GSMA, ITC, ITU, and the Government of the Philippines CSW side-event

Commission on the Status of Women 67 (CSW-67) 2023

Empowering Women Micro-Entrepreneurs in the Digital Economy	
Date	Friday, 10 March 2023
Time of session	8:15am-9:30am EST
Location	In-person: UNHQ New York City, Conference Room B, Conference Building.
Speakers	Opening remarks • Mr. Mats Granryd, Director General, **GSMA** Keynote • Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General, **ITU** Fireside chat • Women entrepreneur (TBC) Panel • Ms. Atty Jocelle Batapa-Sigue, Undersecretary for ICT Industry Development, Philippines Department of Information and Communications Technology **(DICT)** • Jamie Zimmerman, Deputy Director for Digital Connectivity for Women and Girls at the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** • Ms. Zainab Hussain Siddiqui, Vice President and Head of Sustainability, **Telenor Group** • Ms. Tsedeniya Namrud, Head of Digital Capacity Building and Public Engagement Unit- Digital Transformation Program, **Ministry of Innovation and Technology Ethiopia** Closing remarks • Ms. Judith Fessehaie, Head of the Women and Trade Programme, The International Trade Centre **(ITC)**
Moderator and MC	• Ms. Pippa McDougall, Senior Advocacy Manager, Connected Women, **GSMA**
Session outline and synopsis	Micro-enterprises contribute significantly to economies and societies, and are the dominant form of employment in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). It is estimated that in emerging markets, there are over 400 million micro-enterprises,[1] including up to 345 million informal micro-enterprises.[2] [3] In low-income countries, 88% of working age women earn income through self-employment, yet they are more likely than men to be disadvantaged when it comes to accessing resources to start, run and grow a business.[4]

[1] Dalberg (2019) Bridging the credit gap for Micro and Small Enterprises through digitally enabled financing models.

[2] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020). Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and their role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[3] According to World Bank, micro-enterprises are defined as businesses with 1-9 employees. See: World Bank Group (2018). Access to finance for female-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

[4] ILO (2022). World Employment and Social Outlook Trends.

	Mobile phones are a crucial tool for supporting female micro-entrepreneurs, providing them with access to markets, business services, resources and information that they would not be able to easily access otherwise. However, in LMICs, women are 16% less likely than men to use mobile internet,18% less likely than men to own a smartphone[5] and 28% less likely than men to own a mobile money account[6]. Urgent action is needed to bridge the mobile gender gap to ensure that women micro-entrepreneurs are able to realize the significant benefits that mobile can provide and that they are not being left behind in an increasingly connected world. This session brings together the public and private sector, the international development community and civil society to discuss the challenges and opportunities for empowering women micro-entrepreneurs through mobile. It aims to inform and inspire action for improving the digital and financial inclusion of women micro-entrepreneurs, delivering benefits not only for the women themselves but also for economies, communities and households.

[5] GSMA. (2022). The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022.

[6] GSMA. (2022). Findings from Findex: Mobile money is driving financial inclusion for women, but more work needs to be done