



Permanent Mission of Austria  
to the United Nations in New York

**Side Event  
in the margins of the  
58<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

March 11, 2014

10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Dag Hammarskjold Library Auditorium  
United Nations

**Access to Information and Communications Technologies  
and a free and independent media: effective means to contribute to  
gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.**

*Achieving priorities of women and girls in the Post 2015 development agenda*

Information and communication technology (ICT) is transforming the global economy and creating new networks that stretch over continents and cultures.

However, there remain noticeable disparities as to the extent in which access and skills are available. The benefits of knowledge and technology are not available to the large majority of the world's population, especially women, who find themselves in most cases, not only excluded from equal social and economic opportunities in general, but also in terms of the benefits offered by ICTs.

Without women's participation in decision-making in all spheres of life and at all levels of society, poverty will not be eradicated, nor will fully democratic societies be created. Limited access to ICTs for women also has the effect of reducing countries' competitiveness in the global market.

The topic of this panel is timely and prescient for several reasons. This year the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will review the Agreed Conclusions of the 55<sup>th</sup> session of the CSW in 2011 -- "access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work".

The importance of women's and girls' access to ICTs has been recognized in the Agreed Conclusions adopted by CSW in 2011, where Governments, the UN System and international and regional organizations were called upon to "utilize the full potential of science and technology, including ICT in order, inter alia, to eradicate poverty, promote social development and achieve women's economic empowerment".

The side-event aims to highlight the urgency to empower women and girls through access to ICTs as well as promoting an environment for a free and independent media that can provide information without fear of attack or reprisals:

In December 2013, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity which followed the ground breaking Human Rights Council Resolution 21/12 adopted in September 2012 and presented by Austria.

The General Assembly resolution on Safety of Journalists and the issue of impunity invites UNESCO to be the overall coordinator of the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, operating with focal points from Member States as well as relevant UN agencies, organizations, funds and programmes to exchange relevant information.

The results of the first global survey on violence against female journalists will be presented in this Side Event. The survey is supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and was created by the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) in conjunction with the International News Safety Institute (INSI). It is aimed at looking into the global situation of female journalists and the nature of the dangers they face in connection with their work.

In parallel to this Side Event, UNESCO and Austria will present the finding of this survey in Geneva also in a side event on "Harassment and Violence against Women Journalists" in the margins of the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council.

The CSW is an opportunity for UNESCO and our partners to promote and advocate for access to ICTs for women and girls all as well as the necessity to protect journalists. The expected outcome is to sensitize this unique audience and achieve broader awareness and consensus among UN policy makers, officials, civil society as well as international media coverage of this issue.

Participants are: H.E. Martin Sajdik, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations; Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General; Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, United Nations Under Secretary-General for Public Information; Elisa Lees Munoz, Executive Director of International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF); Anne Bennett, Executive Director, Hirondelle USA; Pamela Falk, CBS news reporter and President of the UN Correspondents Association.

Moderator: Saniye Gülser Corat, Director; Division for Gender Equality, UNESCO