

Empowerment through Information

The conference will be held as a contribution towards the preparations for the UN-World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS, Geneva Dec. 2003) in Austria. It will discuss the significance and the impact of modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) on the socio-economic development in southern countries, particularly with regards to the empowerment of women, how to achieve the potentialities of these technologies and what kind of limits there are to observe.

With the UN-World Summit on the Information Society, the UN aims to focus on a topic with increased significance for the social and the socio-political development: information has grown to be the most important factor of production and is deemed to be the most important resource for development. Governments and telecommunication companies will negotiate on the occasion of the WSIS issues such as the politics of technologies, technical infrastructure and e-commerce. But the civil society does not want to solely discuss issues of technical and market-orientated significance, for them it is also very important to address – within the context of ICTs – their social relevance and their impact on development politics. In the center of the debate stands the digital divide between the haves and have-nots of information, with all its socio-political consequences. ICTs do not only widen the gap between North and South, but also between women and men: ICTs and their impact are in no way gender neutral.

In particular, the conference will address two main themes:

- The international women's movement is in need to improve and increase networking, and ICTs are the more and more disseminated instruments for lobbying, advocacy, awareness building and information providing. Does Cyberfeminism replace the international women's movement?
- Women in rural regions are especially marginalized, they barely have access to the modern instruments of communication and information. What possibilities do exist to promote them as resource and user of information?

The Austrian development cooperation is postulated to promote the needs and requirements of southern women to information and communication, to assure them sustainable development. The conference aims to explore the main requirements and demands of women towards the information society and to suggest ways and means for their implementation.

The Speakers

Susanna George

She is executive director of *ISIS International – Manila* and a leading member of the *NGO Gender Strategies Working Group* for the WSIS. Before she has worked as coordinator of the communications services of a regional programme of the UNDP and has been active in the women's movement for years.

susanna@isiswomen.org
www.isiswomen.org

Judith Gracey

She worked as communication co-ordinator, information & communication project manager and web editor for international enterprises in Belgium. Since April 2002 she is project officer of the *Dimitra Project, Rural Women and Development for rural women in Africa and the Near East*, initiated by FAO.

dimitra@dimitra.org
www.fao.org/sd/dimitra

Djurdja Knezevic

For more than twenty-five years she is active in the women's movement in former Yugoslavia and Croatia. She was a co-founder of the *Women's Infoteka – Women's Information and Documentation Center* in Zagreb and develops and coordinates the international project REWIND NET since 2000.

dknezevic@inet.hr
www.zinfo.hr

Dorothy Okello

Her current research interest as a technician lies in broadband satellite networking. She is Africa representative for the *APC Women's Networking Support Programme (APC-WNSP) Coordination Team*, coordinates the *Women of Uganda Network (WOUNET)* and is responsible for strategic planning and development of WOUNET programmes.

dokello@wougnet.org
www.wougnet.org

Brigitte Voykowitsch

She is a translator and works as a journalist and foreign news editor working for Austrian radio and various magazines like *Der Standard* since 1981. She is focusing on development, human rights and women's issues and concentrating on South and South East Asia.

voyko@hotmail.com

Women Crossing the Digital Divide



Empowerment through Information

The significance of the modern information and communication technologies for the socio-economic development in countries of the South

Conference/Workshops
27 – 28 October 2003
Diplomatic Academy of Vienna
Favoritenstraße 15a
A-1040 Vienna

Programme

Monday, 27 October

Information and Communication Technologies in the International Women's Movement

10 – 12.30 a.m.:

- Opening and Introduction
- *Birgit Weiss* (Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration)
Gender Sensitive Information Society in Austria
- **Isis Journey**
Video on Isis International, an international women's information network
- *Susanna George* (ISIS International-Manila, Philippines)
ICT: A Tool for the International Women's Movement
The World Summit on Information Society and gender
The use of ICTs by women's organisations for lobbying, advocacy, networking and information dissemination for women's rights
- *Djurdja Knezevic* (zenska infoteka, REWIND NET, Croatia)
The Significance of ICTs for the Socio-Political Change in Countries of Transition
REWIND NET and political empowerment of women

12.30 a.m. – 2 p.m.: Break

2 – 5 p.m.:

- Plenary Session
- Workshop A with Susanna George
- Workshop B with Djurdja Knezevic

Moderator: *Brigitte Voykowitsch*

Tuesday, 28 October

Information and Communication Technologies for Rural Development

10 – 12.30 a.m.:

- Opening and Introduction
 - *Dorothy Okello* (WOUGNET, Uganda)
Information for Rural Women
The World Summit on Information Society and rural development
Empowerment of rural women through information in Africa
 - *Judith Gracey* (FAO/Dimitra)
FAO, Gender and Development
Activities of FAO and other UN-organisations in the field of ICTs and gendered development programmes/projects
Access of rural women to information
 - Plenary Session
- 12.30 a.m. – 2 p.m.: Break
- 2 – 5 p.m.:
- **Hope for Africa**
Video (VUM, Kamerun, German)
 - Workshop C with Dorothy Okello
 - Workshop D with Judith Gracey
 - Plenary Session
 - Reports from the workshops

Moderator: *Brigitte Voykowitsch*

Complementing programme:
Monday, 27 October, 6.30 p.m.
How to provide access for all to information and knowledge
Panel discussion on WSIS organised by UNIS Vienna

Registration:

Swanhild Montoya, Tel.: +43-1/7133594-75, FAX: +43-1/7133594-73, montoya@vidc.org

Conference fee: € 10,-

Public Transport:

U1 Taubstummengasse

Organised by:

Frauensolidarität, Berggasse 7/1, 1090 Vienna, Austria, www.frauensolidaritaet.org
Vienna Institute for Development and Cooperation VIDC, Möllwaldplatz 5/3, 1040 Vienna, Austria, www.vidc.org



In Cooperation with:

Österreichische Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (www.bmaa.gv.at/eza)
Österreichische UNESCO-Kommission (www.unesco.at)
Renner-Institut (www.renner-institut.at)
WIDE-Österreich (www.oneworld.at/wide)
UN Information Service Vienna (www.unis.unvienna.org)

Österreichische
Entwicklungszusammenarbeit



Österreichische UNESCO-Kommission
Austrian Commission for UNESCO
Commission Autrichienne pour l'UNESCO

RI RennerInstitut

UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION SERVICE
UNIS Vienna



world summit
on the information society
Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005

Impressum: Frauensolidarität, Berggasse 7, 1090 Wien