

TRAVEL AND CONNECTIVITY WEEK

All Online? Not yet: Closing the Mobility and Digital Gender Gap

Women's Pavilion Programming, in partnership with World Majlis

Session Agenda



Date	Monday 10 th January, 2021
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet at 2:30 PM at the Women’s Pavilion Majlis• Discussion on stage 3:00-4:30 PM Dubai Time• Women’s Pavilion tour 4:45 PM – 5:15 PM Dubai Time
Venue	Women’s Pavilion Majlis

The rapid advancement of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will ensure that digital technologies pervade every corner of our lives. Women and girls lost out in the previous ICT revolution and we cannot let this happen again. Thus, the persistence of a large digital gender gap remains a massive concern.

Across the world, men are 21% more likely to have access to the internet than women. In the least developed countries this number rises to 52%. A 2021 report of the Alliance for Affordable Internet showed that in a large number of low and lower-middle-income countries, the digital gender gap has remained nearly static over the last decade, around 30.5%. Targeted government efforts to improve women’s connectivity remain limited: over 40% of countries have no meaningful policies or programs addressing women’s access to internet (Alliance for Affordable Internet, 2020).

The statistics are clear and so are the wins that would come from bridging this digital gender divide. Online exclusion of women and girls results in significant economic losses particularly in low and lower-middle income countries. Exclusion of women and girls from the internet also results in them missing out on other direct and indirect benefits and opportunities the internet brings: from the sharing of knowledge, to access to job searches, to access to digital financial services, to the setting up of an e-commerce business, to simply keeping in touch with friends and family abroad.

**Overview and
Key Questions**

Access is a real problem, but not the only problem. We are facing a profound digital skills gap and a lack of digital literacy amongst women, from the lowest to the highest levels. According to the OECD (2018), men are four times more likely to have (basic) digital skills. At the higher end of the skills spectrum, recruiters in Silicon Valley estimated that women represent less than 1% of technical job applications in artificial intelligence and data science (UNESCO, 2019).

Diving deeper, the digital gender gap seems perpetuated and exacerbated by stereotypes and (invisible) gender norms. In many places and households, the internet is still implicitly or explicitly perceived as a risk to traditional roles, or seen as an unsafe space for women and girls to roam around freely. While online safety is a valid concern, at the same time, access at a younger age can improve digital literacy as well as skills to understand and manage (perceived) online risks.

- What will be the consequences of women and girls being left out of another digital revolution? How can we raise urgency on this looming issue?
 - Logistics is a traditionally male field, what opportunities and challenges are there for gender equality and women’s empowerment in the digitalization of the industry?
 - A lack of access and of digital skills are key barriers for the digital empowerment of women. What can public and private organizations do to lift these barriers?
 - What can be done to make the necessary change in gender stereotypes, social norms, traditional views on protection of women and girls and online safety?
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Moderator

Hind Alowais – Moderator

Senior Vice President of International Participants for International Organizations and Non-Official Participants, Expo 2020 Dubai, UAE

Currently, Ms. Alowais is the Senior Vice President of the International Participants Department at Expo 2020 Dubai where she oversees the presence and participation of international and intergovernmental organizations, and a wide range of stakeholders including global and local NGOs, academic institutions, philanthropic foundations, and global initiatives. In this role, Ms. Alowais led on establishing the Women's Pavilion and developing the strategic partnership with Cartier to create a space that tackles the agenda of gender equality and women's empowerment in a meaningful way.



Before taking up a position at EXPO2020, Ms. Alowais was the first Emirati national to hold a senior position at the United Nations Entity for Advancement for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women). Ms. Alowais was also previously the Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of the UAE to the United Nations in New York. She has worked on key security files such as the Syria conflict, Combatting Piracy in Somalia, and disarmament issues before becoming actively involved in the Rio+20 process and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ms. Alowais also worked for the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 15 years. Following stations in Beirut and New York, she played a central role in the UAE's successful campaign to host the International Renewable Energy Agency in Abu Dhabi. She also served as Special Assistant to UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs, HH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and advised on key policy issues. Her work focused on multilateral diplomacy and on supporting the advancement of the UAE's agenda at the UN.

In her work for the EXPO 2020 and the Women's Pavilion, Ms. Alowais draws upon these experiences to push forward the gender equality and women's empowerment discourse across all sectors.

Fireside Chat

Cristina Falcone – Virtual participant **Vice President of Public Affairs, UPS® Europe, Belgium**



Cristina Falcone is Vice President of Public Affairs for UPS Europe. During her twenty-one year tenure at UPS, Cristina has held several management roles in the areas of Product Management, Small Business Development, Customer Loyalty and Public Relations. Prior to her current role, Cristina held the role of Vice President, Public Affairs, at UPS Canada where she actively advocated on a range of issues, including the advancement and conclusion of the comprehensive trade and facilitation agreement between the EU and Canada (CETA) and advancing sustainable transport policy.

In her current role, she leads the strategy and execution of UPS Public Affairs activities across Europe, advocating for effective policy that benefits European businesses, communities and consumers. She is active in a number of a number of associations and women's networks including holding the role of Policy Chair and Board member for the American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union, leading the steering committee for the Brussels Women in Trade Network and Chairing the Advisory Board of the Rise and Lead Women Network. She is an Executive Sponsor for the UPS Millennials and UPS Brussels Women's Leadership Development Business Resource Groups.

Cristina mentors aspiring young professionals from a number of countries across Europe and gives back to the community by volunteering with non-profit organizations that provide aid to the homeless in Brussels. She is married with a son and a daughter and lives in Brussels, Belgium.

Moderated Discussion

Asma Shabab – Panelist **Senior Manager, Innovation Strategy, Accenture, UAE**



Asma works at the intersection of technology, culture, and ecosystems to help companies integrate disruptive innovation to future proof their vision. In her role, she advises companies, governments and social institutes on the roadmap to innovation, how to create a culture that is conducive for innovation to thrive and ultimately, she helps them build and source capabilities from the wider ecosystem, establishing and identifying key partnership models.

Asma is a Fulbright Scholar, the most prestigious and competitive fellowships in the world, and pursued a Master's in Public Relations from the University of Southern California, USA in 2010. She was also awarded the Siemens Scholarship in 2004 to pursue a Masters and Bachelors in Business at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Pakistan. Some of her other recognitions, besides multiple awards in the companies she worked for, include being featured by The BrandBerries as a Woman to Watch: Rule Breakers edition 2019 for driving thought leadership on how AI and IoT will impact Customer Experience, being awarded by the Women in Marketing UK as the Inspiration Leader in the Field of Customer Experience.

Asma also sits on the Board of The Mobile Marketing Association, MENA and CMO Council MENA and is a resident mentor at the Founders Institute for Startups. She speaks frequently on Digital Business and Innovation Strategies, Diversity and Gender Parity and the importance of women in STEM, and data-driven business models.

Appendix

Expo 2020 Dubai, the Women's Pavilion and the World Majlis programme

EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Since the first Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, Expos have connected people and provided special spaces to spark dialogue amongst those who are curious about the future.

Running from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022, Expo 2020 Dubai will bring the world together to imagine, design and build a more sustainable, dignified and prosperous world. One that is cleaner, safer and healthier. One inspired by collective action around shared challenges, and in which future generations will flourish. Under the theme of "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future" and our three sub-themes of Sustainability, Mobility and Opportunity, Expo will be a platform for positive, collaborative change.

THE WOMEN'S PAVILION AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Our Women's Pavilion, under the exhibition title 'New Perspectives', is a critical component of this vision and will be curated by Expo 2020 Dubai in collaboration with Cartier. In highlighting the positive contributions of women, we will demonstrate that when women thrive, so too does all of humanity.

The UAE has dedicated itself to ensuring that issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) are centrally addressed in everything we do at Expo 2020 Dubai. By shining a light on women past and present, known and unknown, the Women's Pavilion challenges the misconceptions that women still frequently face, seeks out new perspectives on the impact women bring to our world, explores new approaches to creating a more equal world, and identifies ways in which we, together, can create new perspectives, change deep-rooted perceptions, and adjust mindsets.

Through different modes of convening, our goal is to highlight that the only way to peace, prosperity, and sustainability is through the full and equal participation of women.

WORLD MAJLIS PROGRAMME

Deeply rooted in the traditions of the UAE, the Majlis is one of the cornerstones of Emirati civilisation. In Arabic, "majlis" means 'place of sitting' and refers to both a social gathering space and a formal legislative assembly for government. A place where people meet to hear informed opinions and shape decisions on subjects that matter to the community. The host of the majlis and his guests sit facing one another and engage in respectful but vibrant conversation, with the view of better understanding issues and exploring solutions.

The majlis has been inscribed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It defines majlis as a "sitting place" where community members gather to discuss local events and issues, exchange news, receive guests, socialise and be entertained."

The World Majlis aims to be one of the most engaging and thought-provoking dialogues ever held at an Expo. It is a space for ideas and conversations to make important and complex topics relatable to the general public. It brings together diverse points of views across geographies and generations. It invites open and informed exchanges between its participants with the objective to generate new insights and start meaningful connections between people and new ideas.

WOMEN'S WORLD MAJLIS

The Women's World Majlis is a key programming series at the Women's Pavilion in partnership with the World Majlis. In ten sessions, we will look into ten Expo Thematic Weeks' topics through a gender lens by recognizing and celebrating women's role and positive contributions in advancing sustainable development adapting a free-flowing conversation format.
