

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
Paix –Travail- Patrie

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MINISTERE DE LA PROMOTION DE LA FEMME  
ET DE LA FAMILLE

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SECRETARIAT GENERAL

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COMITE D'ORGANISATION JIF 2023

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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
Peace- Work-Fatherland

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MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT AND THE FAMILY

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SECRETARIAT GENERAL

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ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE 2023 IWD

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SCIENTIFIC AND TRANSLATION COMMISSION

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SUB COMMISSION OF ELABORATION OF TOR AND  
DOCUMENTS

**38th edition of the International Women's Day**

**"FOR AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL WORLD:  
INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR GENDER  
EQUALITY"**

**SIMPLIFIED EXPLANATION OF THE IWD 2023 THEME**

## **BRIEF BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

International Women's Day (IWD) has its origins in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with workers' struggles and feminist demonstrations demanding the right to vote for women, better working conditions and equality between men and women.

Adopted by the United Nations in 1977, 8 March has been celebrated in Cameroon since 1986. In addition to being a day of awareness raising and advocacy, International Women's Day (IWD) is a symbol of:

- the international community's commitment to social justice and the protection of human rights, development and peace;
- the commitment of Member States to take necessary and adequate measures for the improvement of the living conditions of women and girls.

The theme adopted by Cameroon for the 38<sup>th</sup> edition is in line with the theme chosen by the United Nations, namely: **"For an inclusive digital world: innovation and technologies for gender equality"**. It is in line with the priority theme of the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67), namely: **"Innovation and Technological Change, and Education in the Digital Age for achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of all Women and Girls"**.

### **1. UNDERSTANDING OF THE THEME AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS.**

This year's theme recognises and celebrates the contribution of women and girls, alongside men, in promoting advances in transformative technologies and digital education.

It highlights the impact of the gender gap in digital technology in perpetuating economic and social inequalities. Specifically, it aims to better protect the rights of women and girls in digital spaces and to address online gender-based violence which is facilitated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

#### **✓ Definitions of concepts:**

##### **For an inclusive digital world**

It is a world that aims to make digital accessible to all, through skills to manage it well. If digitalisation helps in increasing productivity, in reducing operational costs, in analysing data automatically, in developing new communication skills, in fostering innovations within companies, therefore, the specific concerns of men and women in the digital world need to be taken into account, as it offers new possibilities of empowerment for all, in particular for women and girls through employment and training opportunities (e-learning) as well as online commerce.

##### **Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality**

Technological innovation in the ICT sector contributes to the growth of other key sectors of the economy. This is why gender mainstreaming can promote women

entrepreneurs through direct investment resulting in innovative solutions that address the specific concerns of women and girls.

Despite the initiatives undertaken by governments, development partners and civil society, the integration of women and girls in ICT sectors or professions remains low. Disparities persist. It is therefore necessary to fill these gaps and to fight against these scourges, not only by improving women's and girls' access to digital technology, but above all by educating them and strengthening their capacities to make beneficial use of these technological innovations. Technological innovation therefore offers an opportunity to reach women who are often neglected in this field as well as the most vulnerable populations.

Advances in digital technologies offer tremendous opportunities to address development and humanitarian aid challenges, and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

#### ✓ **Government actions in favour of digital transformation**

Numerous actions are carried out by the Government to reduce the digital divide, including:

- the creation of multimedia resource centres in secondary schools by the Head of State,
- the introduction of ICT learning in the curricula,
- the functioning of the ICT sector in the Women and Family Empowerment Centres (WFEC),
- the signing of an agreement with the 'Fondation Orange' to set up digital houses in the WFECs in order to link women to the digital economy,
- the implementation of the component of the Central Africa Backbone Project "support for women's empowerment", which aims to provide the WFECs with Multipurpose Community Telecentres through the provision of computer equipment, solar energy and support for the design and implementation of training programmes (ICT, entrepreneurship, etc.), and the training of young girls in ICT in higher education;

#### ✓ **Stakes and challenges of digital inclusion**

They concern the generalisation of the use of ICTs for all components of society by:

- promoting access to and use of digital services by all sections of society, in particular women and young people;
- strengthening the capacities of the population in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), especially in rural areas;
- developing digital skills and uses within the administrations;
- extending infrastructures (telecommunications and ICT) which promote the digital technology in becoming a real factor of social and economic inclusion, without being limited to the development of the use of social networks.

## **CONCLUSION**

The theme of this 38<sup>th</sup> edition of the IWD is therefore challenging. It calls on us to fight against gender inequalities in the digital domain. We must therefore increase awareness and advocacy for the proper use of transformative ICTs which can enhance a responsible communication, beneficial for the users.