

Getting it Right from the Start: Empowering Women in Green STEM through the Education Pipeline

CSW67 Side Event

Tuesday 7 March 2023, 13.15-14.45

Australian Mission to the UN, 150 East 42nd Street, 34th Floor
Light lunch provided

This event will bring together representatives from the Australian, Bangladesh, Colombian and Fiji governments, industry and academia for a holistic discussion on Women in Green STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) to:

1. Build understanding of the root causes behind low rates of young women's enrolment in STEM education
2. Address the cultural and structural barriers to women in STEM careers
3. Share best practice and lessons learned to address this problem
4. Examine challenges in the changing world of STEM and elevate the importance of preventing gender segregation in emerging industries in green and environmental STEM.



Speakers will discuss innovative approaches to increasing the participation and retention of women and girls in green STEM education and careers.

Key remarks

- **Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy**, Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Health, Australia
- **The Hon Fazilatun Nessa Indira**, Minister of State for Women and Child Affairs, Bangladesh
- **Her Excellency Lynda Tabuya**, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Republic of Fiji
- **The Hon Yesenia Olaya**, Vice Minister of Talent and Social Appropriation from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Colombia (video)

Panellists

- **Dr Christina Kwauk**, Unbounded Associates
- **Florence Drummond**, Indigenous Women in Mining and Resources Australia (IWIMRA)
- **Virisila Buadromo**, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights Asia & Pacific



Background

The data is clear. Women and girls continue to be under-represented in STEM education and careers. Globally, [the World Economic Forum reports](#) that in 2019, women made up 12% of the global mining and metals workforce and 8.3% of the construction workforce. The picture for leadership is stark as well: data shows that women's share of leadership roles in the energy industry is just 20%, and 24% in technology. While women are more present in the renewable energy sector than in traditional oil and gas industries, [a 2019 report](#) from the International Renewable Energy Agency showed that women represented 32% of full-time workers in the renewables sector—these women held only 31% of jobs requiring STEM training.

The education pipeline is a determining factor in the number of women in STEM careers, with less women graduating from STEM degrees. [2019 data](#) shows the OECD average share of women graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction was 6.59%, with 5.07% in natural sciences, mathematics and statistics and just 1.66% in information and communication technologies.

These numbers reflect the untapped potential of women and girls in STEM education, careers and leadership. Promoting gender equality in STEM is key to boosting economic growth, addressing skills shortages and fostering innovation in the face of evolving challenges. STEM forms the foundational knowledge and skills for the jobs driving the global clean energy transition. As economies around the world focus on this transition and the Green STEM sector expands, it is imperative that private and public policy settings are right from the outset, to remove barriers for women and girls in green STEM careers and leadership.