

Thematic Session 4: Breaking Down Barriers – closing the gender gap in science and technology.

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The 2023 SG's SDG Progress report noted that "cascading global crises have highlighted and exacerbated existing gender inequalities, such as unequal access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities".

We believe that access to quality education at all levels, supported by relevant skills development throughout the life course is a fundamental to ensuring the achievement of gender equality and that Education is a basic human right as established by CEDAW, CRC and the Human Right to Education: - A/HRC/41/L.26.

Already in 2019, Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Finland, raised the alarm in the prologue to the **2019 GSDR Report**, where she quoted playwright Henrik Ibsen "A community is like a ship – everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.", she then added 'Our global ship is currently tossing and turning through stormy dangerous waters and asked if anyone is listening, willing to take the helm or are we waiting for someone else to take the initiative or fooling ourselves that all is fine? that there is no need to change course? Each of us, needs to be prepared to take the helm in an appropriate and realistic way – from our local community to national and international levels. If we do, we will find that the Sustainable Development Goals themselves are the chart to see us through the storm.'

Women and girls in all their diversity are instrumental to crafting the solutions that will improve lives and generate inclusive growth. Yet, due to multiple forms of discrimination they remain a minority in information technology, computing, physics, mathematics and engineering, the very fields that are creating and improving many of these solutions. The 2019 SDG Gender Index has found that SDG9 (industry and innovation) is one of the Goals on which the world is furthest behind, with regard to gender equality issues.

The UNESCO report "**Cracking the code: girls' and women's education in STEM**", Irina Bokova, Director-General noted "Only 17 women have won a Nobel Prize in physics, chemistry, or medicine since Marie Curie in 1903, compared to 572 men. Today, only 28% of the world's researchers are women. Such huge disparities and deep inequality do not happen by chance".

"Too many girls are held back by discrimination, biases, social norms, and expectations that influence the quality of education they receive and the subjects they study. Girls 'under-representation in STEM education is deep rooted and puts a brake on progress towards sustainable development".

Gender differences in STEM education participation of girls is already visible in ECCE especially during science- and math-related play. 'Girls appear to lose interest in STEM subjects particularly between early and late adolescence'. The trend of lower girl's participation

continues in advanced studies at secondary level and by higher education, only 35% of all students are women.

Leaving out girls and women in STEM education and careers is a loss for all and has far-reaching implications for the role of women in society, and in STEM.

THE WOMEN'S MAJOR GROUP and Soroptimist International RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING:

- Women and girls in the global south, in all their diversity, especially in protracted humanitarian context countries, should have an equal opportunity to build their capacities in science and technology.
- Women scientists should have capacity building platforms and take part in the scientific response mechanism to natural and man-made disasters, including pandemics and conflicts.
- Women need to be decision makers related to technology leadership and science pioneering with more equality/equity in the education and specifically, scientific education.
- Financial and non-financial resources should be increased for women and girls in all forms of quality education and lifelong learning to support their advancement in STEM.
- Financing for women's leadership in science and technology needs to ensure sufficient funding to build a global cadre of professional women scientists, technology inventors and innovators.
- Promote and increase funding of female-only start-up entrepreneurs, currently, only 6% of capital goes to women.
- When possible, STEM programmes should be women-led, and it is essential that all gender bias references must be removed from textbooks and other learning materials.

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slettet: Female

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slettet: VC (venture capital and angel investors)

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slettet: (Currently, only 1% of all VC funding goes for women's start-ups).

slettet: created by

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