3. Access to tech for rural, elder, disabilities

*Ensure **universal access to essential and gender inclusive public and private digital infrastructure including electricity and frontier data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) innovations** to bridge existing digital divides. Guarantee access to **digital technologies in rural areas** and **ensure equal opportunity particularly for older women and women with disabilities** to be empowered with ICTs, through not only physical access and skills development, but also design that respects the needs of all people following consultation with those directly affected.*

Relevant UN Precedent Language

Agreed Conclusions of the 66th Commission on the Status of Women
62 (kk). "Bridge the digital divide, including the gender digital divide, to enable equal access to risk-informed information, knowledge and communications, by taking concrete measures to promote equal access for all women and girls to digital training… through equal access to information and communications technologies, mobile devices and the Internet, so as to promote their empowerment and digital literacy… in particular for poor women, women in rural and remote areas and women farmers and producers"

Agreed Conclusions of the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women
20. "It recognizes that new technologies… require skills ranging from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology, and in this regard, emphasizes the importance of all rural women and girls having the opportunity to acquire such skills."

A/74/821 Road map for digital cooperation: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation Report of the Secretary-General 2020
29. "...the underlying definition of what it means to be digitally literate and have digital access has to be based on the fundamental premise that everyone should have an equal opportunity to become empowered through ICT. It means accessibility through not only physical access and skills development, but also design that respects the needs of all people, including those with disabilities…"

ITU Global Connectivity Report 2022
XVII "Recalibrating universal service funds (USFs) can help deployment of infrastructure in unserved areas to reduce gaps among vulnerable groups such as women and girls, persons with disabilities and older persons."
55. "To attain universal connectivity, special attention must be paid to the needs of disadvantaged groups including persons with disabilities, older persons, women and girls in some countries, those with low-incomes, and people living in remote areas. People with one or more disadvantages are at greater risk of digital exclusion."

E/CN.6/2023/3 Report of the Secretary-General, 2022
4. "States are also urged to close the gender digital divide, enable women's equal participation in the design of technology and implement laws, policies and regulations to combat new risks,

including online harassment and other forms of violence, threats to privacy rights and bias in the fields of artificial intelligence and robotics.".

34. "Many Governments are currently developing legislation to put in place mandatory artificial intelligence audits, which need to integrate a gender perspective. National and international discussions are also needed on data governance, to ensure that data are not the property of a few but are safeguarded as "global commons" resources and collective public good that help to achieve equitable and sustainable development.

Data and Statistics

ITU Global Connectivity Report 2022 pp-55
"[An estimated] 1 billion people have a disability or about 15% of the global population. Global statistics about the connectivity status of persons with disabilities do not exist. GSMA has collected data for some middle-income countries that indicates significant gaps separating persons with disabilities and the rest of the population in smartphone ownership and Internet use."

WSIS Forum 2022 Draft Outcome Document pp 138-139
"Technology Usage among Elderly Citizens during COVID-19 and aftermath has drastically Increased. Post Pandemic Era -Segment of senior citizens - approximately 138 million in 2021 - important to financial institutions for digital services. Number is expected to increase to 192 million by 2031 – Need for Specialized Approach- As of now, no such approach. Wrong Notion - Seniors are not tech savvy and therefore they will not access digital offerings."

"Digital Exclusion: An Obstacle that Hinders Rural Women's Work" 2020 Research study by the University of Oxford/IICA/IDB/IFAD
Women living in rural areas are the least "connected" group to ICTs in a research of 23 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

"Big Data for Sustainable Development" 2020 UN Global Issues article
While acknowledging that "big data can shine light on disparities that were previously hidden" it can also reinforce existing inequalities and perpetuate existing injustices. Rural Women are at risk of suffering the worst impacts of unregulated datafication, without reaping any of the benefit due to lack of digital infrastructure and poor digital literacy. It is therefore vital that a comprehensive plan for training in digital literacy accompanies any attempt at data gathering, and that public-private partnerships are informed by the fundamental human rights of privacy and data sovereignty.

UN General Assembly Resolution 77/183, Preamble
"More than 80% of the extreme poor live in rural areas and work in agriculture and that the extreme poverty rate in rural areas is three times higher than in urban areas… devoting resources to the development of rural areas and sustainable agriculture and supporting smallholder farmers, especially women farmers, is key to ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions, by, inter alia, improving the welfare of farmers"

Good practices
- Institute for Employment Studies "Review of support for disabled students in higher education in England" section 4.4 has a section on 'Using technology to aid inclusion'
- International Finance Corporation "Women and Online Learning in Emerging Markets" Making Innovation and Technology Work for Women- UN Women, 2017
- UNCTAD Technology and Innovation Report 2021, Catching Technological Waves Innovation with Equity. Trends in frontier technologies, the relationship between human and digital development and the need for innovation with equity form the theme of this publication. See pages 76 & 107.