

# Statement submitted by the signatories at the occasion of the United Nations Civil Society Conference “Shaping a Future of Global and Sustainable Progress” 9 - 10 May, 2024 - UNON, Kenya



**AFRICA CLIMATE  
AND ENVIRONMENT  
FOUNDATION - ACEF**

6<sup>th</sup> May 2024

## **Role of Civil Society Stakeholders in 20 Years of the WSIS Process, towards the Summit of the Future and beyond**

As the UN Civil Society Conference provides us an opportunity for multi-stakeholder engagement ahead of the Summit of the Future and an additional platform to speak out and contribute to the Pact for the Future negotiations, in line with SDG17 and the Common Agenda's vision of networked multilateralism, we wish to not only thank the high-level stakeholders but also indeed share our views through this statement.

As the Pact of the Future is a proposed framework that aims to address global challenges by fostering cooperation and ensuring that future generations inherit a sustainable world, including commitments to digital cooperation and declarations on future generations, which align with the objectives of both SDG17 and SDG5 by promoting inclusive partnerships, we wish to state that ACEF-Africa Climate and Environment Foundation and WOMENVAI, alongside global partners, are dedicated to advancing girls and women's rights to leadership roles in STEM<sup>1</sup> fields which are key in designing solutions that play a significant role in tackling global challenges including the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We, therefore, celebrate UN WOMEN's efforts to bolster gender equality and women's empowerment in STEM, aiming to dismantle long-standing barriers and biases.

In Africa, women and girls in STEM fields are significantly underrepresented: as an example only 13% of STEM field graduates in South Africa are women<sup>i</sup>, Women graduating from tertiary education in STEM fields are below 30% for many countries<sup>ii</sup> in Africa, Only about 30% of science professionals in Africa are women, and female enrollment in STEM courses is on the rise<sup>iii</sup> and for sub-Saharan Africa: the share of female researchers is 31.1%<sup>iv</sup>. These figures highlight the ongoing

---

<sup>1</sup> STEM= Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

gender gap in STEM in Africa, underscoring the need for continued efforts to encourage and support women and girls in these fields.

And even despite progress at global level, significant gaps remain: women earn less, work more, and are underrepresented as landowners, business leaders, and researchers. It is time to implement United Nations recommended practices for equality across all sectors and scales.

Gender equality is vital for human rights, economic growth, innovation, education, health, political participation, poverty reduction, social justice, peace, and global development. We commit to advocacy, capacity building, research, partnerships, education support, leadership promotion, violence prevention, role model elevation, and engaging men in gender equality efforts. We must intensify actions to fulfill SDG 5 for a more equitable and sustainable world and wish all to engage in our strategy for the future, giving 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. We do this through:

- Advocacy and Awareness, including advocating for the removal of gender bias and stereotypes in STEM education and careers, while at the same time mobilizing grassroots communities to take up action in dealing with the global challenges. Women and girls are made to understand that they are well-positioned just like their male counterparts to provide solutions to the global challenges such the triple planetary crisis.
- Capacity Building: deploying initiatives for women and girls in STEM, providing training and mentorship programs to enhance their skills and knowledge in STEM disciplines and how these skills and knowledge can be applied to design solutions
- Research and Data Collection as we researchers from hard and social sciences contribute to better understand the challenges girls and women face in society and develop evidence-based solutions;
- Partnerships as we do partner with technical UN agencies such as the ITU, the UNEP, 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 and allies in promoting gender equality in STEM.

## SIGNATORIES

**Yvette Ramos** [yvette.ramos@womensvai.org](mailto:yvette.ramos@womensvai.org)  
President and cofounder WOMENVAI NGO

**Robert Meya** [meyarobert4@gmail.com](mailto:meyarobert4@gmail.com)  
Communications Lead ACEF Africa,

with Special Consultative status ECOSOC,  
President Swiss Engineering Geneva Chapter,  
Switzerland –PhD candidate ICS - University  
of Lisbon, Portugal.

Environmental Educator and Trainer, Climate  
Action Mobilizer, Founder Our Environment  
Organization-CBO and Project Lead at the  
Friends of Ondiri Wetland Kenya.

## ABOUT THE ENTITIES REPRESENTED

**Africa Climate and Environment Foundation (ACEF) Africa, Cameroun** is an International non-profit organization that was founded on March 31st, 2021 with headquarters in Limbe- Cameroon. This youth-led organization was founded in order to mobilize and empower grassroots African youth to take action for the climate, environment, and sustainable development, that would help bridge the hunger and poverty gap, mitigate climate change, build the resilience of grassroots communities, protect the environment, promote peace, and conserve natural resources across Africa. ACEF is typically a youth-driven organization and its spread across Africa has proven its acceptance by passionate and enlightened African youths who are bent in their irrevocable task of changing the narrative in the African continent. It's time to stop talking the talk. With less than two years of existence, ACEF already has members across 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and it has been accredited by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC). More on <https://www.acef-ngo.org/>

**WOMENVAI: WOMen and Men in ENVironment and Artificial Intelligence, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, France.** Established in January 2018, member of the WCG- Women and Climate Group Constituency, 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. Goals include the representation of women in STEM, particularly in areas with high technological added value, to benefit sustainable development and environmental issues and bridge the professional equality gap between women and men. \*STEM= Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths. More on [www.womenvai.org](http://www.womenvai.org)

---

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/more-women-needed-stem-related-fields>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/04/women-stem-africa-science-gender-education-tech/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/women-and-girls-science-and-technology-bridging-gender-gap>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs60-women-in-science-2020-en.pdf>