



High-level Political Forum 2019  
Report of the STI Forum, 12 July 2019  
Intervention delivered by IfáşínàEfunyemi

Thank you Chair,

I am IfáşínàEfunyemi, from Belize and I speak on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

In my region of the Caribbean, even though many girls still will not be able to achieve higher education, those who do, mostly score better than the boys in their class.

Nevertheless, later in their careers, women will often not advance as far as their male colleagues, especially in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) sectors due to gender barriers.

Before we can talk about harnessing the benefits of science, technology and innovation to improve women's lives, we therefore need to recognize the underlying barriers caused by gender inequalities.

We need to address society's view on traditional gender roles. Young girls are already being directed into fields that are deemed appropriate for females, which then limits their opportunities to explore STEM jobs. *(if you agree with me, wave your hand)*

We need to ensure that women throughout all life stages, and in all regions, including in rural and remote areas, can benefit and obtain access from STI.

As we are pushing for emerging technologies, we need to recall that large parts of the population do not even have access to basic energy and electricity.

Achieving the SDGs, will therefore require a combination of measures:

- Girls and adolescent women should be encouraged and supported to study science, math, engineering and technology from the outset, including from primary school.
- Reskilling and enabling women in digital literacy
- Promote safe workplaces for women, free from violence and harassment, by applying the ILO Convention on ending sexual violence in the workplace which was just passed last month
- Create access to affordable funding to support women grassroots organizations to bridge the technology divide and facilitate the deployment of locally-appropriate, environmentally sustainable and proven technologies.

Thank you Chair!

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Thank you chair,

I am xxx, from xxx and I speak on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

In my region of Africa, even though many girls still will not be able to do higher education, those who do, mostly score better than the boys in the class.

Nevertheless, later in their careers, women will often not advance as far as their male colleagues, especially in STEM sectors, due to gender barriers .

Even before we talk about harnessing the benefits of science technology and innovation to improve women's lives, we therefore need to recognize the underlying barriers caused by gender inequalities.

These barriers are multiple, and I could fill my 2 minutes with them, however let me mention only a few key points 1) the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, 2) violence against women and girls including in the workplace, and 3) structural inequality in access to pay, resources and decision making.

We need to indeed promote STI to improve the wellbeing of those most in danger of being left behind,

But we must be sensitive that there is a risk of pushing them further behind, while unintentionally widening the technology gap

As in April 2019, only 56% of the world population has access to internet. So therefore we must prioritize technology for all women and men, not only those who have access to it already now.

We also need to consider that those who are most left behind, are also often facing the dark side of technologies, for example the pollution and disruption from activities such as fracking or Carbon Capture Systems, or death from the conflicts around the mining of metals used for the new and current technologies, such as used in our mobile phones.

Technologies such as GMOs have been sold hand in hand with cancer causing pesticides such as Roundup Glyphosate, and are leading to irreversible costs at the detriment of farmers and their communities.

Monitoring and assessment of potential impacts of technologies with the active participation of women and affected communities should be an **integral component of the technology cycle**

**We need Regulatory frameworks for hazardous technologies**, including wastes and substances of technological innovations. Sales of dangerous technologies such as nuclear, GMOs, synthetic biology and geoengineering need full transparency on future costs and free and prior informed consent of impacted communities, in particular by indigenous peoples.

We need to ensure that women throughout all life stages, and in all regions, including in rural and remote areas, can benefit and obtain access from STI.

As we are pushing for emerging technologies, we need to recall that large parts of the population do not even have access to basic energy and electricity.

In many of the communities where I work, we are supporting women to access solar energy, biogas, and agroecological solutions, that are **environmentally safe, socially appropriate, gender-sensitive and that create jobs for women.**

### **There is a vital role of endogenous capacity and indigenous knowledge**

Achieving the SDGs, will therefore require a combination of measures

- Increase girls' participation in STEM and avenues for entrepreneurship. Girls and adolescent women should be encouraged to study science, math, engineering and technology from the outset, including from primary school.
- Reskilling, empowering and enabling women by improving skills and literacy of digital infrastructure
- Promote safe workplaces, violence and harassment free work environment for women by applying the ILO Convention on ending sexual violence in the workplace which was just passed last month
- Ensure that women receive equal pay for work of equal value, and also equal pay for equal value
- Create access to affordable **funding** to support the women grassroots to **bridge the technology divide** and facilitate the deployment of locally-appropriate, environmentally sustainable and proven technologies

Thank you chair!

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