

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

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17-19 November 2021**

CSTD 2021-2022 priority theme on “Industry 4.0 for inclusive development”

Statement submitted by
Swiss Engineering Geneva

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CSTD 2021-2022 Inter-sessional Panel

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

Good day to all and thanks for the opportunity given to me and the organizations I do represent to be with you today in this plenary,

The urgent needs of accelerating digital transformation across different sectors as an immediate response to COVID-19 give our group the opportunity to highlight our activities and offer partnerships in terms of advocacy and actions in the areas of Industry 4.0, smart agriculture, urban development, mobility and so many other STEM areas.

The importance of technology and equal access to all, as it has been explained today, shows that yet a lot has to be done to promote coordination amongst governmental stakeholders at national and international levels on one hand and the Civil society on the other hand.

Dear colleagues, i am speaking here on behalf of the WOMENVAI NGO that i have the honour to chair with all fantastic men and women engineers and scientists across the world, **working for efficient and smart solutions** together with our partners namely Swiss Engineering Geneva CH, Farmer Charlie UK, the University of Bari, IT, the University of Krakow, PL, the EPF Engineering School FR, AIODD and others.

We just came back from Glasgow and yes COP26 is disappointing: the IPCC report provides high-level summaries and helps all of us understand the current state of Climate on Earth, including how it is changing and the role of human influence.

Now, we have no choice than to act and we, engineers and scientists, women and men together are more than ever ready to co-design with all stakeholders and offer the Planet and our Humanity an innovative change taking-off now, with the Paris-agreement basis and co-implement a wise and concrete Climate Adaptation plan aligned to the WSIS action lines.

We can make this happen, through all CSTD members and partners, from the public and the private sectors. As UN Women recognizes the *“tremendous efforts of women and girls around the world to shape a more equal future”* we are calling for women’s representation that reflects all women and girls in all their diversity and abilities, and across all cultural, social,

economic and political situations. Challenges in accessing technology lie in many factors, including:

- 1) political fragility,
 - 2) looming barriers posed by climate change, and
 - 3) gender discrimination,
- these 3 key factors being accentuated by the pandemic.

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). It is time to give more opportunities to today's 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 want to promote action!

So as a partner to you, government stakeholders and private/public organizations, we do propose 3 key action points:

- (1) Developing digital skills and building human capacities to match the needs of the XXIst society. Although technologies are becoming increasingly affordable, the acquisition of basic digital skills remains a barrier and the digital divide persists.**
- (2) Strengthening Youth employability, and creating new job opportunities, while ensuring the participation of girls and women in ICT in all socioeconomic sectors.**
- (3) Offering technological solutions to fight sexual harassment and violence at school, at the university campuses and at the workplace.**

Thank you very much for your attention!

17th November 2021 –

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