

CSW64

Commission on the Status of Women



BEIJING+25: REALIZING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

9-20 March 2020



CSW64 Side Event on

Gender Equality in Science, Technology and Innovation: Driving Sustainable Future

Co-organized by ITU, UNESCO and WIPO

March 9, 2020, from 15 to 16:30

United Nations Headquarters – Conference Room A

Gender equality is central to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is cross-cutting in nature. Progress in its attainment will accelerate the pace for all the SDGs.

Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, Gender Equality remains a global and cross-sectoral challenge. In the field of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), underpinning most of the SDGs, women remain under-represented.

In **S**cience - the latest data of UNESCO's Institute for Statistics indicate that women account for less than 30% of the world researchers.¹ In **T**echnology and **I**nnovation – the gender gap in patenting remains. The 2019 WIPO World Intellectual Property Indicators Report reveals that in 2018 the share of women among listed inventors in international patent applications filed under the WIPO Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) is at 17.1% with men the remaining 82.9%, and 32.6% of PCT applications named at least one woman as inventor.

Intrinsic to the challenge and of crucial importance is the question of access to technologies. The ITU Facts and Figures for 2019² reveal another facet of great concern, that is the growing digital gender gap particularly in the global south with LDCs most affected. It also indicates that the overall proportion of women using the internet globally is 48% compared to 58 for men.

¹ <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs55-women-in-science-2019-en.pdf>

² <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/FactsFigures2019.pdf>



In December 2019 - the UN General Assembly adopted its biennial resolution on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development (A/RES/74/229). The resolution, inter alia, reinforces the importance of the participation of women and girls in STI for sustainable development, and provides guidance on the need to address barriers to the equal access for women and girls to STI, encourages efforts to mentor, attract and retain women and girls in STEM education and research to leverage STI for entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

On the Gender gap in STEM, it is not the result of innate ability but rather due to the socialization process including career development, entrepreneurship culture and stereotypes – according to the UNESCO Report Cracking the Code. Thus addressing under-representation of women in STI requires an accelerated holistic approach.

To achieve this and sustainably maintain an equitable digital society of tomorrow, the role of partnerships is pivotal. It is only the collective effort of multiple stakeholders that can effectively drive the positive change in today's society, the functioning of which is subject to constant change and complex power relations. Committed to tackling the challenges faced by girls and women in the progressively technology-saturated world, the EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age has been set up, uniting corporate leaders, governments, businesses, NGOs, academic institutions and civil society groups in a common mission to enable the equality in access to technology, digital skills developments and careers opportunities in the technology sector for women and men alike. The activity of EQUALS Partners paves the way as a truly global effort aimed at raising awareness, building political commitment and leveraging resources and knowledge in the pursuit of digital gender equality thus improving the livelihoods of millions around the world.

Against this background – the event will look at the global trends and global efforts to address the gender gap and will discuss the different barriers that hold women from equal participation in STI. Panelists will bring an array of perspectives and insights on policies, practices and solutions that carry potential in triggering the transformative changes needed – including in educational content and orientation, fostering cultures in support of women empowerment, creating enabling workplace environments, among other. Participants, women and men alike, will be invited to sharing their experiences on what works and what does not, but also their thoughts and recommendations on what it takes for achieving Gender Equality in STI for SDGs.

This event also supports the work of the UN Inter-Agency Task Team Group on Gender and STI for SDGs. The Group is co-led by ITU - UNESCO and WIPO. Its members include ECLAC, ESCWA, ICGBE, ITC, UNCTAD, UNICEF, UNOOSA and WFP.