

## **Statement by Kırmızı Biber Derneği, Kadın Koalisyonu, and Patiska Platformu (Türkiye)**

STI Forum 2025 – Thematic Session 2: Advancing Science, Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality

Speaker: Fatma Aytac

Distinguished delegates, fellow stakeholders,

I speak today on behalf of Kırmızı Biber Derneği, the Women's Coalition, and the Patiska Platform from Turkey.

Despite decades of advocacy, gender disparities in STEM fields persist. Girls and young women are still underrepresented in STEM education and careers. This gap is not due to a lack of interest or ability, but to structural barriers, persistent stereotypes, and the absence of visible female role models. We risk losing generations of talent and perspectives essential to inclusive innovation.

Furthermore, older women face significant barriers in accessing digital tools, platforms, and services. The visibility of older women in global gender policies is notably low, and the gap in access to and understanding of new technologies—particularly AI—between older people and younger generations is a growing concern. This digital divide contributes to the social exclusion and marginalization of older women, compounding the age-related discrimination they already endure. In many cases, the lack of access has left them cut off from tech-based healthcare, public services, and even basic communication.

Therefore, we must:

- Integrate gender-sensitive curricula in digital education,
- Address algorithmic bias in AI and emerging technologies,
- Invest in safe, inclusive digital spaces for women and girls,
- Develop intergenerational learning platforms to close the digital divide,
- Include older women in technology policy and design,
- And promote innovation that reflects the lived realities of women across all ages.

We urge all stakeholders to take these steps—not only to empower women, but to build a more just and equitable future for all.

Thank you.