



IN THE K-NOW

**MRS. DOREEN
BOGDAN-
MARTIN**

**SECRETARY-
GENERAL, ITU**

*1st woman to lead the
ITU in its 160-year
history and a strong
advocate for women
and girls in ICT.*



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INVITATION TO JOIN THE CTU NETWORK OF WOMEN (CTU-NoW)

The Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) recognises the pivotal role of women in the development of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. However, despite significant progress, women remain underrepresented in this field.

To address the gender gap, the CTU's Executive Council, at its 47th meeting in March 2023, approved the proposal "Advancing Gender Mainstreaming: Integrating Parity, Equality and Equity into the National ICT Agendas of CTU Member States." This proposal was subsequently recommended to the General Conference of Ministers (GC) at its 28th meeting in Barbados in October 2023 and again at its 30th meeting (GC30) held in St Kitts and Nevis in October 2024. The General Conference resolved to adopt the Gender Mainstreaming Proposal. It was agreed to recommend the appointment of National Focal Points (NFPs) from Member States and Points of Contact (PoCs) from non-state members, in accordance with Proposal 1 of the Resolution.

A key mechanism for mainstreaming gender within the national ICT agendas of CTU Member States is the establishment of the CTU Network of Women (CTU-NoW). This network will comprise National Focal Points (NFPs) from government ministries across the CTU's twenty (20) Member States, along with Points of Contact (PoCs) from the CTU's private sector, regulatory bodies, academia, and civil society members.

To implement this mandate, the CTU Secretariat invites Member States to nominate a National Focal Point and other members to designate PoCs to actively participate in the CTU-NoW. Please refer to the Terms of Reference (TOR) on our website:

CTU Network of Women Terms of Reference – Caribbean Telecommunications Union

CTU-NoW aims to promote gender inclusion and empowerment within the ICT sector by fostering opportunities for collaboration, mentorship and leadership development for women and young girls across the region. As a member-driven initiative, each NFP or PoC will serve as the link between their country/organisation/sector and

the CTU-NoW, contributing to activities that support the network's objectives, including increasing women's participation in major international fora such as those hosted by the ITU, OAS/CITEL and the UN.

Our immediate priority is to develop the CTU-NoW 2025 action plan in preparation for the ITU's World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 (WTDC-25) and the ITU's Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 (PP-26).

MEMBER STATES

ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINT (NFP):

- Represent the Member State within the CTU-NoW;
- Facilitate communication between CTU-NoW and national stakeholders;
- Promote gender inclusion initiatives at the national level;
- Support the development of programmes that encourage female participation and leadership in ICT

NON-STATE MEMBERS

ROLE OF POINT-OF-CONTACT (PoC)

- Support the National Focal Point (NFP) as required at international fora
- Represent your organisation or sector by participating in multi-stakeholder activities within the CTU-NoW or other ICT fora
- Contribute to proposals and policies to the CTU within the CTU-NoW and other ICT fora
- Support the development of programmes that encourage female participation and leadership in ICT.

SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS:

Members are kindly requested to submit their nominations by completing the membership form via the link: [Registration Link](#). The Secretariat looks forward to the active participation of all Members in building a more inclusive and resilient ICT sector in the Caribbean through the CTU's Network of Women.

FEATURE AUTHOR

MS. DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN
SECRETARY-GENERAL, ITU



I was thrilled to join the CTU ICT Week 2024 in St. Kitts and Nevis, where we are “Bridging Technologies for a Sustainable and Inclusive Future”.

This year’s theme resonated deeply with ITU’s strategic objectives of universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation.

And nowhere is it more acutely felt than in the Caribbean, where Small Island Developing States have been champions of digital transformation to support climate action, resilience, and Early Warnings for All.

With 2030 on the horizon and just 17 per cent of the UN Sustainable Development Goals targets on track, the urgency to come together to address shared challenges has never been greater.

We saw it at the UN Summit of the Future, where digital has taken centre stage in our collective vision of what this future must be.

I am grateful to CTU and the Ministry of Information, Communication, Technology and Posts of St. Kitts and Nevis for bringing us together at such a pivotal moment for technology, and for the world.

When United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres visited ITU in June, he urged all of us to “work together to build bridges”. CTU has been a shining example of this kind of collaboration in action. From infrastructure mapping to cybersecurity capacity building to the implementation of the Smart Seas Initiative, you have helped pool resources, extend knowledge and facilitate digital cooperation across the region.

CTU ICT Week 2024 is yet another bridge, connecting us to one another and to a brighter digital future where sustainability and inclusion have become lived realities for every community throughout the Caribbean, across the Americas and beyond.

You can count on my support – and that of the entire ITU family – to continue building those bridges together.

Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Secretary-General, ITU



SG Doreen Bogdan-Martin (centre) at the 22nd Ministerial Strategic ICT Seminar with some of the attendees at CTU ICT Week in St Kitts and Nevis.

Time for action!

The Caribbean Telecommunications Union was honoured to host the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) at its 22nd Ministerial Strategic ICT Seminar in St Kitts and Nevis where she issued a call to action and pledged the organisation's steadfast support for the region on the march to carving an inclusive and successful digital footprint.

In a powerful keynote address, Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin challenged SIDS to adopt the Global Digital Compact (GDC) which she championed as a **"birthright of the future"** and the framework which should guide governments and stakeholders in harnessing technology to ensure a digital future for all.

The Secretary-General's clear message delivered to the more than 100 delegates and high-level officials, highlighted **collaboration and digital transformation** as essential tenets to securing a sustainable and inclusive future, particularly for Small Island Developing States (**SIDS**).

Focusing on how to make the GDC a lived reality for island nations, Bogdan-Martin further proposed Guide, Develop, and Collaborate — or G-D-C — as key pillars to the technology growth agenda for island nations from St Kitts and Nevis to Palau.

Guiding Technology for all

The first pillar, "Guide," the Secretary-General said, should focus on ensuring safe and meaningful use of technology by building digital skills, particularly among vulnerable groups, including children. She highlighted the growing complexity of keeping pace with the rapid evolution of technology, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI) and reminded the meeting that to address the AI skills gap, the ITU recently launched the AI Skills Coalition at the recent UN Summit of the Future held in New York in September. The coalition aims to equip IT professionals, especially in developing countries, with the skills to harness AI for sustainable development. In addition, ITU's collaboration with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) on a Child Online Protection strategy was cited as a key area for ensuring that digital spaces remain safe for younger generations.

DEVELOPING RESILIENT DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The second pillar, “Develop,” is centered around building a resilient digital infrastructure. Among the key initiatives she underscored was Giga, the ITU-UNICEF partnership aimed at connecting every school around the world to the Internet. With Giga already active in 34 countries, including nine OECS members and other Caribbean nations, its success demonstrates the vital importance of digital connectivity for education and development.

In the Caribbean, where vulnerability to natural disasters is a significant concern, the ITU head has prioritised the Early Warnings for All initiative. Although more than half of the world’s countries now have multi-hazard, early-warning systems, the Caribbean still faces substantial gaps, particularly in SIDS. Less than 50 per cent of these nations are covered by such systems, making the need for enhanced resilience and national coordination even more urgent. The ITU’s efforts in developing National Emergency Telecommunications Plans and leveraging AI for disaster connectivity mapping further support this goal.

COLLABORATING FOR A DIGITAL AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The Secretary-General also made a strong case for the third pillar, “Collaborate,” which she used to reinforce the need for cooperation across regions and sectors to achieve universal, meaningful connectivity. She highlighted the ITU’s leadership in promoting climate ambition through Green Digital Action, launched at COP28. This initiative calls on the digital sector to commit to the 1.5-degree target of the Paris Agreement, which is critical to the survival of the world’s Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

She also pointed to ITU’s Partner2Connect Digital Coalition as a model for fostering investment in digital transformation. With pledges now amounting to over US\$52 billion and 15 per cent of those pledges targeting SIDS, this coalition exemplifies the power of collaborative partnerships in promoting digital equity and sustainability, she explained.

A SHARED DIGITAL FUTURE FOR THE CARIBBEAN

Citing the recent visit of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres to ITU and his call to “**build bridges**,” the ITU Secretary-General embraced this message as the driving force behind the seminar’s theme, “**bridging technologies for a sustainable and inclusive future**.”

The ITU Secretary-General’s vision for the Caribbean’s future is unequivocally digital. From AI-driven economic growth to school connectivity and digital healthcare access, the potential to transform lives across the region through the use of technology is vast. With 2030 fast approaching, she urged Caribbean leaders to embrace the GDC’s principles – Guide, Develop, Collaborate – to ensure that technology serves not just economic development, but also social and environmental sustainability.

“**We can and must Guide, Develop, and Collaborate on this shared digital future together**,” the Secretary-General declared.

AS THE COUNTDOWN TO 2030 BEGINS, THE MESSAGE FROM ITU IS CLEAR: THE FUTURE IS DIGITAL, AND IT IS TIME TO ACT NOW.

CARIBBEAN'S CHALLENGE – RESILIENCE, INCLUSION AND INNOVATION



Mr. Rodney Taylor, Secretary-General of the CTU is flanked by (at left) Mrs. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of the ITU and Ms. Bernadette Lewis, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO). Both SG Bogdan-Martin and SG Lewis have shattered the industry's glass ceiling as the first women to lead their organisations in 160 and 123 years respectively.

The urgent need for resilience to be woven into the Caribbean's infrastructure which is heavily exposed to the threats of natural disasters was a focal point of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Secretary-General on her recent visit to this region.

Recalling the devastation caused by Hurricane Beryl, Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin stressed the need for more robust early warning systems. "How many more lives must be lost before early warning systems protect everyone?" she asked, referencing the global "Early Warnings for All" initiative, which seeks to safeguard vulnerable communities.

In her keynote address at the high-profile opening of the CTU ICT Week 2024 in St Kitts and Nevis, Bogdan-Martin highlighted the critical role of digital technologies in shaping the future of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the Caribbean region. The event was attended by Her Excellency Marcella A. Liburd, Governor General, Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis and senior Government officials.

The ITU Secretary-General also took the opportunity of the opening ceremony to outline a roadmap which not only threw the spotlight on resilience, but also embraced inclusion and innovation as important considerations for the volatile territories in the Caribbean.

BUILDING RESILIENCE AMIDST CLIMATE CHALLENGES

SG Bogdan-Martin called on digital companies to lead the way through ITU's Green Digital Action initiative, identifying the need for sustainable digital infrastructure, including stronger and more

resilient submarine cable systems. She also spoke of ITU's collaboration with the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC) to establish an advisory body focused on Submarine Cable Resilience, vital for ensuring that island nations maintain robust connectivity in the face of disruptions.

Her message of resilience was underscored by ITU's commitment to support the Caribbean's efforts at the Global Sustainable Island Summit, to be held from May 27th – 29th 2025 in St. Kitts and Nevis. This summit will serve as a platform to ensure that every voice in the region is included in shaping the digital future.

DRIVING DIGITAL INCLUSION TO CLOSE THE CONNECTIVITY GAP

Bogdan-Martin's address also drew attention to the question of inclusion and particularly on bridging the digital divide.

"How can we talk about an inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe, and secure digital future when 2.6 billion people are still offline?" she asked, pointing to the persistent connectivity gaps, including those between urban and rural areas in the Caribbean.

She lauded the efforts of the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) in harmonising ICT regulations, which are critical to the success of the CARICOM Single ICT Space. ITU's Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, which has mobilised over US\$50 billion for universal connectivity, was singled out as a key initiative addressing these challenges. Bogdan-Martin also referenced the Giga initiative, a collaboration between ITU, UNICEF and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), aimed at connecting every school to the Internet.

She recounted the story of Joan, a teacher from Dominica, who shared at the UN Summit of the Future how school connectivity had transformed her students' lives. This, SG Bogdan-Martin noted, is a prime example of the tangible benefits that come from ITU's work in driving digital inclusion across the Caribbean.

FOSTERING INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

When she addressed the issue of fostering innovation to accelerate sustainable development, the ITU head described innovation as "the glue that holds everything together," pushing the region towards a future defined by progress and technological advancement. Artificial intelligence (AI), she noted, could either help island nations leapfrog into the future or exacerbate existing inequalities.

To ensure AI becomes a force for good, Bogdan-Martin stressed the importance of universal, meaningful connectivity and the development of AI standards that build trust and safety. She announced the upcoming International AI Standards Summit in New Delhi as a critical opportunity for the Caribbean to participate in shaping global standards. In addition, she introduced the AI Skills Coalition, an initiative designed to equip people across the globe, including those in the Caribbean, with the knowledge and expertise to navigate the AI era.

SG Bogdan-Martin shared with the enthusiastic audience her optimism for the region's future, noting the inspiration from her recent interactions with young leaders from the CTU's

Caribbean ICT Youth Network. These young leaders, she said, exemplify the potential for unity in diversity, using digital technologies to address the unique challenges faced by the Caribbean. "We're ready... to direct them for good!" she declared, reaffirming ITU's

commitment to working with the CTU and other regional partners to realise a future of resilience, inclusion and innovation.

The ITU SG noted Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Mottley's persistent fight in this regard and urged the attendees to move forward with "a pep in our step" as they work to harmonise technology, planet, and people for the collective good.

Mrs Doreen Bogdan-Martin took office as Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on 1 January 2023.

Mrs Bogdan-Martin has held leadership positions in the field of international telecommunications policy for over three decades, with a track-record of brokering innovative partnerships to expand digital inclusion and connectivity for everyone around the world.

Digital Transformation



NEW FELLOWS

Three of the Caribbean's bright, young professionals are among the newest ICANN Fellows. They are all representing CTU member states.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) invited persons from around the world to apply to become an ICANN Fellow. ICANN79 Community Forum was held on March 2-7, 2024 in San Juan, Puerto Rico where the three were chosen. They are:

- Ms. Krislin Goulbourne-Harry, St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Ms. Shanelle McPherson, Jamaica
- Ms. Caron David, Trinidad and Tobago



“
Three (3) ICANN Caribbean Fellows:
From the left Ms. Krislin Goulbourne-Harry, Ms. Shanelle McPherson and Ms. Caron David
”

NoW in ITU-D Event at Global Symposium for Regulators 2024

Since 2000, the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) has brought together heads of national telecommunications and ICT regulatory authorities from around the world to share their views and experiences on the most pressing regulatory issues. This annual event also fosters dialogue between the broader membership of the Development Sector of the ITU (ITU-D) on major issues facing the sector. GSR concludes with the adoption of a set of regulatory best practice guidelines.

The overarching theme of GSR-24 was “Regulation for impact: a gender and leadership perspective”, with particular emphasis on strategies to:

1. mitigate risks and create trustworthy AI systems;
2. enable an inclusive, safe and sustainable space economy;
3. facilitate comprehensive global data collection on technology-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and tackle e-waste;
4. ensure safe and inclusive digital financial services and
5. connect everyone, everything, everywhere, all at once.



Participants at the Interactive Network of Women Event at GSR-24

NoW in ITU-D encourages gender balance in all ITU-D activities with particular emphasis on those leading up to the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), ITU-D's statutory meeting, held every four years. The next WTDC will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 17-28, 2025.

The NoW in ITU-D event held on July 3rd, 2024 recognised the critical need for gender balance throughout the telecom/ICT lifecycle and effecting equity, inclusivity, and equal opportunities. Many of the prevailing issues in the current environment were explored during this session including: the prevailing leadership gender gap in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields; the disproportionate number of women holding junior and support roles rather than managerial positions; the likelihood of women becoming ICT entrepreneurs or technology policymakers and the fact that women tend to leave STEM jobs at higher rates than men.

The examination of these important themes was facilitated in four moderated group discussions which considered: Why is gender balance in digital ecosystem leadership important and how can we break stereotypes; How can a gender perspective inform regulation for impact; What policy and regulatory approaches have been, and can be, employed to increase the participation of women in tech operations and leadership; and an examination of participation levels in ITU-D meetings over the last four years and recommendations to increase women's participation.

The general discussion highlighted the need to focus on women's inclusivity in policy-making and to establish rules allowing them to contribute an element of 'care'. Participants emphasised the importance of having more women at the decision-making level, considering that they contribute to society too and better understand its difficulties and challenges. It was posited that having women in positions to make decisions will positively impact the outcomes, thoughts, and ideas of at least half of the world's population and this would help to reduce the barriers that are contributing to a decrease in women's participation. These barriers include denial of school attendance and early marriages, and promote community engagement with

leaders to recognise the value that comes along with women's involvement. Furthermore, the workgroups highlighted the importance of intentionally seeking out women and women-focused groups in rule-making processes and when regulating ethics, standards, safety and risks, the importance of including more prevalent issues concerning women including gender-based discrimination.

There was also discussion around the increase of women in technology and that involving more women in leadership encourages participation and creates trust in the output. The groups noted that it is essential to include literacy and skills building focusing on women, into new regulatory frameworks based on understanding the needs of women, listening to those needs, and collecting gender-disaggregated data.

The targeted areas of policy/regulation should ensure financial equality, design for female users, training for them to use technology impactfully and that there are safeguards against gender-based violence (GBV). At the recruitment level, women must be encouraged to participate. It's essential to provide a conducive environment for their involvement and to motivate them through community engagement.

Table I: Details of Group Discussions at the NoW in ITU-D event

Group Numbers	Questions	Moderators
1	Why is gender balance in digital ecosystem leadership important and how can we break stereotypes?	Ms. Ekaterine Imedadze Commissioner of the Georgian National Communications Commission <i>Georgia</i>
2	How can a gender perspective inform regulation for impact?	Dr. Kim Mallalieu Vice Chair of the NoW in ITU-D Advisory Board & Deputy Chair of the Trinidad and Tobago Telecommunications Authority (TATT) <i>Trinidad and Tobago</i>
3	What policy and regulatory approaches have been, and can be, employed to increase the participation of women in tech operations and leadership?	Prof. Sandra Maximiano Chairwoman, Autoridade Nacional de Comunicações, ANACOM <i>Portugal</i>
4	Can you share 3 ITU-D meetings that you have participated in over the last four years and recommendations to increase women's participation?	Ms. Regina Fleur A. Bessou Chair of ITU-D Study Group 1 & Director of International Cooperation, Telecommunication/ ICT Regulatory Authority and Post Office of Côte d'Ivoire, ARTCI <i>Ivory Coast</i>



ITU Secretary General & ITU-D Director sharing remarks at GSR-24 NoW in ITU-D event



Trinidad and Tobago facilitators for Question 2 at GSR-24 NoW in ITU-D event

Observations and Recommendations

The discussions were fully interactive and resulted in several positions on key issues being shared. Participants offered the following specific observations and recommendations regarding gender-sensitive regulatory-related strategies around GSR-24 regulation for impact themes:

1. Mitigate risks and create trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems:

To effectively tackle issues and drive research and innovation, it is critical to implement relevant policies, laws, and strategies. Managing the risks of gender bias in AI, training in data and Language Learning Models (LLMs) is vital. Participants suggested improving AI output by implementing a process to filter information before inputting it into AI systems. This would ensure that the data used to model and create AI systems more accurately reflects cultural beliefs, religious beliefs, acceptable scientific research results and integrity without patriarchal bias. It is also important to analyse gender-specific security systems driven by data and the impact of regulations on AI.

Developing human-centric cases for emerging technologies encompassing a gender perspective was also emphasised. Moreover, transparency, accountability, bias reduction and creating global standards and industry guidelines were also deemed to be essential, in addition to conducting risk assessments, rigorous testing, continuous monitoring, and engaging stakeholders to address potential risks. Providing comprehensive training for developers and raising public awareness about the benefits and risks of AI are also crucial. Finally, ensuring at least 30 per cent participation of women in areas with low female engagement is necessary along with training more young people, especially women, to participate and mitigate the risks associated with AI systems. Providing online safe spaces for young women to learn and utilise available platforms was also determined to be an important component.

2. Creating an inclusive, safe & sustainable space:

The participants identified the importance of creating policies to provide equal opportunities for women and marginalised groups in space-related careers. They highlighted the need to encourage and mandate the representation of women in leadership roles to bring diverse perspectives to space and AI exploration. They also stressed the importance of increasing women's participation in the digital space economy and satellite industry.

3. Supporting comprehensive global data collection on tech-related GHG emissions; and to tackle e-waste:

The participants proposed implementing a comprehensive data collection and analysis tool to monitor e-waste and the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programme. This tool would be uniquely tailored to focus on engaging and empowering women to take charge of e-waste management and environmental sustainability.

It is essential to initiate sensitisation and awareness programmes that begin at home, with a particular focus on mothers. This approach aims to empower mothers to play a pivotal role in educating and guiding younger family members about the potential risks and hazards of mishandling or neglecting proper e-waste management practices. We can cultivate a more responsible and environmentally-conscious generation by instilling this knowledge from a young age.

4. Ensuring safe and inclusive digital financial services:

Participants urged regulators to require companies to have gender-specific policies to protect women's use of financial services. Participants also recommended that product teams include women when designing inclusive solutions since a gender perspective could help ensure that these services are available to empower women and girls.

Building trust and confidence in the adoption of ICTs is crucial, as is increasing women's adoption of ICTs for business to address existing gender inclusion gaps. Accepting innovations that inform women's participation in e-commerce is also a priority. Furthermore, there is a need to ensure more digital financial literacy programmes for women and MSMEs.

5. Connecting everyone, everything, everywhere, all at once:

“Create open feedback mechanisms that demonstrate engagement is valued and how the feedback will be taken into account (or if not, why not).” – Mei Lin Fung, People-Centered Internet.

Encouraging women's active involvement in regulatory spaces is crucial to ensuring an inclusive approach to decision-making. Their unique perspective, empathy, and understanding can play a pivotal role in supporting and advocating for other women. Identifying specific gender groups and their needs can lead to targeted initiatives to address the challenges they face.

Participants also stated that it is essential to include feedback mechanisms to ensure that the initiatives are serving their intended purpose and to make necessary adjustments. Engaging women directly to understand their experiences and challenges is key, as it can inform more effective and inclusive decision-making processes. For example, exploring the implementation of solar-based systems in areas with limited access to grid power can ensure that mothers have reliable access to ICT devices. This addresses their unique needs and empowers them in various ways. By collecting and leveraging data from these initiatives, well-informed policies and regulations can be developed that prioritise gender-centred issues and ensure a fair and equitable distribution of resources to address these needs.



Group Discussions at the Interactive Network of Women Event

CITEL/OAS: PCC.I (TELECOMMUNICATIONS/ICT) MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

At the 40th meeting of PCC.I, April 4-8, 2022 (virtual), the decision PCC.I/DEC. 329 (XL-22) was taken, among other things:

1. To create the mentoring programme for PCC.I to ensure the continuity of CITEL procedures in accordance with their statutes and regulations, as well as the preparation of the newcomer's delegates in the scope and work of CITEL and at the regional and international levels for World Assemblies; and

2. To start this programme gradually through the cycle of virtual seminars planned by CITEL Secretariat, while this programme is fully implemented and launched at the 42 Meeting of PCC.I, with the following:

I. Development:

- Ensuring target groups of both mentors and protégés in the mentoring programme are selected;
- Responsibilities, with clear accountability, of both mentors and protégés are assigned; and
- Assessment criteria for programme success are defined.

II. Implementation:

- Mentoring is defined; and
- Expectations and objectives of the programme are defined.

III. Evaluation:

- The usefulness of the programme in the organisation's planning (i.e. are protégés ready to take on leadership roles) is assessed.









3. To appoint Dr. Kim Mallalieu of the administration of Trinidad and Tobago as coordinator and Ms. Mavis Johnson as co-coordinator, for this programme with the support of CITEL Secretariat.

4. To instruct the coordinator of the Mentoring Programme to remit a report to each PCC.I as well as immediately after each World Assembly or Conference, on the results of this programme.

The first cycle of the Mentoring Programme started on January 15, 2024 with six English-speaking, and 29 other protégés; as well as 11 mentors from several countries in the Americas. Programme resources are available on an online learning platform which features 11 core modules which include: Organisational Structure of CITEL, CITEL in relation to ITU, COM/CITEL & PCC.I Meetings, Being a Delegate, Key Leadership Skills: Negotiation and Consensus-building, and Other Regional Bodies. The CTU Secretary General delivered several rich presentations and a self check on the CTU within the final module.

The first cycle of CITEL's PCC.I Mentoring programme concluded in September with several face-to-face activities at the 45th Meeting of PCC.I in Brazil from August 19-23rd, 2024.

MEET THE CARIBBEAN PROTEGES AND MENTORS OF THE 1ST COHORT OF PCC.1 MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Protégés		Mentors	
Francola John		Cynthia Reddock-Downes	
Victor Ryan Biran Jr		Vanessa Copetti Cravo	
Sonja Douglas			
Annie Baldeo			
Milene Franco Pereira		Santiago Reyes-Borda	
Dean Molina			

CYCLE 2

Focuses on WTDC-25



Call for C2
mentors &
protégés

Cycle 2
starts

RDF/RPM/
46 PCC.I

WTDC-25

47 PCC.I

PCC.I
Central
Closed to C2

Nov 21
2024
42 COM/CITEL
Bogota,
Colombia

Feb 3
2025

Mar 31 – Apr 4,
2025
Asuncion,
Paraguay

Nov 17 28
2025
Baku,
Azerbaijan

Aug 18 – 22
2025
Santiago,
Chile

Nov 28
2025

Cycle 1 participants invited to:

1. Continue to Cycle 2
2. Collaborate on prep for WTDC-25

WOMEN IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY FUND (WiDEF)



The \$60M Women in the Digital Economy Fund (WiDEF) seeks to enhance women's livelihoods, economic security, and resilience by funding and accelerating investments in effective solutions. The fund aims to ensure equitable, affordable access to digital technology for all women and girls, driving economic growth and improved development outcomes, ultimately helping to lift millions out of poverty. WiDEF aspires to transform digital ecosystems to enable safe, affordable and meaningful online participation for women and marginalised populations (including youth and young women).

This funding opportunity is aimed to scale proven solutions that:

- Drive digital inclusion for women through meaningful access to and use of digital technology;
- Significantly close the gender digital divide in their context; and
- Are economically sustainable and scalable.

WiDEF's Three areas of focus are accelerating solutions to provide : financial and technical support to scale evidence-based solutions; fostering partnerships through collaborating with public, private, and civil society actors to share resources and knowledge and influencing change by generating and sharing evidence of effective strategies, engaging policymakers, and amplifying the voices of women and girls to advocate for change.

WiDEF focuses on programme that advance gains across five areas:

- 1. Improved access to affordable devices and online experiences by getting** internet access and internet-enabled devices into the hands of women and make sure that devices and services, are affordable, reliable, secure, and accessible.
- 2. Increased availability of relevant products and tools through** supporting the design, development and deployment of relevant digital products and tools that meet women's needs and facilitate women's use of mobile devices, particularly smartphones, internet, and other technologies, especially for income-generation purposes.
- 3. Elevating digital literacy and skills with the** strengthening of women's digital skills and literacy, including media literacy, so they can fully and safely access digital services and participate in and lead digital spaces, including the digital economy.
- 4. Enhancing safety and security by addressing** technology-facilitated gender-based violence and online harassment and strengthen safeguards for digital user protection, including on consumer financial protection, data protection, cyber security, fraud and risk mitigation.
- 5. Generating data and insights by** expanding the collection and responsible use of digital inclusion data, prioritizing sex-, age-, and disability-associated data; conducting and sharing focused research, work to address social norms and systems that influence gender disparities in technology adoption and using robust evaluation to measure and benchmark change.

SHOWCASING THE CTU'S CARIBBEAN ICT YOUTH NETWORK

Caribbean ICT Youth Network (CIYN) – Member Highlight



Ms. Shanelle McPherson – Co-Founder – CodeED Virtual Learning

Being part of the CIYN is profoundly important to me because it serves as a catalyst for change and innovation. There are countless challenges that remain unresolved and it is through the fresh perspectives and ideas of young minds that these can be addressed. The Youth Network provides a safe space for us to collaborate, brainstorm and envision the impactful changes we want to see. My mission, driven by my vision, is simple, yet powerful: “to ensure that the voices of youth are heard and that our ideas are transformed into tangible actions.”

The CTU's Caribbean ICT Youth Network (CIYN), established in 2023, aims to empower and engage Caribbean youth and equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills and opportunities to become active leaders in the digital era.

Aligned with the Caribbean Telecommunications Union, the Caribbean ICT Youth Network finds its place as a driving force for Caribbean youth in the realm of ICT serving as a platform for young voices to articulate their visions for the future of technological and ICT issues. The Caribbean ICT Youth Network will be a collaborative platform established by the CTU to encourage youth involvement and participation in national, regional and international technological and ICT issues. The mission of the Caribbean ICT Youth Network is to equip Caribbean youth with the necessary skills, knowledge, and opportunities to become innovative leaders in the digital age.

The network sets out to achieve four main goals around:

1. Empowerment and Capacity Building: To empower and engage Caribbean youth and equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and opportunities to become active leaders in the digital era.
2. Advocacy and Representation: To be a strong and influential advocate for youth interests.
3. Networking and Collaboration: To foster networking and collaborative partnerships among youth organizations, governments, private sector entities, and international institutions, promoting synergistic efforts towards ICT development and innovation.
4. Access to Opportunities: To ensure that all network members have equal access to ICT resources and opportunities to reap the benefits of ICTs.

Ms. Cheryleann Pemberton, the Permanent Secretary in the St Kitts and Nevis Ministry of Information, Communications, Technology, and Posts created history when she was appointed to serve on the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation's (CTO) Executive Committee.

Pemberton was appointed to the Executive Committee during the 2024 Digital Week in London.

She is the first representative from St Kitts and Nevis to serve on the Executive Committee.

"We are thrilled to welcome Mrs Cheryleann Pemberton to the Executive Council," said Bernadette Lewis, Secretary-General of the CTO. "Her expertise and leadership will be invaluable as we continue to advance our mission of promoting ICT development and digital transformation across our member states."

Pemberton said she is excited to serve on the Executive Committee, which consists of seven members and the CTO Secretary General.

"I am honoured to be appointed to the CTO Executive Committee.

This is a significant opportunity to contribute to the collective efforts of the Commonwealth in leveraging technology for socio-economic development. I look forward to working with my fellow committee members to drive impactful change and innovation," Pemberton said.



WOMEN IN CaribNOG



Women in CaribNOG: Ms. Ophelia Blanchard, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dr. Kim Mallalieu and Dr. Claire Craig, Trinidad and Tobago and Ms. Cathrona Samuels, Antigua and Barbuda.

The Caribbean Network Operators Group (CaribNOG) is a vibrant community of network operators dedicated to sharing technical information and experiences related to managing IP networks in the Caribbean region.

Among CaribNOG's main objectives are community-building aimed at bringing together the region's network professionals to form a functional technical community and knowledge sharing which is intended to leverage the collective knowledge and experiences of the community as a rich resource.

The community also has a role in expertise development by providing a robust platform necessary for building knowledge-based economies in the Caribbean; fostering research in networking and internet technologies to cultivate mastery in these fields and problem-solving, using the technical community to address issues within the critical regional internet infrastructure.

Since its inception in August 2010 in St. Maarten, CaribNOG has organised biannual regional meetings. These gatherings welcome a diverse range of participants, including network operators, IT professionals, students, regulators, entrepreneurs and government representatives, all with a common interest in advancing Internet technologies.



WOMEN IN CaribNOG INITIATIVE

Introduced at the CaribNOG 26 regional meeting in St. Kitts and Nevis in September 2023, the Women in CaribNOG Initiative aims to discover, nurture, support and champion Caribbean women and girls active in network engineering, IP network management, internet infrastructure research and leadership roles.

The primary objectives include talent identification, providing support systems for professional growth and driving increased participation by females in its activities.

CaribNOG also inspires the next generation of female leaders in technology, promoting a culture of diversity and excellence which aligns with its commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion within the Caribbean technology sector.

If you're ready to help shape the future of the Caribbean's digital landscape and contribute to a more inclusive and dynamic technological ecosystem contact Dr. Claire Craig at claire.craig@caribnog.org.

REPORT ON OAS/CITEL 45TH PCC.I MEETING

Prepared by: Dr. Kim Mallalieu

Photo credits: CITEL

The 45th Meeting of Permanent Consultative Committee I, PCC.I, of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission, CITEL, ("45 PCC.I") was held 19 – 23 August 2024 in João Pessoa, Brazil. Three CTU administrations were present: Bahamas, Belize and Trinidad and Tobago.

PCC.I meetings are held over a week, twice per year. The most recent past meetings were held in May 2024 in Panama, October 2023 in Paraguay, April 2023 in the Dominican Republic, and November 2022 in the USA.





PCC.I meetings generally comprise:

- An opening plenary session which covers administrative matters such as approval of the agenda; reports from chairs and vice-chairs, review of action items etc., and may include special presentation/s.
- Presentations of reports and updates from PCC.I Working Groups: currently, WGCONF (Working Group for the preparation and follow-up of the WTSA, WCIT and WTDC); WGPR (Working Group on Policies and Regulation); and WGDTS (Working Group on Deployment of Technologies and Services)
- Consideration of various matters within the context of PCC.I Working Groups and their rapporteurships including pressing issues of concern to the sector, and emerging trends and challenges in telecommunications and ICT across the Americas; exploration of new initiatives, projects, and collaborations to address these issues; training programmes, workshops, and technical assistance initiatives aimed at building capacity within member states; and updates and coordination efforts with other international bodies
- Consideration of proposals and recommendations: review and discussion of proposals submitted by member states or stakeholders, and the update of support for recommendations and resolutions to be adopted by CITEL.
- Future Work and Planning: setting priorities and planning the agenda for future PCC.I meetings and activities, establishing timelines and responsibilities for ongoing projects.
- A closing plenary session: final statements, conclusions, approval of the final report, scheduling and venue of the next meeting, and expressions of thanks from various administrations to the host administration.

The 45th PCC.I hosted a number of events to encourage gender balance in CITEL decision-making and representation, considering that the average participation of women in PCC.I meetings since 2021 to present stands at 39 per cent. Over the same period, women's participation at COM/CITEL meetings is 46 per cent, and at PCC.II meetings, it is at per cent.

The most recent 45 PCC.I programme of support and encouragement for women kicked off with a special networking event on the first evening with personal journeys shared by a number of guest speakers.

A special session on gender equality and meaningful youth empowerment was held in plenary on 45 PCC.I Day 2. Panelists responded to three questions:

1. Did you design a roadmap to reach your current position? Did you have a vision for your career path? What unique factors contributed to your success?

2. How have your organizations incorporated a gender perspective in their work, programs, and projects? What steps are needed to advance gender equality and close the gender gap in an inclusive, participatory, and safe manner?

3. What strategies or actions can we recommend to foster greater female participation in leadership roles? How can governments, policymakers, businesses, and society contribute to closing the gender gap and promoting equal female representation across all sectors?



Day 3 kicked off with an interactive roundtable hosted by the Network of Women in ITU-T (NoW in ITU-T), themed “Enhancing meaningful participation of women delegates”. Charlyne Restivo, from the ITU Standardization Bureau delivered an overview of WTSA-24 preparations and leadership training, covering the purpose, structure and processes of WTSA; draft time management plan, high-level workflow, call to action to all delegations and key deadlines.

Kandice Davis of the Utilities Regulation & Competition Authority (URCA) in the Bahamas, was one of the other six panellists at the NoW in ITU-T session. The chair of the NoW in ITU-T and of ITU-T Study Group 12, Tania Villa Trapala of Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones (IFT) Mexico, shared the objectives of NoW in ITU-T, related objectives for WTSA-24 (at least 35 per cent female participation, more gender-balanced delegations, more women as heads of delegations, and more women nominated for key ITU-T leadership positions in the next four-year study period), schedule of NoW activities prior to and at WTSA-24, and contact info. Global and regional statistics on women's participation in ITU-T events, including WTSA-24 registration by gender as of 8 August 2024, were shown.

BE IN THE K-NOW

VISION OF CTU NETWORK OF WOMEN

To lead the charge in creating a strong community of Caribbean Women in ICT to drive profound and impactful transformation across the region. We envision women being equally represented and actively shaping the industry's future.

MISSION OF THE CTU NETWORK OF WOMEN

Our mission is to cultivate a supportive and collaborative community that empowers and advances Caribbean Women in ICT and STEM. Through networking, mentoring and professional development opportunities, we strive to promote gender equality, equity and parity by amplifying women's voices, and driving positive change in the industry.

OBJECTIVES OF IN THE K-Now

The Caribbean has a staggering record of potent women leaders in telecommunications, yet there is no channel for the sharing of experiences, mentoring and encouraging women across the region to take on leadership roles in the longitudinal processes associated with ITU's statutory meetings and study groups. ITU's networks of women are available to fill this gap. At the same time, In the K-Now provides information on key supporting resources with a Caribbean focus.

Women are a key CTU Stakeholder group. We engage them through In the k-Now to share updates, inform on activities, data, announcements and successes of Women in ICT in our Member States and the wider Caribbean Community.



Get to know your Point of Contact for the CTU NoW: Ms Francola John, Stakeholder Engagement Specialist and CTU Focal Point for ITU's Network of Women. Tel. No.: 1-868-628-0281 Ext. 231; Email: NoW@ctu.int or francola.john@ctu.int

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