



April 4, 2016

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WITSA Challenges Industry to Capitalize on Women Talent in the Marketplace

Fairfax, VA, April 4, 2016: The World Information Technology and Services has published a new statement of policy, “Women in Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs): *Capitalizing on an untapped global resource*”, challenging businesses to take advantage of female talent in ICT to boost profits and competitiveness. WITSA recognizes the importance of and applauds the United Nations September 2015 ratification of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, all of which have varying degrees of focus on progress for women and one which specifically calls for gender parity and full empowerment for all women and girls. As discussions take place on how to connect the next billions, WITSA supports a strategic focus and calls for actions to narrow the gender gap.

WITSA Chairman Santiago Gutierrez noted that, if women reached parity with men in the workforce, it could add up to \$28 trillion, or 26 percent, to annual global GDP in 2025 compared with a business-as-usual scenario. “If every country matches the progress towards gender parity of its fastest-improving neighbour, global GDP growth would amount to as much as \$12 trillion annually by 2025, equalling the economies of Japan, Germany and the U.K. combined”, stated Mr. Gutierrez.

techUK CEO Julian David, who led WITSA’s drafting group, summarized WITSA call to action: “Businesses of all sizes must aim to get more women into corporate boardrooms by including female talent in their short lists”, said Mr. David. “We also challenge businesses to follow best practices in attracting, retaining and sustaining female talent and encouraging businesses to offer employment opportunities to women who have left the tech industry after a career break”, continued David. “Moreover, businesses should support programs designed to inspire and equip girls to pursue further education and careers in technology and establish programmes that can advance new skills in digital areas for women of all ages, returning to the workforce in mid or later life”. The paper also encourages industry to engage policy makers at all levels to understand that enabling women in the digital workforce must be a top priority.

WITSA Secretary General Dr. Jim Poisant stated that WITSA members, spanning 82 countries comprising a majority of the global ICT market, are fully committed to this cause by adopting a set of principles. “WITSA members are committed to promote equal access for women in jobs and education, support equal pay, gender equality and support and encourage educational programs that provide Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) learning opportunities for girls from a young age and for women of all ages”, continued Dr. Poisant.

The paper can be found on the WITSA web site at the following link: http://witsa.org/witsa-wp-site/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/WITSA_Women_in_ICT_2016.pdf

About WITSA:

The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) is the leading recognized international voice of the global ICT industry, whose members from over 80 countries and economies represent more than 90 percent of the world ICT market. WITSA is dedicated to advocating policies that advance industry growth and development; facilitating international trade and investment in ICT products and services; strengthening WITSA's national industry associations; and providing members with a broad network of professional contacts.

WITSA members are leaders in a globally interconnected marketplace. Because the challenges facing the ICT industry are undisputedly global in nature, WITSA members work together to achieve a shared vision on important issues of common interest. WITSA makes it possible for its members — ranging from Mongolia and Argentina to Kenya and the United States — to identify common issues and priorities, exchange valuable information, and present a united position on industry issues. For more information on WITSA, please visit www.witsa.org