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Recommendations from APEC Forum on Digital Economy for Women 2006 “Innovation and Leadership” Ha Long Bay September 16—17, 2006

Preamble

The APEC Forum on Digital Economy for Women 2006: “Innovation and Leadership” took place in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam on September 16-17, 2006. The Forum was hosted by the Asian Pacific Women’s Information Network Center (APWINC) at Sookmyung Women’s University and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI). The meeting was supported by the Korean Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy (MOCIE) and International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International) and other women organizations.

The Forum was initiated by APWINC in recognition of the importance for women to fully participate and contribute to the knowledge-based economy and be part of the information Society as a whole.

The Forum agenda was to identify the present and future of women and ICT in a global information society; share best practice on ICT policies and projects for the development and advancement of women; and encourage the formation of a gender and ICT development alliance across the Asia Pacific region.

We note that in 1996 in Manila, Philippines the Leaders recognized the value and importance of women’s contribution and integration in APEC processes with the formation of the Women Leaders Network (WLN). Subsequently the Philippines, Canada and New Zealand worked on the framework for the integration of women that resulted in the holding of the first APEC women’s ministerial meeting in Manila in 1998. The three areas of focus at that time were SMEs, science and technology, and human resource development. A second Women’s Ministerial Meeting was held in Mexico in 2002 which focused on women in the digital economy. The second Ministerial Meeting and that year’s WLN meeting led to the APEC related project on women in the digital economy of which this forum is part.

We acknowledge and affirm the Leaders’ support for the inclusion of gender as a cross-cutting theme across all APEC fora and policy making, and to ensure this, established the Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN). However, we wish to draw attention to the fact that over the past decade the world has changed into a digitally based economy and there is now a need to specifically address the incorporation of women in the APEC region into the world-wide digital economy to maximize both their benefits and their contributions.

Recommendations:

To that end we recommend to APEC leaders and the relevant APEC fora:

1. To set up an APEC advisory committee on women’s participation in the digital economy, and to maximize women’s economic contributions, harnessing their potential in the global market.
2. To explicitly include women in each economy’s ICT master plan and develop a database and research on women’s contributions to the digital economy across the APEC region which can be made available in a single portal, so that economies can collaborate and share their research, knowledge, technology and experience.
3. To promote capacity building of women’s participation in the digital economy, relevant ministries dealing with ICT in partnership with the private sector and relevant NGOs should work collaboratively to support the growth of e-business through offering training/consultancy that is customized with respect to women at various levels of IT knowledge and financial capability as well as various phases of e-business development. This training and related activities should be directed at fully integrating women-owned enterprises in global value chains.
4. Make transparent and increase SMEs awareness of laws, rules and regulations relating to e-business, e-payment, cross-border trading and intellectual property rights (IPR) in order to facilitate compliance.