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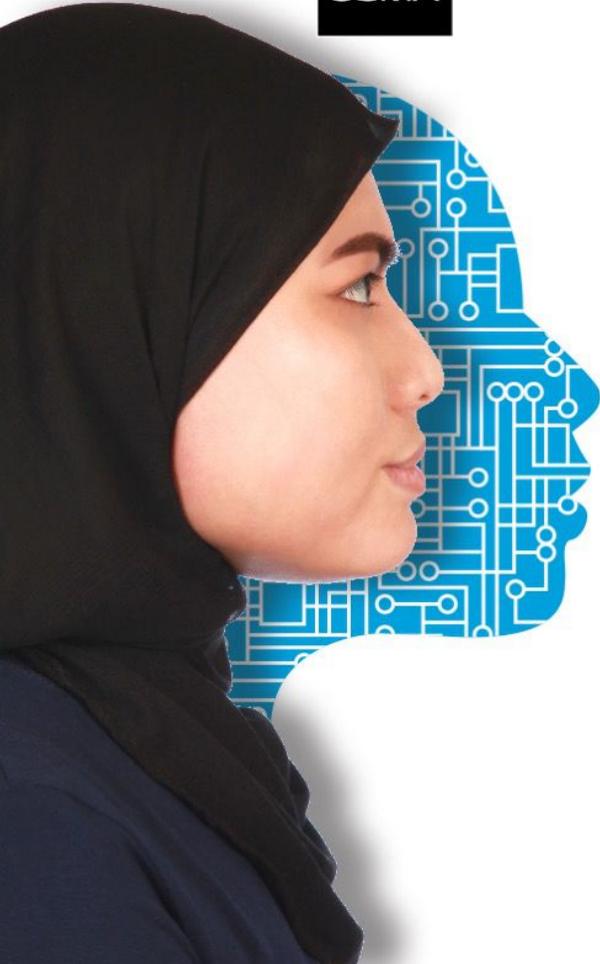
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Pakistan celebrates

Girls in ICT

10TH ANNIVERSARY

22 September 2021

11:30 - 15:00 (GMT+5) Islamabad Time

A Virtual Event

Plenary and Launching of Girls in ICT Day Pakistan

#GirlsInICT

itu.int/girlsinict

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PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR PLENARY AND LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF GIRLS IN ICT DAY PAKISTAN

22 September 2021

11:30-15:00 Hrs (GMT+5) Islamabad time

13:30-17:00 Hrs (GMT +7) Bangkok time

[International Girls in ICT Day](#) is celebrated worldwide every year on the fourth Thursday of April and this year, it was celebrated globally on 22 April 2021. Girls in ICT Day provides an opportunity for girls and young women to see and be exposed to the benefit of ICT in enabling their career and aspiration. To date, over 377,000 girls and young women have taken part in more than 11,400 celebrations of International Girls in ICT Day in 171 countries worldwide.

As a result of the COVID-19 situation, the reliance on ICT to support the 'new norm' have become evident and widespread. The ICT sector is a growing sector for education in both developed and developing countries. This means that qualified female students in technical fields around the world have significant opportunities available to them. These are excellent opportunities in particular for highly skilled girls and young women who are still a minority when it comes to STEM education and careers. Developing initiatives and activities to promote and encourage girls to take up study in STEM and ICT is hence a requirement.

Unequal access to the internet is a multifaceted issue, it is infrastructural that many communities in Pakistan do not have physical access to the internet. In terms of social factors such as gender and being differently abled can limit one's access to technologies.¹

Pakistan has been a key driver of the narrowing gender gap in South Asia in recent years, recording impressive growth in women's adoption and use of mobile technology. Pakistan has some of the widest mobile gender gaps and mobile phone ownership in is still unequal as only 50 per cent of women own a mobile phone compared with 81 per cent of men. This is equivalent to 22 million fewer women than men owning a mobile phone.² Pakistan had one of the strongest rates of growth in mobile internet awareness, especially among women.

¹ Ifex, 2020, <https://ifex.org/pakistan-the-digital-gap-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-is-exasperating-inequalities/>

² GSMA, Addressing the Mobile Gender Gap in Pakistan 2020, <https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Addressing-the-Mobile-Gender-Gap-in-Pakistan.pdf>

Nowadays, the digital transformation provides new avenues for the economic empowerment of women and can contribute to greater gender equality. The digital platforms opportunities for all and can help bridge the divide by giving girls and young women in the possibility to earn additional income, increase their employment opportunities and access knowledge and general information.

In 2018, The Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication Pakistan has launched the programme, “ICT’s for Girls” as a direct outcome of the policy objective of promoting inclusiveness and empowerment of girls/ young women to enable them contribute to and benefit from the value chain of ICTs.³ It was also a program which specifically targets female empowerment by reducing barriers to the access of technology and improving their access to digital infrastructure, particularly through improving digital facilities in schools, providing customized ICT education for specific skill development and the job market. As part of this programme, over 100,000 students and 202 teachers in Islamabad benefitted and participated in a training in collaboration with Microsoft. Teachers have also been trained and Women Empowerment Centres across the country are being developed with IT labs targeted at training women. Such initiatives need to be scaled up particularly in areas that indicate low levels of digital literacy.⁴ ICTs are an emerging sector in Pakistan. The internet penetration has jumped from less than 2% to over 30% with broadband subscribers around 50 million in 2018⁵. The gender gap in mobile internet awareness also narrowed from 16 per cent to 11 percent. In parallel, women’s mobile internet use nearly doubled from 10 per cent to 19 per cent in 2020.⁶ The development of this programme presents numerous opportunities for girls and women to tap into the potential of opportunities leveraging the power of ICTs.

This year, the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication Pakistan and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) are organising the Girls in ICT Day Pakistan in September in conjunction with a series of the training programme in partnership with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Pakistan, the United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office in Pakistan (UNRCO in Pakistan), the UN Women, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA), EQUALS Global Partnerships, W4, CodeGirls, CISCO, Telenor, and Academia in Pakistan. The celebration and the digital skills training programme will encourage girls and young woman to pursue studying STEM, enhance their level of digital skill, and raise awareness on meaningful and safe use of ICT.

As part of the continuous steps to implement the ICTs for Girls programme in Pakistan, the Girls in ICT Day Pakistan aims at:

1. To enhance the digital literacy of girls and young woman, particularly in the area of cyber security, ICT application, and use of digital technology in Pakistan.
2. To encourage girls and young women to utilize ICT meaningfully and strengthen the Girls in ICT Day online community in Pakistan, as well as other countries in Asia and the Pacific.
3. To explore partnerships with various government and UN agencies to continue the support to digital literacy and digital skills development after the event.

³ ITU News, 2018, <https://www.equalsintech.org/post/2018/03/08/how-pakistan-is-promoting-women-and-girls-in-ict>

⁴ ITU News, 2018, <https://www.itu.int/en/myitu/News/2020/05/26/13/15/Girls-in-ICT-Day-Transforming-the-lives-of-women-and-girls-through-ICTs>

⁵ ITU News, 2018, <https://www.equalsintech.org/post/2018/03/08/how-pakistan-is-promoting-women-and-girls-in-ict>

⁶ GSMA, Addressing the Mobile Gender Gap in Pakistan 2020, <https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Addressing-the-Mobile-Gender-Gap-in-Pakistan.pdf>

Provisional Agenda**Date: 22 September 2021**

11.30-12:30 (GMT+5) Islamabad time	Brief Introduction to the Girls in ICT Day Pakistan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Ajmal Anwar Awan, Member, International Coordination, Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication Pakistan Introduction by Moderator <p>Session Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Welcoming Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General, ITU Special address <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representative from Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Pakistan (TBC)• Mr. Raza Shah, Head of Science Section, UNESCO Islamabad Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Syed Amin Ul Haque, Minister, Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication Pakistan
12:30-12:35 (GMT+5) Islamabad time	Virtual Group Photo Session
12:35-13:15 (GMT+5) Islamabad time	Session 1. Women in ICT Leadership <p>The session is to inspire young female students, girls, and young students in Pakistan to understand the opportunities that are offered to them in the ICT and STEM sector by providing opportunities to see and talk with actual examples as the role models for them when they think about their own career life. This session will be a trigger to encourage girls and young women in Pakistan to learn more about ICT skills and services.</p> Moderated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Minza Haque, Medical student, Liaquat National Medical College, Karachi Panellist: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Nadia Tariq Ali, Programme Officer, Ending Violence Against Women, Governance and Human Rights, UN Women Pakistan• Ms. Jeanette Whyte, Head of Public Policy, APAC, GSMA• Ms. Belinda Chanda, Programme Analyst, ILO in Pakistan• Ms. Areej Khan, Vice President, Digital, Telenor Pakistan <p>Q&A session will be opened for the participants (10 minutes)</p>
13:15-14:45 (GMT+5) Islamabad time	Session 2. Moderated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. June Lee, Education Officer, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia

	<p>i. Introduction to Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific Youth Members from Pakistan will introduce the Generation Connect programme and action plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Zahra Nayab, Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific Youth Member • Mr. Ali Muhammad Umair, Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific Youth Member <p>ii. Talking tech – Girls and Women in ICT Interactive interview/conversation between a girl or young woman in tech and ICT female leader and experts to share experiences and best practice for girls’ and young women’s future career.</p> <p>Panellist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Ellen Van Kalmthout, Chief Education, UNICEF Pakistan • Ms. Corien Vermaak, Cybersecurity Partner Specialist, CISCO • Dr. Sadaf Hina, Assistant Professor (Tenure Track), University of Engineering & Technology (UET), Lahore, Pakistan <p>Q&A session will be opened for the participants (10 minutes)</p>
<p>14:45-15:00 (GMT+5) Islamabad time</p>	<p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific • Representative from the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication Pakistan (TBC)

Additional Information

For more information, visit the event page at:

<http://www.itu.int/go/3CJD>

Registration

You can register for this webinar by completing the online form using the following link:

https://itu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wkqfw9vQRK-blpVFeeQcQ

How to Participate

A Zoom meeting invite, and details will be sent via email to all registered participants closer to the event date. For more information on how to use Zoom, please visit <https://us04web.zoom.us/>

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Event Coordinator

Contact:

Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication Pakistan focal point: Mr. Syed Waqas, Senior Manager ITU & UN, (sm.itu@moitt.gov.pk)

ITU Regional Office for Asia-Pacific focal point: Ms. Rury Demsey, *Project Officer* (rury.demsey@itu.int)

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We look forward to you joining us for this online meeting.