

**Statement by Derechos Digitales before the Commission on the Status of
Women**

Sixty-seventh session (6-17 March, 2023)

14 March, 2023 – Paloma Lara-Castro

Thank you, Chair.

Derechos Digitales appreciates the opportunity to participate in this important session. We would like to focus our intervention on providing a human rights lens to this CSW priority theme.

First, we recall that since the first editions of the World Summit on the Information Society, several advances were made in understanding the human rights implications of digital technologies. We encourage States to recognize and strengthen the commitments adopted since then, including existing efforts for multistakeholder participation in the governance of digital spaces. Women, in all their diversity, need to be meaningfully included in decision-making processes regarding technological development, deployment and governance if we are to build gender equality at innovation and technological contexts.

We call States to develop policies on access to the Internet from a meaningful access perspective which goes further beyond infrastructure and connectivity. Proactive measures should be taken to overcome gender digital divides, to limit monopolistic practices at the ICT sector; promote a transparency and accountability framework for global tech companies; and to create enabling environments for innovation and technological change for gender equality at marginalized communities and Global South countries.

This should be followed by measures to promote digital literacy from critical perspectives that allow women, in all their diversity, to understand how technologies operate and to be able modify them and their infrastructure. States should avoid the adoption of proprietary technologies in public educational systems and establish strict mechanisms for the protection of personal data from children and adolescents in any context.

Additionally, Chair, it is urgent to develop common concepts that can be operationalized towards survivor-centric and human rights-based frameworks to tackle all forms of gender

violence, including tech-facilitated gender based violence. We call for the development of frameworks that include criteria on legality, necessity, and proportionality in order to prevent the weakening of any other rights.

We acknowledge that the development and deployment of surveillance technologies, together with irresponsible practices for digital transformation, can hinder any possibility to achieve gender equality. We urgently call States to include accountability and participation mechanisms to any digitization process – particularly within the deployment of automated decision-making systems – as well as human rights impact assessments and audits. We also call your attention to the recommendations of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights regarding the need to further control the production and sales of surveillance systems that are not in compliance with human rights as well as to call a moratorium for those that do not meet the basic criteria.

To conclude: there is a pressing need to advance in the operationalization of human rights frameworks that recognize both States obligations and the tech sector corporate responsibility to protect and respect human rights both off and online. Such frameworks must depart from an intersectional gender perspective and acknowledge the several layers of power imbalances affecting women's rights. Advancing a global agenda for tackling gender inequality at technological contexts should involve coordinated multistakeholder action and strict commitments to transparency, accountability, fairness, and non-discrimination at all levels.

Thank you, Chair.