fade from view. This double-bind needs to be considered for future advocacy planning in both WSIS and Beijing events

   o how much work is down to a few dedicated individuals or small groups working with limited time and resources. This is coupled with a deeply felt need to create spaces for lateral skill and knowledge exchange within WSIS civil society, and beyond to other practitioners and research communities in related areas.

5. Questions asked by many at this stage (early to mid-2005) include

   o how to render gender and/or women more effectively from within the WSIS II consultations. At an operational level and in terms of how best to "gender-sensitise" both civil society at WSIS and the second phase's agenda-setting

   o how to make WSIS a public issue; raise awareness of the socio-political and economic stakes. Combating the low profile of WSIS is related to awareness that ICT/Internet issues are no longer hot topics.

   o how to improve online, web-based forms of networking and education. This is coupled with a call to think in terms of analogue multimedia rather than just digital, Internet ones

   o how, despite severe reservations about the whole initiative, a commitment to continue impacting on the WSIS process from the inside. How to shift the mode of action to a proactive as opposed to reactive one. This is particularly pertinent to gender advocacy as a broad platform and a specific one focusing on various women's needs and which intersects with other WSIS issue-areas.

4.2   Summing Up

As this report is based on preliminary research and the WSIS process itself is still in full swing, this last section draws some open-ended conclusions, in lieu of making recommendations. Reasons being that all the points raised thus far, and below, would be best put to work in further discussions about their implications for gender advocacy at and beyond WSIS, on the one hand, and for continuing to build broader synergies within and across civil society advocacy clusters on the other. In that spirit, these findings can be regarded as potential focus points for creating better, more accessible *online* platforms and mutual knowledge-sharing and online-to-*offline* ones; between WSIS adepts and research communities observing this summit, and translated (when need be) into more digestible forms for those communities on the ground.

In light of the findings, listed in Section 4.1, above the following general points bear reiterating:

➢ Both terms, *gender/women*, have gained a place in official WSIS output and are integral to Civil Society contributions to these documents. All in all, Gender and ICT advocates' energetic on-the-ground and online interventions have had a clear impact on WSIS output. Women's groups and their allies in freedom of information and human rights movements who focus on the on-the-ground renditions of "gender-power relations" per se (including the exclusion or discrimination of women as a group) have been the toughest critics of both WSIS Geneva and the upcoming Tunis summit.

➢ On the road to Tunis, this input has been an increasingly uphill battle. WSIS II has become increasingly deficient in either "gender-sensitive" or particularly women-friendly formulations. WSIS II main themes, *Financial Mechanisms* and *Internet Governance*, are missing the mark in many respects on a number of counts for civil society advocates; gender-sensitivity has to vie against the arcane and technical nature of these themes.

➢ Gender-awareness - and women's participation - within the Civil Society Caucus and WSIS II working groups is also of some concern. The dearth of women in WSIS decision-making bodies, input into more technical discussions is evidence both of circumstance, or lack of woman-power, but also more widespread blind-spots, activity preferences, ICT expertise Internet/Web-based knowledge gaps or comfort with the same. This "gender fall-out" intersects with another set of divergences between WSIS I civil society visions of the field of action available to them and the current realities on the ground in 2005.

➢ The lead-up to the Tunis Summit has seen civil society delegates becoming increasingly disenchanted with the actual nature of WSIS participation itself, less than satisfied with - if not divided about - the outcome of WSIS I, and deeply concerned about the direction WSIS II has been unfolding to date. Basically, "hard-nosed" techno-economic and hi-tech, exclusive formulations of the "problem" appear to be overshadowing "softer", more inclusive sociocultural (and gender-focused) platforms. Along this spectrum an array of evaluative positions and experiences are evident. For instance, those groups and individuals who are fluent in accounting, computer programming/hacking, Internet protocols and ICT technical jargon have found their stride in WSIS II, whose focus is *Internet Governance* and *Financing Mechanisms*. The arcane language of computer

programming, the ITU working culture based on technical standard-setting resonate more robustly with these delegates' programmes. Grassroots media/ICT activism - and those emergent from the women's movement in particular - are having difficulty in maintaining their voice, their position and their interest in WSIS II.

➢ With WSIS II nearly here, smaller, grassroots civil society groups who are the self-acknowledged "country cousins" to government and private-sector groups anyway, are dealing with some complex conceptual and technical lacunae in their own strategies. Continued participation at WSIS II is a less attractive summit for community-level groups. Their more affluent and wider focused colleagues amongst civil society participants also have serious reservations about WSIS II. But they are opting for a continued presence leading up to and at Tunis whilst shifting attention back towards local/national-level interventions.

➢ *Gender* is one term, then, that indicates as much by its absence as by its appearance and placement in official pronouncements. The same can be said for other, politically or socially critical terms (such as *social*, *women*, *rights*, *public*). As UN meetings are run and judged by the pronouncements that ensue, civil society groups take the need to maintain a consistent and critical eye on these official statements very seriously.

"The WSIS is a low-level conference run by a low-level UN agency [the ITU] that is basically into hardware and technical fix-its rather than social issues around ICTs. … [In short] a third rate summit." [36]

"WSIS is intellectual idiocy!" [37]

Despite a consensus amongst Civil Society/Gender advocates that WSIS, as an attempt at real consultative and participatory agenda-setting, is deeply flawed, as a UN-level, public forum on ICT and society it is an important opportunity; a moment to impact on ICT discourses and frames at the point of their institutionalisation. Which is why the lamentable lack of general awareness about WSIS itself - in the media, academic conferences and higher education curricula - goes hand-in-hand with a widespread consensus in civil society advocates about the need to start sharing knowledge and strategies with each other.

---

[36] One opinion offered of the WSIS process as a whole.

[37] Cees Hamelink, speaking at the WSIS Multistakeholder Roundtable at the 2005 Annual Conference of the International Communications Association, New York (see Appendix 2). See also Hamelink (1995, 1998)

How the term *gender* and its corollary, *women* operate at WSIS, then, are worth more than a passing glance by anyone interested in ICTs as sociocultural issues in general and this summit in particular. The main reasons, truisms to all intents and purposes, being that

> ➢ the inclusion and deployment of either, or both terms of reference in WSIS proceedings indicate, at the very least, a recognition that equitable ICT futures cannot afford to ignore glaring "gender inequalities". Women as a group are over half the world's population, are over-represented in negative indices for poverty, and exclusion from basic ICT access and use. Women also predominate in unskilled and unprotected labour-forces in ICT manufacturing and service sectors the world over.

> ➢ evidence of whether WSIS is managing to do more than pay lip-service to its own declaration of principles can be gauged by looking at it through a "gender lens" [38], argument being that "gendered" approaches avoids over-generalizations or stereotypes about "all" women or "all" men.

---

[38] See Peterson and Runyan (1999)

V   APPENDICES

Appendix 1
From Women's to Gender Advocacy: Conceptual Issues

> "Gender – n. 1 "Grammar a class (usually masculine, feminine, common, or neuter) into which nouns and pronouns are placed in some languages, distinguished by a particular inflection. – the property of belonging to such a class. 2 the state of being male or female (chiefly in cultural or social contexts) – the members of one or other sex: differences between the genders." [1]

This section takes a look at how the terms, *gender* and/or *women*, operate for and in Feminist Theory. The latter term, in capital letters, is meant here as a *rubric* for a longstanding and diverse body of research literature that spans all the main academic disciplines within the Humanities to the Social Sciences, with Science and Technology Studies straddling the terrain between the latter two and the "hard sciences" [2]. Footnotes in this section lead the reader onto other sources as well as into deeper conceptual waters. For quicker readings, the main text should be taken as a "rough guide" only; for this terrain needs not only a compass but a well-referenced map as well. The definition boxes punctuating this section are another navigational tool; expressions of the research and practical issues that have helped me navigate this terrain in my own thinking, teaching and research over the years, as well as some more pertinent ones to gender advocacy at WSIS. Intended for the reader as invitations for further reflection, they also mark key shifts in thinking over the last thirty-forty years (at least) in feminist, civil/women's rights thinking. They are openings into a rich literature, one that not only needs to be taken on its own terms but also as it intersects, and overlaps with research and practical (strategic and tactical) goals for social advocacy in general.

> Too typically, and quite erroneously, the term *gender* is understood as interchangeable with the term *sex*, which conventionally refers to biological distinctions between male and female. Instead, gender should be understood as a social, not physiological construction. *Femininity* and *masculinity*, the terms that denote one's gender, refer to a complex set of characteristics and behaviours prescribed for a particular sex by society and learned through the socialization experience [that also] shape our thinking.[3]

---

[1] "Gender", Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 10th edition, 2002.

[2] Science and Technology Studies have had a strong "gender and technology" stream for some time. See Mansell and Silverstone (1996); Rogers (2000); Henwood et al (2003); Jones (1999), Wyatt et al (2003). The rise of "Gender Studies" (where sexuality and "masculinities" are key topics) and "Race/Ethnicity Studies" in recent years, particularly in the North American academe, have put some Women's Studies/Feminist Studies programmes on the back foot in terms of financing and student numbers.

[3] Peterson and Runyan (1999: 29)

The research question at the heart of this investigation is whether the term "gender" is being rendered at the World Summits on the Information Society as a (convenient if not politically expedient) synonym for "women". The seemingly obvious answer to this question - "yes *and* no" - points to where a complex conceptual terrain preoccupying feminist philosophers and political theorists (1) crosses paths with practical, daily realities encountered by any rights-based advocates. As, indeed, do multilateral, inter/governmental and non-governmental organizations' programmes looking to decrease instances of marginalization, discrimination and social injustice in general (2).

> ➤ (1) In the first instance, the different ways in which "gender" is defined matters enormously because they have an impact on the methods employed and final conclusions drawn. Conceptual rigour and analytical finesse are the main requirements here. Conversely, feminist theorists and researchers often differ deeply about how the way certain methods imply unarticulated assumptions about "gender" and/or "women" as essential - universal and historically unchanging categories

> ➤ (2) In the second instance, relying on "women" as the privileged term of reference, maintains a clear focus on a recognisable demographic group of people who, more often than not, are systematically excluded from the full socio-economic benefits of the Hi-Tech, industrialised standards of living from liberal, consumer societies. By the same token, this categorisation of *all* women as equally excluded vis-à-vis one another has been regarded as empirically inadequate, culturally suspect.

The differences between these terms in principle and practice, then, are more than semantics. The gradual shift from *women* to *gender* as the official, preferred term of reference in feminist activist, policy-making and research circles has not arrived unchallenged (3).

> ➤ (3) Both terms, and their application in advocacy programmes, are often critiqued by men and women - and feminists - from non-western societies as socioculturally insensitive; labels (nouns) that mean more to white/western and/or high-income and highly educated feminists than to their "sisters" elsewhere [4]. The predominance of white and/or middle-class/high-income women in defining the terms and strategies for feminist politics and policy-making at the UN level has not gone unnoticed. Ethnic, religious and cultural divisions that spliced through "gender unity" marked the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995. That said, uses of the "gender card" as a cultural-difference trump card can be a political manoeuvre as well (as witnessed in the first PrepCom meeting in 2004 for the WSIS Tunis Summit).

---

[4] See Haraway (1992, 1997: 36-40); Hill Collins, Spivak, and Narayan in Nicholson (1997); hooks (1990); Young in Nicholson (1990); Smith (1999); Chowdhry and Nair (2003: 8-10, 17-21), Franklin (2001, 2004: 12-15, 78-80, 198-99).

> "'Gender': n. a grammatical term only. To talk of persons or creatures of the masculine or feminine gender, meaning of the male or female sex, is either a jocularity (permissible or not according to context) or a blunder." [5]

The seeming consensus over the effectiveness - if not the necessity - of this shift has not diminished key differences within and between feminist research and activist circles. The intense debates that have emerged as a result pivot on different standpoints about

- ➢ human nature
- ➢ social relations, over long periods of historical time, within and between different cultures
- ➢ economic relationships, particularly during and since the rise of industrial capitalism
- ➢ where race, ethnicity, class, caste/status, sexuality, religion and a host of other forms of socio-economic discrimination intersect with sex and/or gender
- ➢ the nature of power; social, cultural and political economic
- ➢ "best practices" in research terms for getting to the bottom of all of the above for the benefit of women as a discriminated group

> Gender is a concept developed to contest the naturalization of sexual difference in multiple arenas of struggle. Feminist theory and practice around gender seek to explain and change historical systems of sexual difference, whereby "men" and "women" are socially constituted and positioned in relations of hierarchy and antagonism.[6]

That said, feminist/women's rights politics and feminist/gender theoretical frameworks are intertwined, in principle and practice. The different paths carved out by feminists in the academe, feminists and women's advocates "on the ground" are not necessarily divergent ones. Even if, over the years, a certain polemical divide between feminist "theory" and "practice" would suggest insurmountable differences [7].

---

[5] *Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, Oxford, (1940), quoted in Scott (1989: 81-100).

[6] Haraway (1992: 290)

[7] See Jaggar (1984) for a very good coverage of how these philosophical differences play out within and between (nominally) Marxist, Socialist, Radical and Liberal Feminist political streams. See Curthoys (1997) for a sharp critique of the "political and moral failure" of academic/Second Wave feminist thought whereby the "intellectual products of this women's studies movement is [critiqued] in terms of the unrecognised betrayal of earlier principles" (Curthoys 1997: ix, 4, 9). Here, Curthoys' main target is "postmodernist" theories about gender and sex-gender roles in particular. For an historical overview of First/Second Wave Feminism vis-à-vis Postmodernist thought, within and beyond the academe, see Nicholson's Introductions in Nicholson (1990, 1997).

At the heart of the matter is

> whether women and men are - *should* be - to all intents and purposes the same (and so equal); equal but *different*; in *essence* different [8].

> whether differences between men/males and women/females in socio-biological terms (physiologically, neurologically or emotionally) are genetically coded or socio-historically contingent. In short, whether "biological sex" predates social formations. Whether biology should matter and if it does, where and how [9].

> where and how differences do - or should - be used as *explanations* for ongoing discrepancies between men and women in income, opportunity, life expectancy, and sociocultural and political power. Or, in other words, are these differences the *result* of century-old forms of differential treatment? In human biology, psychological and pedagogical literature, these are encapsulated as the nature/culture or nature/nurture debate.

We *learn*, through culturally specific socialization, what characteristics are associated with masculinity and femininity and how to assume the identities of men and women. In this sense, gender refers to characteristics linked to a particular sex by one's culture'. The specific meanings of and values given to masculinity and femininity vary dramatically over time and across cultures. … The particulars of gender are always shaped by context. However these variations still rest on concepts of gender differences and do not necessarily disrupt gender as a relation of inequality. We focus on gender in this text not because other axes of difference and bases of inequality (race/ethnicity, class, religion, age, etc.) are less important than - or even inextricable from - gender. Rather, gender is our primary lens because the worldwide institutionalisation of gender *differences* is a major underpinning of structural inequalities of significance to world politics. … Gender is about power, and power is gendered. [10]

Nevertheless, the way in which *gender* (alone mainly, although with some derivatives) has come to be used - and perceived - as a *synonym* for women in everyday parlance, university classes, government circles and activist scenarios has led to some revisiting of an ongoing debate about the nature of "women's oppression" and efficacy of feminist

---

[8] To explicate further: Equal treatment is a seemingly obvious point to those socialised in liberal notions of equality and representative democracy based on secularism and universal suffrage. At the same time, more basic positions taken in all these cases resonate with current discourses that stress "civilizational" and/or cultural divides between the West and elsewhere in attitudes to equality; ones that overlook, however, conservative notions about women's role, in the home and as mothers, in western societies. Sometimes these ideas about "feminine" sex-gender roles are based on Christian precepts albeit not necessarily. Finally, all three have acquired another, more populist twist in resignations to everyday "gender differences": women and men are, figuratively speaking, from different planets (Venus and Mars respectively, the title of a recent best-seller). The latter is a popular rendition of perceived and experienced differences between men and women as *fundamental*.

[9] Simone de Beauvoir's landmark work, *The Second Sex* (1949/1952), took this as its central inquiry. Her oft quoted point that "one is not born a woman; one becomes one" (ibid: 259) still resonates today albeit under some very different political circumstances and scientific knowledge about the human organism.

[10] Peterson and Runyan (1999: 7)

lexicons for articulating the issues at hand; whether discrimination can be put down to "patriarchy", private-public economic relationships in capitalist societies, psycho-emotional developmental paths, legislative discrimination, or cultural traditions [11].

> The term gender refers to socially constructed differences between the sexes and to the social relationships between women and men. These differences between the sexes are shaped over the history of social relations and change over time and across cultures. Gender identity depends on the circumstances in which women and men live and includes economic, cultural, historical, ideological, and religious factors. Gender relations also vary according to the economic and social conditions of the society and differ between social and ethnic groups. [12]

Whereas *women* (and derivatives) is a term available in all languages, *gender* is not. It is a specifically English-language term whose official neutrality - syntactic inclusiveness - runs counter to many other languages that have feminine and masculine cases, or ways of speaking (as is the case with Japanese, for instance). Adopting the term in Spanish or French on the one hand or German and Dutch on the other, for example, means using it pretty much in its English rendition/s. In some multicultural - educational and policy - settings, one consequence is that "feminism" is reduced to a negative stance about what "femininity" *should* or *does* mean. Feminism thereby being rejected as "anti-woman".

> There [is] an immediate problem … in a social world distorted by U.S. hegemonic projects and the culpable ignorance of white, especially, US citizens. English, especially American English, distinguishes between sex and gender. That distinction has cost blood in struggle in many social arenas … German has a single word, *Geschlecht*, which is not really the same as either the English *sex* or *gender*. … The evidence is building of a need for a theory of 'difference' whose geometries, paradigms and logics break out of binaries, dialects and nature/culture models of any kind. Otherwise threes will always reduce to twos, which quickly become lonely ones in the vanguard. And no-one learns to count to four. These things matter politically. [13]

At the UN, regional and governmental level in liberal capitalist societies both terms are used, sometimes in conjunction, as synonyms and as distinct categories albeit never far apart (WSIS being no exception here). The rise of the term "gender mainstreaming",

---

[11] This was the theme of a keynote speech by Juliet Mitchell (one of "First Wave" Feminism's leading thinkers in the United Kingdom) at the 2003 Conference marking the 10th anniversary of the *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Belle van Zuylen Institute, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 2003. See Mitchell (1971: 99 passim; 2003: 111-13).

[12] United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, "Making Gender Statistics; A Definition of Gender" at: http://www.unece.org/stats/gender/web/genstats/whatisgs/gender.htm, accessed 15 November 2003

[13] Haraway (1997: 23, 24)

indeed the term "mainstreaming" per se, is a more recent rendition at the baselines of definition and operationalization [14]. This more recent terminology links "gender mainstreaming" research methods in the academe, where women and/or gender are treated as an "empirical category" first and foremost. This move facilitates the gathering of quantifiable indicators, has an eye firmly on being policy "relevant" and, a more implicit tactic, not so easily dismissed as part of a so-called radical feminist political agenda (however perceived or defined). At the multilateral policy-making level, as the 1980's *United Nations Decade for Women* made way for the *1995 Beijing Conference on Women* and its two follow-ups (Beijing+5 in 2000 and Beijing+10 in 2005), *mainstreaming* became a keyword at large.

> Gender "is a culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behaviour of women and men, and the relationship between them. Gender, therefore, refers not simply to women or men, but to the relationship between them, and the way it is socially constructed. Women and men are included in the concept of gender. Like the concepts of class, race and ethnicity, gender is an analytical tool for understanding social process." [15]

That said, this latest version of "gender as a variable" has also met some solid resistance in not only its conceptual-political implications but also its applicability in everyday and institutional realities. These criticisms relate directly to the question underpinning this study; why use the term "mainstreaming gender" when what is effectively being talked about is "mainstreaming women"? In addition, the "mainstreaming" of either tends to be

> ➢ too economically focused; 'capacity building" and/or labour relations seen simply in terms of women's employment. Moreover, this is a largely quantifiable term that forgoes more qualitative, relational dimensions [16]

---

[14] For instance, *UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework (GMIF) for 2002-2007* from 2003 states that 'UNESCO's new policy context … seeks to translate UNESCO's commitment to "*integrate a gender perspective in policy planning, programming, implementation and evaluation activities*" (31/C/4) into practical directives that will yield visible and tangible results; this being the most effective approach to address the "*urgent needs of women*"' (UNESCO 2003: 4, original emphasis). The writers are quick to acknowledge that the terms are not completely interchangeable when it goes on to note that the 'starting point is to establish the notion that a gender perspective addresses the distinct needs of both women and men. In most situations, however, the needs of women and girls are the least understood and attended to and therefore warrant specific attention' (ibid). With respect to UN-level organizations, this translates to the term (gender) mainstreaming referring 'now most generally … to a comprehensive strategy that involves both women-oriented programming and the integration of women/gender issues into overall existing programmes, throughout the programme cycle.' (ibid: 6).

[15] *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, at http://www.genderfund.com.ua/tconcept.htm, accessed November 30, 2003

[16] See Ortner (1996: 116 passim); Saunders and Foblets (2002) for anthropological approaches to these issues.

- ➤ not much more than empty rhetoric for intergovernmental and/or national machineries [17].

- ➤ suffering from a top-down, we-know-best, idea of policy-implementation that overlooks how cultural and socio-economic delineations on the ground impact on the issues at hand as well

- ➤ where output and outcomes can be measured but where more qualitative dimensions to the structural features of endemic inequities in "gender power relations" [18] are - indeed have to be - excluded from the statistics

In other words, "gender equality", or making women "visible" if not integral to the policy/ research terrain at hand must mean more than "simply adding women and stirring" [19] if significant changes in the long-term are to come about.

> "Mainstreaming" is a process rather than a goal that consists in bringing what can be seen as marginal into the core business and main decision-making process or an organization. … Efforts to integrate gender concerns into existing institutions of the mainstream have little value for their own sake. A gender perspective being mainstreamed to achieve gender equality and improve the relevance and effectiveness of development agendas as a whole, for the benefit of all women and men. … although some progress has been made in achieving gender equality there still are significant gaps to full gender equality. … In some cases the so-called 'gender gaps' are at the detriment of boys. … [20]

Irrespective of how any, or all of the above issues play out in international politics, multilateral (multi-stakeholder) policy-making scenarios or community-levels of intervention, the shift from *women* to *gender* is intertwined with three broad research standpoints. Each of these has their own set of debates and crossovers. They also have their own advocates and policy/political implications.

- ➤ Women/Gender as an *analytical* category
- ➤ Women/Gender as an *empirical* category - as a "variable"
- ➤ Women/Gender as *constitutive* of the object of inquiry/arena for action [21]

---

[17] In the Treaty of Amsterdam, this tautology comes out in the very definition whereby the Council of Europe calls for "gender equality perspective [to be] incorporated in all policies at all levels and all stages, by *the actors normally involved in policy-making*" (Council of Europe, 1998: 15, emphasis added). Point being that if the aforementioned "actors" have been active in 'gender insensitivity" or systematic exclusion/discrimination of women as a group *inter alia*, how can their resolve to do otherwise be held to account? See also True (2001: 239-247).

[18] See Bordo (1990) for more on this dyad. See also Franklin (2004).

[19] N. Keohane quoted in Whitworth (2000:91)

[20] UNESCO, 2003: 5. See note 14 above.

[21] See True (2001) for a survey of these three research modes and their ramifications for, and in International Relations theory. See also Weber (2001: 82-90); Locher and Prügl (2001); Franklin (2004)

Finally, and at the risk of opening yet another can of "gendered" worms, there is a solid and influential research literature that resists attempts at pinning down women (or men) and/or gender relations as fixed categories in historical time, or in geographical space; confining what are relational, interlocking and "performative" identifications to the "categorical imperative" of policy prescriptions or positivist research methods [22]. The point here is that "gender trouble" [23] happens when men and/or women, female and/or male bodies, identities, sexualities, consciousness are reduced to simplistic biological dualisms; categories that enclose rather than empower literally and figuratively. Human biologists and radical gender theorists actually concur, albeit from very different entry-points, that even binary, biological sexual difference ("male" to "female") has multiple permutations; that is, "gender" - like "race" or "ethnicity" - does not always present in daily life as an either/or embodiment, social roles or psycho-emotional states [24].

> Gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of gender as a constituted social temporality." [25]

The argument is that rendering either - or both - term *too* literally runs the danger of becoming stranded on the twin sand-banks of universalism and essentialism; the very things that the Civil Rights and First Wave Women's movements strove to abolish as the root causes of all forms of overt and covert discrimination. The "Other Globalization" socio-political agendas of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, as encapsulated by the World Social Forums and which form an important aspect of WSIS Civil Society advocacy platforms, concur with these broad aims.

Here, one can see a stress on the "intersectionality" of various categories of difference with a sharp increase in add-on terms, forward slashes and hyphenation at the textual level. For some this is a necessary nuance; a disruptive device for upsetting ingrained ways of thinking and reformulating the issues in writing. For others these devices are the

---

[22] See Haraway (1990, 1992, 1997) and Butler (1990, 1999) for two leading thinkers in this regard. See also Franklin (2002a); Carver (1998)

[23] See Butler in Nicholson (1990).

[24] See de Beauvoir (1949); Haraway (1992); Carver (1998)

[25] Butler (1999: 179). See also Carver (1998); Haraway (1997)

marks of "postmodernist anything goes" in writing, thinking and political action. Either way, there is an unavoidable "dialectic" at play in both physical, literal and symbolic renderings of sociocultural and political economic relations based on "sex", "gender" and - by association - "power ".

> In a culture that is *in fact* constructed by gender duality, however, one *cannot* simply be "human". This is not more possible that it is possible that we can "just be people" in a racist culture. … Our language, intellectual history, and social forms are "gendered"; there is no escape from this fact and from its consequences on our lives. Some of these consequences may be unintended, may even be fiercely resisted; our deepest desire may be to "transcend gender dualities"; to not have our behavior characterised as "male" *or* "female". But, like it or not, in our present culture, our activities are coded as "male" or "female" and will function as such within the prevailing system of gender-power relations. The adoption of "professional" [or "technical"] standards …. is no more an activity devoid of gender politics than [current women's fashion] is devoid of gender meaning. One cannot be "gender neutral" in this culture. [26]

In order to bring these conceptual reflections more explicitly back into the orbit of civil society advocacy agendas at WSIS, of which "gender and ICT" items have been an integral part to date, Donna Haraway's influential essay "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's" cannot be omitted. Haraway's ode to more creative and proactive language use and strategic thinking (that of "cyborg imagery" in this case) is a conscious attempt to render ICTs (then and since) as inherently sociocultural issues in a stubbornly technocratic context.

I will end this conceptual "rough guide" by giving the last word to Haraway:

> The "odd circumlocution, "the social relations of science and technology" [indicates] that we are not dealing with a technological determinism, but with a historical system depending upon structured relations among people. But the phrase should also indicate that science and technology provide fresh sources of power, that we need fresh sources of analysis and political action. Some of the rearrangements of race, sex, and class rooted in high-tech-facilitated social relations can make [WSIS Gender/Social Justice advocacy] more relevant to effective progressive politics. [27]

---

[26] Bordo (1990: 152). See also the collection edited by McDowell and Sharp (1997) for a broad range of views.

[27] Haraway (1990: 207)

Appendix 2
METHOD

Parameters and Method

This report is based on a short-term study of the perceptions and experiences of Gender-ICT activists, as individuals and as representatives of their respective groups; all of whom have been active in the WSIS process since at least 2003. Information on-the-ground was gathered by face-to-face and telephone interviews and participation-observation of a number of meetings and conferences/conference panels organised around WSIS and ICT and Social Justice /Gender themes in 2005 in the lead-up to the last *PrepCom* and Tunis Summit of WSIS II. Official documentation from the WSIS website and civil society groups' listservs and websites along with additional material such as conference papers and publicity material supplement on-the-ground data-gathering. Apart from an initial content analysis of WSIS output, the focus was on gathering date on participants' perception and experiences. These, input and post facto dimensions are also integral dimensions to the 'rendering' of gender in the WSIS process.

The research itself was conducted over a relatively short time-span; at regular intervals between October 2004 and June 2005. As a researcher, I came into this study as an interested onlooker to the WSIS process as a whole in general and some of its gender/ed dimensions as a matter of course. Following codes of Anthropological Codes of Ethics about informed consent and the need to protect the anonymity of informants in participation-observation research scenarios, any citations from formal interviews and informal comments are anonymous. Their inclusion indicates that these views were echoed elsewhere by others. Any public statements (in Conference Panels for instance) come with the person's name.

Data Gathering

Participant-Observation
Meetings and Conferences attended included:

➤ Global Media Policy Planning Meeting, New York Law School, 25 May, 2005

➤ Meeting on Gender and ICT, IWTC New York, 27 May 2005. Attended by WSIS participants, representatives from UN-DAW, International Women's Tribune members, researchers into WSIS

➤ Annual Conference of the International Communications Association, 25 - 30 May, 2005. Panels attended:

➤ Pre-Conference: Articulating the Media / Globalization Nexus, 26 May, 2005

➤ Multistakeholders' Roundtable on WSIS, 28 May, 2005

- Feminist Perspectives on WSIS Roundtable, ICA, 28 May, 2005
- *Incommunicado: Information Technology for Everybody Else*, Conference on ICT for Development (ICT4D) and WSIS issues, Amsterdam, 15 - 17 June

Formal interviews

Interviews (telephone and face-to-face) and informal conversations were held with members of the

- International Women's Tribune Centre, New York
- Association of Progressive Communications
- researchers into, and members of the WSIS Civil Society Caucus

Documentation and Websites

The following documents and websites were studied.

- WSIS 2003 - Geneva

Declaration of Principles

Action Plan

Civil Society Dissenting Declaration

WSIS Gender Caucus interventions on the above

- WSIS 2005 - Tunis: PrepComs 1 & 2

Working Group on Internet Governance Reports

Working Group on Financial Mechanisms Reports

Report of the Friends of the Chair: Political Chapeau/Tunis Commitment

Civil Society and Gender Caucus interventions on above

- Websites/listservs visited and examined

WSIS Portal

WSIS Gender Caucus website

IWTC website

APC and the APC WNSP websites

WSIS Gender Caucus Listserv

- Corroborating documentation that was accessed included Minutes of the above Meetings; draft resolutions made available on websites; conference programmes; research papers; personal notes.

The results provided here are based on a short-term, limited study and a select group of interviewees. Hence conclusions drawn are provisional and pending further investigation. That said, any misconceptions or oversights are the author's responsibility.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works Cited

Ammelrooy, P. van, "Petticoat Rebellion against the "Computer Nerd" Bulwark: The computer industry continues to turn its back on women, already few and far between in the field" ["*Zachte rebellie tegen het bolwerk van de 'nerds'*"], *de Volkskrant*, Economics section, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Thursday, 7 July 2005: p. 7

Andjelkkovic, M./WSIS Gender Caucus, *The World Summit on the Information Society: Creating Your Own Gender Programme - A Practical Guide*, Version 1 (7 August, 2003), at http://www.genderwsis.org/sourcebook, accessed 30 November, 2004

Association for Progressive Communications - Women's Networking Support Programme (APC-WNSP), *Programme Work Areas*, at http://www.apcwomen.org/work/index.html, accessed 14 February, 2005.

Bøås M. and McNeill, D., (eds.), 2004, *Global Institutions and Development: Framing The World?*, London and New York: Routledge

Bordo, S., 1990, "Feminism, Posmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism" in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, L. Nicholson (ed.), New York and London: Routledge: 133-156

Butler, J., 1999, *Gender Trouble,* New York: Routledge

Butler, J., 1990, "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse" in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, L. Nicholson (ed.), New York and London: Routledge: 324-340

Carver, T., 1998, "Sexual Citizenship: Gendered and De-Gendered Narratives", Chapter 1 in Politics of Sexuality: Identity, Gender and Citizenship, T. Carver and V. Mottier (eds.), London and New York : Routledge: 13-24

Chowdhry G. and Nair S., (eds.), 2003, *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations : Reading Race, Gender and Class*, London and New York : Routledge,

Curthoys, J., 1997, *Feminist Amnesia: The Wake of Women's Liberation*, London and New York: Routledge

de Beauvoir, S., (1949) 1952, *The Second Sex*, Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books

Deibert, R., 2000, "International Plug 'n Play? Citizen Activism, the Internet, and Global Public Policy" in *International Studies Perspectives* , Volume 1, Issue 3, December : 255-272

Esterhuyzen, A, 2003, History of APC: Whose 'Information Society'?", at http://www.apc.org/english/about/history/english.shtml?cmd%5B384%5D=x-575-17983, accessed 14 Feburary, 2005

Franklin, M. I., 2002, "The Homeless and the Internet: Thinking Policy Thoroughly", Background Paper, Information Technology, International Cooperation and Global Security Programme, New York, USA: Social Science Research Council

Franklin, M.I. , 2002a, "Reading Walter Benjamin and Donna Haraway In the Age of Digital Reproduction", in *Information, Communication and Society*, volume 5, number 4, 2002: 591-624

Franklin, M.I., 2003, "I Define My Own Identity: Pacific Articulations of 'Race' and 'Culture' on the Internet" in Ethnicities 3 (4), December 2003, Thousand Oaks USA: SAGE Publications: 465 - 490

Franklin, M.I., 2004, *Postcolonial Politics, The Internet and Everyday Life: Pacific Traversals Online*, London and New York: Routledge

Ghose, J, *Panel 1: Integration of Gender Perspectives in Macroeconomics*, written statement by Jayati Ghosh, submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women: Forty-Ninth Session [Beijing +5], New York, 28 Feburary - 11 March 2005

Gurumurthy, A., 2003, "A Gender Perspective to ICTs and Development: Reflections Toward Tunis", ITforChange, at http:www.worldsummit2003.de/en/web/71.htm, accessed 2 August 2005

Haraway, D.J., 1990, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 198's" in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, L. Nicholson (ed.), New York and London: Routledge: 190-233

Haraway, D.J., 1992, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*, London and New York: Verso

Haraway, D.J., 1997, "Gender for a Marxist Dictionary: the Sexual Politics of a Word " in *Space, Gender, Knowledge: Feminist Readings*, L. McDowell and J. Sharp (eds.), London, New York, Sydney, Auckland: Arnold: 53-72

Hill Collins, P., 1997, "Defining Black Feminist Thought" in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, L. Nicholson (ed.), New York and London: Routledge: 241-260

hooks, b, 1990, *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*, Boston, MA: South End Press ITU/WSIS *Political Chapeau / Tunis Committment,* at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/pc2/off3.html, accessed 11 February, 2005.

ITU/WSIS, *Declaration of Principles*: *Building the Information Society: A Global Challenge in the new Millennium*, Document WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-E, 2003, available at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html, accessed 10 Feb. 2005

ITU/WSIS, *Plan of Action*, Document WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/5-E, December 2003, available at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/poa.html, accessed 10 Feb. 2005

Jaggar, A. M., 1983, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature ; Philosophy and Society*, Totowa N.J., Rowman & Allanheld
Locher, B. and Prügl, E., 2001, "Feminism And Constructivism: Worlds Apart or Sharing the Middle Ground?" in *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 45, No 1, March: 111-130

McDowell L., and Sharp, J., (eds.), 1997, *Space, Gender, Knowledge: Feminist Readings*, London, New York, Sydney, Auckland: Arnold

McLaughlin L, 2004, "Engendering Informational Labour: The Real Gender Agenda of the World Summit on the Information Soceity", Working Paper, available from the author, Miami University-Ohio

Mitchell, J., 1971, *Women's Estate*, Middlesex and New York: Penguin Books

Mitchell, J., 2003, *Siblings: Sex and Violence*, Oxford UK: Massachusetts: Polity Press

Mueller, M., Kuerbis, B., and Pagé, C., 2004, *Reinventing Media Activism: Public Interest Advoacy in the Making of U.S. Commmunication-Information Policy, 1960-2002*, Final Report: July, 2004, Convergence Center, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, www.digital-convergence.org, at http://dcc.syr.edu/index.htm, accessed 31 August, 2005

Mueller, M., 2005, *The Free Software Foundation and the Free/Open Source Software (F/OSS) Social Movement*, Version 3.2., July 2005, www.digital-convergence.org, at http://dcc.syr.edu/index.htm, accessed 31 August, 2005

Narayan, Uma, 1997, "Contesting Cultures: 'Westernization," Respect For Cultures, and Third-World Feminists" in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, L. Nicholson (ed.), New York and London: Routledge: 396-414

NGO-Gender Studies Working Group (NGO-GSWG), "Call to Governments: Prepared by the NGO GSWG", WSIS Intersessional, July 15-18, 2003, Paris, at http:www.genderit.org/resources/Call-to-governments.htm, accessed 14 FEb. 2005

NGO GSWG, *Women's involvement in the WSIS process (and related events) from May 2002 to December 2003* on the NGO GSWG site, at http://www.genderit.org/wsis/wsis_process.shtml, accessed 11 Feburary 2005.

Nicholson, L., (ed), 1997, "Introduction" in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, London and New York: Routledge: 1-6

Ortner, S. B., 1996, *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*, Boston: Beacon Press

Peterson, V. Spike & Sisson Runyan, Anne, 1999, Global Gender Issues, Dilemmas in World Politics Series, Second Edition, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford : Westview Press

Report on the Work of the Group of Friends of the Chair, at http://www.itu.int.wsis/docs2/pc2/off3.html, accessed 11 Feb. 2005

Rodgers, F. J., 2003, *Spatialising International Relations*, London / New York: Routledge Rogers, R, (ed.), 2000, *Preferred Placement*, Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Akademie Editions

Rogers, R. (ed), 2000, *Preferred Placement*, Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Akademie Editions

Sarakakis, K., 2004, "Ideology and Policy: Notes on the Shaping of the Internet", First Monday, at http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_8/sarikakis, accessed 4 August, 2005

Saunders B. and Foblets M-C., (eds.), 2002, Changing Genders in Intercultural Perspectives, Studia Anthropologica, Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press

Scott, J., 1989, "Gender a Useful Category of Historical Analysis", in *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics*, Elizabeth Weed (ed.), London and New York: Routledge: 81-100.

Smith, L. T. 1999, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London: Zed Books/Dunedin: Otago University Press

Spivak, G., 1997, "In a Word: An Interview" with Ellen Rooney, in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, London and New York: Routledge: 356-379

Surman M., and Reilly, K., 2003, "Appropriating the Internet for Social Change", Social Science Research Council, November 2003, at http://www.ssrc.org/programs/itic/publications/knowledge_report/final_entire_surman_reilly.pdf

Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM), *Financing ICTD: A Review of Trends and an Analysis of Gaps and Promising Practices* (December 2004), at http://www/itu.int/wsis/preparatory2/index.html, accessed 4 August 2005

True, J., 2001, "Feminism" in *Theories of International Relations*, Second Edition, S. Burchill, R. Devetak, A. Linklater, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit, J. True, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave: 231-276

UNESCO, 2003, *UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework (GMIF) for 2002-2007*, The Section For Women and Gender Equality of the Bureau of Strategic Planning, Paris: UNESCO, at http://www.unesco.org/women, September, 2003

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, "Making Gender Statistics; A Definition of Gender" at: http://www.unece.org/stats/gender/web/genstats/whatisgs/gender.htm, accessed 15 November 2003

Van Aelst P. and Walgrave, S., 2003, "New Media, New Movements? The Role of the Internet in Shaping the 'Anti-Globalization' Movement" in *Information, Communication and Society*, Volume 5, Number 4, 2002: 465-493

Weber, C, 2001, *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction*, New York and London: Routledge

Weber, s., 2004, The Success of Open Source, Boston MA: Harvard University Press

Whitworth, S., 2000, "Theory and Exclusion: Gender, Masculinity, and International Political Economy" in *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, Second Edition, R. Stubbs and G. Underhill, Canada : Oxford University Press: 91-13

Working Group on Internet Governance, *Report of the Working Group on Internet Governance* (June 2005), at http://www.wgig.org, accessed 4 August 2005.

WSIS Civil Society Caucus, *Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs: Civil Society Declaration to the World Summit on the Information Society*, Civil Society Declaration to the World Summit on the Information Society, 8 December, 2003: 2, available at http://www.un-ngls.org/wsis--about.htm, accessed 2 August, 2005.

WSIS Gender Caucus, *Gender and Agriculture/Rural Development in the Information Society (GenARDIS): A Small Grants Fund to Address Gender Issues in Information and Communication Technologies for Agricultural and Rural Development in Africa. the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP Countries)*, 2003, at http://www.genderwsis.org/196.0.html, accessed 10 Feburary 2005

WSIS Gender Caucus, *Statement and Suggestions by the WSIS Gender Caucus, DAWN, AMARC Africa, IT for Change concerning the Political Chapeau / Tunis Commitment*, 20 January, 2005, Section 1 with corrections.

WSIS Gender Caucus, *The World Summit on the Information Society: Creating Your Own National Gender Programme - A Practical Guide*, Version 1, 7 August, 2003, at http://www.genderwsis.org/sourcebook, accessed 26 November, 2004

Wyatt S., Thomas G. and Terranova T., 2002, "They came, they surfed, they went back to the beach: Conceptualising use and non-use of the Internet" in *Virtual Society? Technology, Cyberpole, Reality*, S. Woolgar (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press : 23-40

Young, I., 1990, "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference" in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, L. Nicholson (ed.), New York and London: Routledge: 300-323

Further Reading

Butler, J., *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, New York and London: Routledge

Enloe, C., 1989, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, London: Pandora

Franklin, M. I., 2001, "InsideOut: Postcolonial Subjectivities and Everyday Life Online" in the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Volume 3, Number 3, November 2001: 387-422

Franklin, M.I., 2005, "Keeping Public Cyberspace Open: Lessons from the Pacific Islands" in *Pacific Journalism Review*, Volume 11, Number 1, April 2005: 60-89

Hamelink, C. J, 1995, *World Communication: Disempowerment and Self-Empowerment*, London: Zed Books

Hamelink, C. J, 1997, "New Information and Communication Technologies, Social Development and Cultural Change", *Discussion Paper D.P.86*, Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Haraway, D.J., 1997, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_ Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience*, New York and London: Routledge

Harcourt, W. (ed), 1999, *Women@Internet*: *Creating New Cultures in Cyberspace*, London: Zed Books

Henwood F., Hughes, G., Kennedy, H., Miller, N. and Wyatt, S., 2001, "Cyborg Lives in Context: Writing Women's Technobiographies" in *Cyborg Lives: Women's Technobiographies*, F. Henwood, H. Kennedy and N. Miller (eds.), York: Raw Nerve Books

Kolko B. E, Nakamura L., and Rodman G. B. (eds.), 2000, *Race in Cyberspace*, New York / London: Routledge

Mansell R. and Silverstone R. (eds.), 1996, *Communication by Design: The Politics of Information and Communication Technologies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Mansell R. and Wehn U., 1998, *Knowledge Societies: Information Technology for Sustainable Development*, United Nations Development Programme/Oxford: Oxford University Press

Mitter S, and Rowbotham S, (eds.), 1995, Women Encounter Technology, London / New York: Routledge

Quintas, P, 1996, "Software by Design', in *Communication by Design: The Politics of Information and Communication Technologies*, R. Mansell and R. Silverstone (eds), Oxford: Oxford University Press : 75-102

Rubin, G., 2003, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy of Sex'" in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, L. Nicholson (ed.), London and New York: Routledge: 27-63

Rowbotham, S., 1995, "Feminist Approaches to Technology: Women's Values or a Gender Lens" in *Women Encounter Technology*, S. Mitter and S. Rowbotham (eds.), London / New York: Routledge: 44-69

Sharf, B. F., 1999, "Beyond Netiquette: The Ethics of Doing Naturalistic Discourse Research on the Internet" in *Doing Internet Research: Critical Issues and Methods for Examining the Net*, London, S. Jones (ed), Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications: 243-256

Silverstone R. and Haddon L., 1996, "Design and the Domestication of Information and Communication Technologies: Technical Change and Everyday Life"" in *Communication by Design: The Politics of Information and Communication Technologies*, R. Mansell and R. Silverstone (eds.), Oxford: Oxford University Press: 44-74

Spiller N., 2002, *Cyber_Reader: Critical Writings for the Digital Era*, London / New York: Phaidon Press Ltd.

Thomas G. and Wyatt, S., 1999, "Shaping Cyberspace - interpreting and transforming the Internet", *Research Policy* 28, Amsterdam: Elsevier: 681-698

UNESCO, 1980, *Many Voices, One World*, The MacBride Report 1980, Paris: Unesco, 1980, at http://www2.hawaii.edu/~rvincent/mcbcon1.htm, accessed 25 August 2005

Zoonen, L. van, *Feminist Media Studies*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications