



Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs

New York, 15-16 May 2017

Concept Note for Session 2(d) on

Key priorities for engaging STI for achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG 5)

Conference Room 4, UN Headquarters New York, 15 May 2017, 16:30 - 18:00 am

1. Background

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5) aims to “*achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*”. Two of SDG5’s targets are closely related to technology: SDG target 5.6 to “*ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences*”, and SDG target 5.b to “*enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women*”.

Science, technology and innovation (STI) are expected to play an important role for gender equality. It should be noted that women account for 28 per cent of the world’s researchers, according to estimates by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. A higher number of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields would be beneficial for countries efforts to reach the SDG.

The current gender imbalance in STEM is a consequence of various factors, including deeply rooted cultural and societal discriminations, long-term implicit and explicit policies and related instruments in government, funding agencies, higher education institutions, and research centres.

Gender equality goes beyond SDG 5. It is crucial to the achievement of all the SDGs, which is why gender-specific targets are integrated throughout the 2030 Agenda.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are closely linked and can enhance progress in STI, and vice-versa. Both gender and STI are cross-cutting imperatives across the SDGs.

2. Objectives

The session will discuss key areas where STI can empower women, for example, economic and social empowerment, reproductive health, maternal health, early childhood care, education and access to agriculture and employment information. Furthermore, it will discuss the reasons for and the ways forward for women to fully participate in STI, including collection of policy-relevant indicators and instruments on the role of women in STEM, the role of policy makers, as well as ways to support young female students to continue working in research. Governments can ensure equal access to science and technology, and they can ensure that research content, technology development and deployment respond to the needs of both women and men.

3. Format

The session will begin with a short (90 seconds) innovation pitch by a winner of the Call for Innovations for the STI Forum, followed by a panel discussion. A moderator will introduce the theme (3 min), and up to three panellists addressing the topic with 7-minute remarks. Thereafter, the floor will be open for a series of 3 min remarks, followed by a moderated discussion and remarks from the other participants.

4. Questions for discussion

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- How can women be more involved in technology development to ensure it benefits women? Which technologies empower women?
- How can STI help a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda? How can women have a greater role in STI decision making? How can studies, indicators, and data support STI policies for gender equality?
- What are your top three recommendations for action by the United Nations system, governments, businesses, scientists, civil society, and others?