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Statement submitted by WOMENVAI Women and Men in ENVironment and Artificial Intelligence, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

Statement

A call for action towards achieving Agenda 2030 success by accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

We, WOMENVAI reunited together with our partners and colleagues committed to promote Girls and Women's right in accessing leadership position in STEM careers, in public and private organizations around the Globe, to celebrate the International Women Day 2024.

UN WOMEN through its active involvement and efforts in promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls in various fields, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). What we do at WOMENVAI, in partnership with our partners worldwide, in the area of women and girls in STEM aim to break down barriers and biases that have historically limited women's and girls' opportunities in STEM, ultimately working towards greater gender equality and diversity in these fields, and we call on women's representation that reflects all women and girls in all their diversity and abilities, and across all cultural, social, economic and political situations. Some progress was made over the past decade but there is still a long way to go towards achieving Equality, as in 2023, yet:

- For the same position, while a man earns 1 euro, a woman earns 0.77 euros
- A woman works 25% of the time more, for the same result
- Access to property is more difficult for women: they are only 13% of landowners
- Women represented on average 4.4% of business leaders, 16.9% of board members
- Only 24% of national parliament members are women
- Only 28% of researchers worldwide are women

Let us step up the action as it is time to formalize practices and follow the recommendations of the UN and other global stakeholders to develop strategies for Equality in the public and private arenas whether within small or large organizations (Very Small Enterprises to Medium ones), NGOs representing the civil society, including Engineering societies, Engineering and Science Faculties, and local authorities (small to medium cities and cantons).

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women is crucial for several reasons, and accelerating progress in this regard has numerous benefits for individuals, societies, and the world as a whole:

(1) Human Rights and Dignity: Gender equality is a fundamental human right. It's essential to recognize and ensure that women and girls enjoy the same rights and opportunities as men and boys, which includes the right to live free from discrimination, violence, and unequal treatment.

(2) Economic Growth: Gender equality contributes to economic growth and development. When women have equal access to education, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities, economies become more dynamic and competitive.

(2) Innovation and Creativity: Empowering women leads to increased diversity and a wider talent pool. Diverse perspectives and ideas foster innovation, creativity, and problem-solving, benefitting businesses and society.

(3) Education: Gender equality in education ensures that girls and boys have equal access to quality schooling. When girls receive education, they are better equipped to make informed decisions about their lives, health, and future opportunities.

(4) Health and Well-being: Empowering women to make decisions about their reproductive health and well-being leads to healthier families and communities. It helps reduce maternal mortality, improve child health, and limit the spread of diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

(5) Political Participation: Gender equality increases women's participation in political and decision-making processes. This results in more balanced, inclusive, and representative governance, which reflects the needs and aspirations of both women and men.

(6) Reducing Poverty: Gender equality plays a pivotal role in reducing poverty. Empowered women are better positioned to access economic opportunities, earn higher incomes, and contribute to their families' well-being.

(7) Social Justice: Gender equality is essential for achieving social justice. It helps address disparities in access to resources, services, and opportunities and ensures that marginalized and vulnerable women have their rights upheld.

(8) Peace and Security: Countries with greater gender equality are more peaceful and secure. Women's participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding contributes to long-lasting peace and stability.

(9) Global Development: The achievement of gender equality is integral to global development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Progress in gender equality is directly linked to advancements in other areas like poverty reduction, education, and healthcare.

WOMENVAI does commit in the following as it is time to give more opportunities to the Youth and more generally, to all women in the private and public sectors by breaking the glass ceiling which no longer has its place in the 21st century:

- Advocacy and Awareness, including advocating for the removal of gender bias and stereotypes in STEM education and careers;
- Capacity Building: deploying initiatives for women and girls in STEM, providing training and mentorship programs to enhance their skills and knowledge in STEM disciplines;

- Research and Data Collection as we researchers from hard and social science contribute to better understand the challenges girls and women face and develop evidence-based solutions;
- Partnerships as we do partner with technical UN agencies such as the ITU, the WMO, the UN Water, UN Ocean, UNFCCC as well as governments and other NGOs to help increase women's participation in STEM fields;
- Support for Girls' Education as we develop programs to encourage girls to pursue STEM education from an early age;
- Promoting Women in Leadership and representation in STEM-related fields;
- Addressing Gender-Based Violence with Engineering schools at policy and technical development of the device “CONNECT & Stop Violence”
- Championing Role Models as we boost contributions of women in STEM fields to serve as role models and inspire the next generation of female scientists, engineers, and technologists;
- Engaging Men and Boys, starting from our own governance as we work closely with our Male cofounders allies in promoting gender equality in STEM.
 - Lets crystallize our efforts to achieve SDG 5, and through it, all of the SDGs for a more inclusive, fair and sustainable world.

ABOUT WOMENVAI

email : contact@womensvai.org

The NGO WOMENVAI established in January 2018, proposed for the Special Consultative status ECOSOC to the United Nations, is a unique platform gathering women and men together in STEM* to build and bring sustainable solutions for a better world, aligned with the SDGs. Our Goals are (a) represent the interests of women in STEM globally (b) strengthen their role in our society in a sustainable and inclusive way (c) build on diversity and create innovative synergies, particularly in areas with high technological added value, to benefit sustainable development and environmental issues (d) enable international cooperation between national organizations of women engineers and scientists, (e) promote a balanced and modern life for all, respectful of professional equality between women and men.

*STEM= Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths
more on www.womensvai.org