

Transforming our ideas into a smarter today

August 2020

Dear colleagues and friends of the WOMENVAI platform,



What a strange time summer 2020 has been!

This holiday period has had an eerie feeling, with everything seeming closed in a strange prison-like atmosphere: schools, gyms, restaurants, cafes, cinemas, stadiums, non-emergency public services, even offices usually bustling with activity.

And yet, the Future is here and modernization has imposed itself upon many. Organizations are now convinced that digital transformation is an absolute requisite for life in the 21st century.

Accelerating the UN SDGs means simply accelerating modernization on all levels, whether technological, social or economical: thinking ahead and contemplating globalization and our behavior differently by keeping a great sense of humanity in mind. Humanity is comprised of women and men from many diverse communities who want to be part of the societal transformation process and access new technologies - like all of us on this planet. In this issue, we recap on what we have been contributing to since April... from home!

Yvette Ramos, President and co-founding member of WOMENVAI

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Ms. Lidia Zakowska, Secretary General

A Ph.D., professor in transport engineering at CUT, Poland. An International Researcher on sustainable urban mobility, equality in transportation, environmental protection and safety. An Author of many publications. A Member of Editorial Boards and referee in civil engineering. An active Member of WIE (Women in Engineering) Committee at the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), the Polish FSNT NOT and SITK RP. As H2020-GEECCO leader and co-founder of WIEmy Network at CUT, she works for women equality in engineering. As WOMENVAI Secretary General, she helps design engineering solutions to environmental issues.



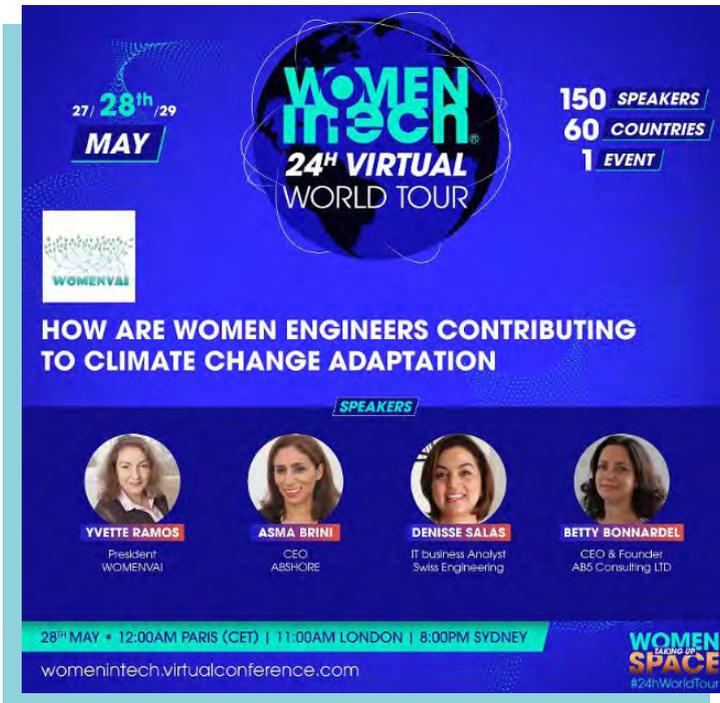
A short poem

I stepped from Plank to Plank
A slow and cautious way
The Stars about my Head I felt
About my feet the Sea.
I knew not but the next
Would be my final inch -
This gave me that precarious Gait
Some call Experience.

Emily Dickinson, c. 1864

May-July Activities... From Home!

WOMENVAI was invited to take part in a series of webinars during the COVID-19 lockdown occurring across the globe.



1. Women in tech

It was an honour to participate in the Women in Tech World Tour, which, for 24 hours, allowed us to meet international leaders and role models who champion their industries from AI to Blockchain, FemTech, Climate Change, HealthTech, and Diversity & Inclusion.

On **May 28th 2020**, WOMENVAI moderated a panel on “Women engineers contributing to SDGs: a focus on climate change adaptation”. With 12,000 members across the globe and growing rapidly, Women in Tech is an international organization with a double mission: to **close the gender gap and help women embrace technology**.

More on [women-in-tech.org](https://www.women-in-tech.org)

2. WSIS forum

We attended the opening as well as various sessions, including two high-level sessions, of the **International Telecommunications Union (ITU) World Symposium on Information Society (WSIS) 2020 Forum**, which took place from **June 22nd 2020** in collaboration with the ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD and UNDP. More information [here](#).

In light of the global health crisis and the drastic travel restrictions, the WSIS Forum was held **entirely online**. It kept a momentum created by a 15-year cooperation between all WSIS Stakeholders to make ICTs a critical driver of global development. As a partner of many years, our team composed of Swiss Engineering Geneva Chapter members and WOMENVAI cofounding members contributed greatly to various sessions, including:

May 26th

WSIS TalkX Series Challenges and opportunities while facing Lockdown

We presented a co-designed, connected device using IoT technology, for women and girls suffering from violence at home, as COVID-19 lockdown is proven to have caused a dramatic increase in domestic violence (35% increase in France).



June 22nd

Waste and water data solutions for reducing environmental impact

June 29th

Digital Adaptation
How to develop a system that is cost effective and delivers sustainability

July 7th

Women engineers and technicians contributing to the ICTs related SDGs and WSIS objectives

July 20th

Digital divide policy

July 21st & 29th

ICT Applications and Services and the importance of ICT in the Gender Equality agendas
On national and regional levels (high-policy session)

WSIS+15 FORUM 2020

Digital adaptation: how to develop a system that is cost effective and deliver sustainability

MODERATOR:
Yvette RAMOS, President, Swiss Engineering Geneva, Switzerland

SPEAKERS:
Betty AZZARELLI, CEO ADS Engineering, UK
Liliane DORVEAUX, prof. EPF Ecole d'Ingenieur/S. France
Pascal DEL PRATE, AI Young Delegation Committee, EPF France
Olivier PERDIN, AI Young Delegation Committee, EPF France
Asma BRINI, CEO ABSShare, Tunisia/France

June 29th, 2020 - 12:00-13:00 CEST
Registration: <https://bit.ly/2YSSueZ>

SWISS ENGINEERING, EPF CONSULTANT SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, WOMENVAI

WSIS+15 VIRTUAL FORUM 2020
Starting on 22 June
Final Week 7-10 September 2020

Women engineers and technicians contributing to the ICT's related SDG's and WSIS objectives

YVETTE RAMOS
President and co-founder WOMENVAI, Switzerland (moderator)

DENISSE SALAS
Swiss Engineering Geneva

REINE ESSOBMAJJE
Co-Founder Digital Coalition (Cameroon, Gabon, France and Germany)

Liliane DORVEAUX
Deputy Director EPF School of Engineering Montpelier Campus - Professor in Mathematics

AYUMI MOORE AOKI
Founder and CEO Women in Tech - Founder & CEO Social Brain

WFEO / FMOI, WOMENVAI

TUESDAY, 7 JULY 2020 - 13:00-14:00 CEST

According to the ITU 2019 statistics, while 58% men use the internet, only 48% women do so. ICT create opportunities which could improve women's lives, through knowledge sharing, access to education, access to online services such as e-health - a critical aspect at the time of COVID-19 - or economic power. However, there are many barriers that need overcoming: access to ICT, affordability, digital literacy, social and cultural barriers.

The lack of accurate and official gender-specific data is detrimental to the development of national and regional policies and programmes for gender equality.

Attending those many talks was the opportunity for us to bring concrete examples on an international scale into the debate, to share practices and experiences.

Here is our perspective on the outcome of WSIS:

WOMENVAI declaration at the WSIS 2020 Forum

By:

- 1** Raising visibility of Women all along the WSIS process, proving we have great competencies in STEM, leadership and management,
- 2** Demonstrating the importance of using all modern technologies, in particular ICT, to promote women's empowerment,
- 3** Working on Artificial Intelligence regulation for a better gender equality, AI tools and systems that will contribute further to a more sustainable and inclusive growth,
- 4** Offering young generations opportunities to innovate and start-off their ICT-based SMEs, especially our women entrepreneurs working in and with STEM,
- 5** Increasing possibilities for international cooperation among organisations for women in STEM,

We, engineers, technicians and scientists in ICTs, women and men, together, declare that WSIS 2020 has helped develop active collaboration across our global platform and provide expertise, for a more efficient sustainable development.

3. UN SDG-related events

On **June 11th**, WOMENVAI in partnership with Swiss Engineering Geneva and others, moderated a panel on **“Women engineers ensuring access to water and sanitation for all in a COVID-19 environment: challenges and opportunities across the Globe #SDG6”**.

On **July 3rd**, together with EPF Engineering School, France, we presented a UN WOMEN France labelled project aiming at **stopping sexist violences against students on University campuses**. We were honoured to have a dedicated message from the UN Secretary General, in both French and English.

4. EPF virtual Tech camp

On **July 9th**, WOMENVAI was honoured to contribute to the EPF virtual Tech Camp which gave over 1,500 students and professors across the globe the unique opportunity to access fundamental disciplines taught at EPF Engineering faculty and to interact with research teachers and students on different themes, including women entrepreneurship and digital transformation, sustainable management of systems and resources to maintain quality of life and well-being, etc.

WOMENVAI and its partner organisations have actively developed projects to support gender equality and women entrepreneurship. We offer workshops for kids aged 8-12 to discover STEM and bring mentoring and coaching for young women entrepreneurs in STEM. It is important that we all come together and promote actions which will make a difference in women and girls' lives.

All sessions were recorded and can be viewed on the **WOMENVAI Youtube Channel**

Just click [here](#)



WOMENVAI contribution to the EC White Paper on Artificial Intelligence by cofounding members equal charter

In June 2020, the European Commission called for consultation from its Member States. WOMENVAI had the honor to contribute to this piece of work named: **White Paper on Artificial Intelligence - A European Approach to Excellence and Trust.**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is developing fast and is changing our lives **by improving healthcare, farming, climate change mitigation and adaptation, the efficiency of production systems** through predictive maintenance, increasing the security of Europeans, and in many other ways that we can only begin to imagine. However, AI also entails a number of **potential risks, such as opaque decision-making, gender-based or other kinds of discrimination, intrusion in our privacy or being used for criminal purposes.**



In the context of **fierce global competition**, a solid European approach is needed, building on the European strategy for AI presented in April 2018. To address those opportunities and challenges, the EU must act as one and define its own way, based on European values, to promote the development and deployment of AI. The Commission is committed to enabling scientific breakthrough, to **preserving the EU's technological leadership** and to ensuring that new technologies are **at the service of all Europeans – improving their lives while respecting their rights**

Our key recommendations for the EC

- Specific-sector **Europe-based NGOs** (STEM, gender, diversity, ethics, education, youth) **need to be associated** to bring in expertise and civilian representation, with a focus on younger generations, especially STEM students (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics).
- Humanities Faculties **need AI-specific Ethics and Human Resources Development programmes**
- The European Commission should promote an **interaction between Humanities and STEM stakeholders** at all levels (Government/State, University, Research Labs, NGOs, SMEs etc.).
- A **network of existing AI research excellence centres** could be guided by **peer-based strategies**, together with a sound public-private partnership, focusing on startups, SMEs (which we believe are central) and academic bodies.
- The **gender-bias that we believe is rife in AI** needs to be fought through initiatives promoting equality-based AI. We at WOMENVAI, as well as our partners, actively support these.
- While regulation is essential in **protecting citizens while deploying AI-based technologies**, many other approaches can help ensure it: General guidance, Ethical Guides, Gender mainstreaming principles, impact-focused strategies etc. WOMENVAI and its partners work together to contribute to such frameworks.
- The **high risks posed to humans by AI** (judiciary issues, casualties, property loss, hunger, health problems...) demand studies based on blueprints, such as UN 2030 SDGs.
- While a number of requirements have already been met in existing legal or regulatory regimes, It has been shown that **transparency, traceability and human oversight** are not always covered under current laws in many industries.

Full paper [here](#)

In the Met Expo Magazine...



Yvette Ramos was amongst the 10 Experts interviewed by Meteorological Tech Magazine.

The Meteorological Technology International's Special 10th Anniversary was the opportunity for leading industry experts to take part in a feature on **Future trends.**

As a project manager in a World Bank financed Hydromet and climate services project (namely AIRBM, Myanmar Union), WOMENVAI's President **was the sole female interviewee** in the Expert panel of 10. She believes that **Green data centers have been one of the most important developments** within the meteorological sector in recent years, as they have contributed to climate change mitigation and created a greener high-tech environment. **"One example of how a data center can be more environmentally friendly is by reusing the waste heat it generates as a heat source for buildings."** In terms of challenges, she states that **lack of international and regional cooperation could be a big threat** to the sector, and that more needs to be done in change management and encouraging new, highly skilled technicians and engineers into the meteorological industry: "New talent can help generate innovative solutions that can benefit the sector in the future, such as in the areas of IoT, big data, AI and smart grids for energy efficiency."

All details [here](#).

WOMENVAI & AIODD - Signing our first MOU in Geneva, Switzerland

On July 10th **Pascale Fressoz**, President of the International Alliance for Sustainable Development Goals (AIODD) and **Yvette Ramos**, President and cofounder of WOMENVAI, signed an **MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)** on behalf of their committees **that aims at reinforcing together the use of new technologies at the service of the planet, with a special focus on gender equality**, including empowerment of girls and women in STEM careers (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). Our common activities started already many years ago, when Yvette and Pascale started collaborating on specific UN programs, always aligned with the MDGs and then SDGs.

In the next 3 years, our NGOs will partner and develop programs around various themes, including: a side-event for and with women in ICTs and Environment at the next COP26, a workshop on STEM Empowerment for young professionals in Ivory Coast (March 2021) and Morocco (2022), and at least one publication on the capacity building platform of the UNFCCC (PCBC) on key challenges and forward-thinking actions for the achievement of the SDGs. «Our common goal is to achieve the SDGs - the United Nations 2030 Agenda - which is part of our common DNA for peace and prosperity, for all citizens and the planet.»

AIODD is an NGO with branches in 17 countries and over 1,260 actions achieved over the past 15 years to promote the Millennium Goals and then the SDGs. More information on aiodd.org.



Signature of MOU between
AIODD and **WOMENVAI**
10th July 2020 - Geneva (CH)

Want to join as a NGO Partner, Sponsor or Ambassador ?
Feel free to contact us at contact@womensvai.org

Who we are: the co-founding members

Executive Committee

Yvette Ramos, president, France/Switzerland
Lilian Coelho, vice-president, France/Brazil
Inès Aivazian, treasurer, France
Sophie Magner, deputy-treasurer, Belgium/France
Lidia Zakowska, secretary general, Poland

Ethics Committee

Soizic Vangrevelinghe, France
Denis Aivazian, France,
Sangeeta Wij, India

Communication

Ariane Barbier, France
Asma Brini, France/Tunisia
Camille Coq, France
Guillaume Pahud, France/Switzerland
Denisse Salas, Bolivia/Switzerland

Projects

Liliane Dorveaux, France
Marwa Zaghib, Tunisia
Nadia Souissi, Tunisia
Betty Bonnardel-Azzarelli, UK/ France
Lidia Santiago, Portugal

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