

Press release

Berlin, 7 July 2017

OFFICE W20

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Digital transformation must incorporate women

Berlin/Kiel – On the occasion of the G20 summit in Hamburg, Women20 (W20) calls for the active inclusion of women in digital transformation. In its own study, W20 has provided recommendations to better exploit the opportunities digital technologies provide. The W20/EMSD (Emerging Market Sustainability Dialogues) study “The Effects of Digitalization on Gender Equality in the G20 Economies” concludes that women could be the big winners as the digital age progresses, but only if the proper course is set – and promptly. Otherwise the opposite could happen and digitalization could further exacerbate gender inequalities. This was the conclusion Alina Sorgner, Christiane Krieger-Boden and Eckhardt Bode of the Institute of the World Economy (IfW), who authored the study on behalf of EMSD, drew. They investigated the effects of digitalization on equality for women and men in the 20 most important industrial and emerging economies.

Above all, digitalization will lead to higher demand on the labour market for executives and highly qualified workers in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). In future, such jobs will increasingly require a combination of strong analytic capabilities, which are usually acquired through academic training, and exceptional interpersonal skills. Therefore, G20 countries should provide women with better access to academic training. Furthermore, a central recommendation of the study is that the G20 countries should ensure that women are no longer discriminated against when it comes to appointment to management positions.

Mona Küppers, President National Council of German Women's Organizations (Deutscher Frauenrat), made the following demands:

- W20 asks the G20 to close the ever growing digital gap between the genders as quickly as possible and to prepare a comprehensive five-year plan for a digital transformation that encourages gender equality;
- unrestricted educational opportunities for girls and women with a special focus on technical and professional training, e-skills and programmes for lifelong learning;
- equal representation of men and women in decision-making positions.

The study criticizes the fact that start-ups are male dominated and women hardly get the chance to meet important people or investors. The G20 should therefore support online tools and online networks for women that teach them entrepreneurial skills and provide more opportunities to meet mentors. The increased use of digital technologies, for example in the financial services sector, would afford women better access to start-up capital.

Stephanie Bschorr, president of the Association of German Women Entrepreneurs (Verband deutscher Unternehmerinnen, VdU) demanded the following:

- We need unrestricted access to productive and financial resources under equal conditions for women;
- W20 recommends the G20 assist female entrepreneurs and women's cooperatives in founding and leading companies and support them in acquiring the abilities needed to do so. Furthermore, the G20 should ensure that women gain equal access to financial resources and markets and that they are afforded an equal share of the global value chain. Nurturing the vast and, as yet, untapped potential of female entrepreneurs would have an extremely positive impact on attaining the growth targets of the G20 states.

Women20 (W20) is the official G20 dialogue partner focusing on women's economic empowerment. W20 brings together the global experiences of women's civil society organizations, women's entrepreneur associations, and academia. W20 Germany is jointly organized by the National Council of German Women's Organizations (Deutscher Frauenrat) and the Association of German Women Entrepreneurs (Verband deutscher Unternehmerinnen, VdU). This year the W20 focused on the issues of access to the labour market and financial resources, female entrepreneurship and digitalization. The key objectives were to establish the economic empowerment of women as a task within all political issues at the G20 and to set up a sustainable Women20 network. The dialogue process culminated in the W20 summit, which took place from 24 to 26 April in Berlin. At the summit, 120 delegates from all of the G20 states passed a joint resolution of demands that was then presented to acting G20 president Angela Merkel. Numerous expert lectures were held and a panel of distinguished individuals discussed this year's key issues. The event organizers will monitor the G20 summit negotiations in Hamburg as they happen.

[Link to W20 Communiqué 2017 \(in German\)](#)

EMSD is a global network of policymakers and pioneering minds from think tanks, multinational companies and the financial sector and acts as the W20's global implementation partner. Our members jointly develop and implement solutions for sustainable economic development in emerging economies through consultation, dialogue, and research. We bring these solutions into national and international fora, such as the G20, and thus contribute to the global sustainability transition.

To the complete study:

[Women20 Study „The Effects of Digitalization on the Gender Equality in the G20 economies“](#)