

IGF 2022 - Open Forum

Title: CGI.br's Gender and Diversity Agenda for ICT

Room: Banquet Hall A

Thematic Track: Connecting all people and safeguarding human rights

Date: 01/12/2022

Report:

Organized by the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br), the Open Forum, focused on providing an overview of the activities developed by CGI.br within the scope of the Gender and Diversity Agenda, a project that was implemented in 2021 to investigate challenges to promote gender and ethnic-racial diversity in the IT sector and Internet Governance ecosystem in Brazil.

The session was presented by Beatriz Barbosa, Laura Tresca and Gabriela Nardy, and divided into two parts: 1) the motivations, objectives and methodology of the initiative; 2) the results of the national workshops.

In the first part, Beatriz presented the guidelines for developing the workshops, how they were held and conducted, ensuring regional and ethnic diversity of women, and leading the group to the joint construction of the main challenges in Brazil to promote diversity in ICTs. The second one focused on presenting the ten challenges found in the workshops, how the debate took place and how it relates to the Brazilian scenario. The ten challenges are:

1. Produce data that includes information on gender, race and ethnicity regarding presence participation in the technology sector
2. Develop public and private policies that promote diversity and equity in Internet access, use and development
3. Address gender and racial violence and different forms of oppression on social media/Internet platforms
4. Ensure access to information and the exercise of freedom of expression for women on the Internet
5. Promote policies with gender, equity and diversity perspective
6. Build capacities for girls and women regarding ICTs considering the intersectional perspective of class, age, race, sexuality and persons with disabilities
7. Support and foster civil society initiatives that promote diversity within the Internet ecosystem
8. Create a work environment that is favorable for women in Internet and technology companies
9. Ensure gender and racial diversity in Internet governance spaces
10. Economic empowerment of women in the online environment

After the presentation, some comments highlighted how this initiative can inspire actions into other countries. The comments from the audience could be divided in three areas: policies that could contribute to reduce inequalities, education, and interseccctionall issues.

A participant from Uganda mentioned that, in his country, the digital world is creating even more gaps between women and men. The debate revolved around policies that could tackle these challenges not only in the digital environment, but, somehow, to make women equally benefit from the digital technologies. Another one ranted about university courses and asked how we could make STEM more appealing to women. A comment from an online participant from Brazil said that the first step to advance on themes like facial recognition and transgender is producing material on the topic. Finally, another woman from Brazil talked about the importance of making women feel like they belong in tech and how to provide a warm environment where they can feel safe to learn and work.

Key Session Takeaways:

1 - The CGI.br Working Group on Gender, Race and Diversity is preparing a document on Brazil's main challenges for diversity and inclusion in ICT to be published next year.

Through a series of workshops, ten challenges were collected and presented in the Open Forum, so the public could give their opinions and comment on them.

2 - The challenges showed that, despite the problems related to themes like surveillance, violence on the Internet, or the dangers of the artificial intelligence to women and people of color, Brazilian most significant challenges are still related to the low use and participation of women on the Internet.

Call to actions:

1 – Build an agenda of action in order to be able to prevent the deepening of the gaps between women and men. It is important to make a list of our homework and address these issues.

2 – Continue with the publication about diversity and Internet Governance in Brazil, as we found out throughout the process the existence of a great demand to publish materials on these themes.