

ITU Secretary-General's High-Level Response at the Science, Technology & Innovation Forum Session 6: Advancing Sustainable Development with Women-centered Science and Technology Solutions

May 10, 2024 – 15:00-16:20 – UNHQ, New York City, United States

Great discussions!

I thank the presenters for their valuable input, and for their continued commitment to our shared mission of closing the gender digital divide.

We need this solidarity. The [latest data](#) show it will take 130 years to reach gender equality for women in executive government positions.

Less than a quarter of all Ministers for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are women, and only 32 out of 165 ICT regulators are led by a woman.

Looking at C-suite roles in STEM, just 1 in 8 is held by a woman. Globally, women outnumber men who are not connected to the Internet by 17%.

Working together, we can tackle these disparities by building mentorship programs, to encouraging more girls to enter STEM.

Take young people like Natacha Sangwa, who recently completed a coding course despite those around her doubting she could do it.

Natacha learned to protect herself against online attacks and safeguard her digital identity at a coding camp organized by African Girls Can Code, a programme led by UN Women, ITU and the African Union in 11 countries.

Women leaders can use our experiences to inspire the next generation — women like Natacha.

The connections we have made today and the strategies you have shared give us blueprints for building a more gender-inclusive technology workforce.

Our task now is to put those strategies in action, especially with the Summit of the Future coming up in September.

At the 67th Commission on the Status of Women, the UN Secretary-General said that “the Summit of the Future must reflect our commitment to gender equality and women’s rights.”

This is why I have joined calls for a gender-transformative approach to the Global Digital Compact — with inclusion and especially gender equality at its core.

May 17th is World Telecommunication and Information Society Day — ITU’s birthday.

Next year’s WTISD will focus on gender equality to underscore the significance of Beijing+30.

I hope you will join us. Thank you very much.
