Workshop report of the review meeting of the CITIGEN research programme – Executive Summary

The [Gender and Citizenship in the Information Society](#) (CITIGEN) research programme, launched in 2010, aims to explore the notion of marginalised women's citizenship as a normative project or an aspiration for equitable social membership contained in the promise of an emerging techno-social order. Six research partners from Sri Lanka, Philippines, China, Thailand/Taiwan, Bangladesh and India are studying various aspects of the terrain, and four eminent scholars from Costa Rica, Pakistan, Thailand and Germany, are writing think pieces delving into the research subject from their perspectives to further enrich the research process.

On 26-28 April 2011, IT for Change, coordinator of the network, organised a three-day Review Workshop for the research programme in the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. The objectives of the workshop were:

- Review and reflect upon the emerging insights from each research project in relation to the questions and core concepts of the programme
- Build a big picture that speaks to the theoretical imperatives of the programme as a whole
- Anchored in emergent theoretical formulations of the programme, explore the elements of a 'Southern' discourse on women's citizenship in the information society and implications of the same for practice and policy at national and global levels.

The workshop aimed at facilitating the articulation of emerging concepts and tentative theories from the ongoing work in the CITIGEN network and channel these into a debate on the larger questions of democratic structures and institutions, and their shifting meanings for marginalised women's participation in the information society, as equal citizens. In order to expand and deepen the debates and discussions, a few scholars working on feminist frameworks from a Southern perspective, and who are potential contributors to the network's research, were invited to comment and present their perspectives on the project's ongoing work.

The agenda was spread over three days to ensure an in-depth engagement with the issues addressed. On the 26th, the six research partners presented their analysis and experience of the field in the form of Stories of Change, multimedia essays capturing the story emerging from their work in relation to the conceptual framework informing CITIGEN. The second day started with a presentation by Anita Gurumurthy (IT for Change) who brought together a consolidated understanding and the theoretical take-ways from the programme so far. The rest of the conference was organised around thematic sessions about the promise of ICTs in terms of extending institutional reach and transparency for marginalised women, contestations around gender and citizenship in the information society context, and ways in which the network society redefines the public sphere providing a new architecture for community and identity building. Each session included reflections from two research partners followed by perspectives from two prominent scholars and/or practitioners. This series of sessions was closed by a session on the nature of participation in virtual reality/real virtuality, during which two scholars presented their views on the material and symbolic dimensions of the structures of the virtual environment. The second half of the 28th was dedicated to open reflections in a, more loosely structured format. Comments and thoughts were shared by the three programme advisors present – Andrea Cornwall, Lisa McLaughlin and Parminder Jeet Singh. Teams were also encouraged to sit with their advisors to clarify issues specific to their project and study the possibilities of taking forward their research through advocacy and research networks. The workshop ended with Ramata Molo Thioune (IDRC), Anita Gururmurthy and Andrea Cornwall sharing final thoughts about the programme and its last phase in the next few months.