



 **# FEBRUARY 11**
Women & Girls in Science

9th International Day of Women & Girls in Science Assembly

8-9 February 2024
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Women in Science Leadership: a New Era for Sustainability

Concept Note and Provisional Agenda

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Concept Note

The Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT), co-organizing and co-sponsoring Member States, UN Agencies and Intergovernmental Organizations are celebrating the **9th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly**, taking place on **8 and 9 February 2024** at the **United Nations Headquarters in New York**.

Following the adoption of **Resolution A/RES/70/212** on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, RASIT continues to work with UN Member States, Inter-Governmental Organizations, the UN and its entities to achieve equality in science, technology, and innovation for socio-economic sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

The 9th IDWGIS Assembly is **co-organized** by the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT), and the Permanent Missions of Costa Rica, Lebanon, Malta, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, and Spain, to the United Nations. The 9th Assembly is **co-sponsored** by the Permanent Missions of Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Austria, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Colombia, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, France, Greece, Guyana, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Maldives, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, and Türkiye to the United Nations, as well as the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and World Health Organization (WHO).

Recognizing the role of women and girls in science as agents of change and the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the main theme for the 9th IDWGIS Assembly is: **“Women and Girls in Science Leadership – a New Era for Sustainability”**. The 9th Assembly will bring together women in science leaders and experts from around the world, high-level government officials, representatives of international organizations and the private sector to **discuss women leadership in achieving the three pillars of Sustainable Development**, namely *economic prosperity, social justice, and environmental integrity*.

As indicated in the herewith enclosed provisional program, this edition of the IDWGIS Assembly will focus on the key role of women experts in all fields of sciences in accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals under review at the forthcoming High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2024, namely SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and its nexus SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG13 (Climate Action). More specifically, it will:

- Highlight the role of women leadership in Diplomacy and International Affairs;
- Address gender responsive and human rights-based approach for achieving sustainable, equitable and inclusive socio-economic development;
- Zoom in on science diplomacy and science and society;
- Recognize the interplay and interdependency between science, technology, and green economic growth;
- Underline the inclusion of Women with Disabilities in National and International Affairs; and
- Promote Youth Leadership to Transforming Science and Culture Education.

The voice of Youth, Girls in Science 4 SDGs International Platform, and our fellow blind and deaf scientists and experts will be present in every panel.

Provisional Agenda

8 February 2024

United Nations Headquarters, New York

10.00 – 18.00 (US-EST)

Selected Side Events

on Women Leadership in Different Fields Related to Sustainable Development

10.30 – 13.00 (US-EST)

Conference Room 6:

High-Level Panel

Women in Science Rising: Leadership in Business and Economics

Globally, women have become engines for economic growth. Achieving gender diversity in enterprises is of critical importance to improving business outcomes. However, women remain underrepresented in business, particularly at senior management levels. While much progress has been made, women remain underutilized despite representing a dynamic and capable pool of talent.

Women's entrepreneurship is both about women's position in society and the role of entrepreneurship in the same society. Therefore, women's entrepreneurship needs to be explored separately as an important untapped source of economic growth.

This highly-level Panel will address the benefits of reforming policies to empower women in science in business and will assist in promoting awareness of the role of women in science entrepreneurs in the economy growth. It will further discuss:

- the importance of incorporating a women entrepreneurial dimension in considering all SMEs and growth policies (e.g. meeting women's financing needs at all stages of the business continuum; take-

- up of business development and support services; access to corporate, government and international markets; technology access and utilization; R&D and innovation; etc.); and
- the need for better qualitative information and quantitative data and statistics to profile women entrepreneurs (e.g., demographic information, barriers to start-up and growth).

Moderator:

Mr. Adam Kuymizakis, *Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations*

Welcoming Remark:

HRH Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite, *Executive Director, Royal Academy of Science International Trust*

Opening Statements:

H.E. Ms. Jelena Begović, *Minister of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia*

H.E. Mr. Zenon Ngay Mukongo, *Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the United Nations*

Panelists:

Mrs. Sandrine NGALULA MUBENGA, *Director General of the Electricity Regulatory Agency, Democratic Republic of Congo.*

Dr. Belen Carrillo-Rivas, *Senior Vice-President, Head of Regulatory Affairs & Quality, Structure Therapeutics, Spain*

Dr. Henry Bryce Wedler, *Blind Scientist and Entrepreneur, Science and Innovation Officer, RASIT "Science in Braille" Global Program*

Paola Mina-Osorio, MD, Ph.D., *Vice President, Medical Affairs at Immunovant*

Mr. Bill Diamond, *CEO, SETI Institute*

Interventions

Ms. Izgin Ozdas, *Mechanical Engineer, Lead Manufacturing Engineer, Imtek Cryogenics, Peer-mentor for Girls in Science 4 SDGs International Platform, Türkiye.*

Closing Remarks

15.00 – 16.30 (US-EST)

Conference Room 5

High-Level Panel

**Empowering Women and Girls in Science and in Leadership:
From Discovery to the Market**

Historically, women have been underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields worldwide. Slovenia has been striving for a more inclusive scientific landscape, fostering diversity and creativity. The country's initiatives, from the support networks and mentorship programs, research funding, and investments in work-life balance, aim to provide equal opportunities and support for women and girls pursuing educational pathways and careers in scientific disciplines.

As a long-term supporter of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, this year we are shedding light on women in biotech science and industry. According to BIO's 2022 diversity, equity, and inclusion report, only 34% of executive teams and 20% of CEOs are women in the biotech industry and biotech start-ups. Furthermore, women make up only 11% of investing partners at venture capital firms.

Owing to a gender disparity in pay, scarcity of mentorship programs, and a lack of funding for women-led biotech businesses, women are more likely to leave the sector.

Despite these challenges, women leaders are emerging stronger and are seen as role models. As we celebrate the 9th International Day of Women and Girls in Science, Slovenia is presenting three Slovenian women, who are not only making a difference in leading the research and innovation in the biotech industry but also leading the way in the venture capital sector.

This Side event, co-organized by the Republic of Slovenia, ASEF – American Slovenian Education Foundation, VTIS Association, and OnaVe, with the support of the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT) and the UN member states, will discuss how to dismantle the barriers women in biotech science face, to learn about good practices from science and industry, and to capitalize on the incentives for investment in women in leadership positions in the biotech industry, start-ups, and the venture capital world.

Moderator:

Polona Šafarič Tepeš, Ph.D., *Research Fellow in Women's Reproductive Health, FIRM, Northwell, RASIT External Relations Coordinator, Chair of VTIS USA Committee Board*

Opening Statements:

H.E. Ambassador Boštjan Malovrh, *Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations*

HRH Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite, *Executive Director, Royal Academy of Science International Trust*

Mr. Eliot Minchenberg, *UNESCO Representative to the United Nations in New York*

Panel discussion with:

Cat Donaldson, Ph.D., *Head of Alexandria LaunchLabs & Principal at Alexandria Venture Investments*

Daša Lipovšek, Ph.D., VP, *Lead Discovery, Aktis Oncology, Inc.*

Katja Lumbar Globocnik, Ph.D., *Senior Director, Global Product Introduction & Optimizations, Teva Pharmaceuticals*

Jake Prigoff, MD, *Healthcare Partner at Gaingels & EIR at Eidos - University of Pennsylvania*

Closing Remarks:

10.00 – 13.00 (US-EST)

Girls and Female Youth in Science

First EXPO on Transforming Science and Arts Education

The 9th Assembly will feature, for the first time, a STEM EXPO for Girls and female youth on the 8th of February, with the aim of raising awareness on the professions and career opportunities and inspiring girls and female youths in science.

Despite significant improvements in the last nine years of celebrating #February11, female youth are either not choosing STEM fields or leaving it after graduation. This is due to a variety of reasons, mostly related to the role allocated to women in modern society, the environment on international community and global policy arena, as well as pre-existing prejudices that form glass ceilings while encouraging male presence in the workplace. It is also however, a result of lack of information, which constrains young women freedom when the time comes to choose a career, with little knowledge of available possibilities.

What seems to be missing are good role models that could act as inspiration and source of information and guidance and offer a glimpse into the reality of being a female employed in the field of science and/or technology. Parents, teachers, and career guidance counselors all have a significant role in assisting or hindering the way young women choose their career paths and that choice begins early on from school, all the way through to higher education.

STEM-focused institutions and corporations will be invited to showcase their work, how their work is connected to SDGs, and further to encourage and motivate girls and female youth to choose and remain in science.

Moderators:

Ms. Olivia Cohn, *Co-Founder, One Billion Voices Global Campaign, RASIT Girls in Science 4 SDGs International Platform*

Polona Šafarič Tepeš, Ph.D., *Research Fellow in Women's Reproductive Health, FIRM, Northwell, RASIT External Relations Coordinator, Chair of VTIS USA Committee Board*

Opening Remarks:

HRH Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite, *Executive Director, Royal Academy of Science International Trust*

Panelists:

Prof. Wanda Díaz-Merced, *Blind Professor of Astrophysics, Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, San*

Juan Puerto Rico

Dr. Tahani Amer, *Associate Director for Flight Programs- Acting, Astrophysics Division, Science Mission Directorate, NASA*

Cat Donaldson, Ph.D., *Head of Alexandria LaunchLabs & Principal at Alexandria Venture Investments*

Dr. Cary Supalo, *Research Developer at Educational Testing Service, USA; Advocate, RASIT “Science in Braille” Global Program*

Jerica Oblak, Ph.D., *Adjunct Professor of Music Composition and Theory, Music Composition Department Steinhardt, New York University*

Meera Ramanujam, Ph.D., *Senior Director, Head of Translational Research Sr. Director, Head of Translational Research, Alexion, AstraZeneca Rare Disease*

Daša Lipovšek, Ph.D., *VP, Lead Discovery Aktis Oncology, Inc.*

Questions and Answers

Outcome and Closing Remarks

9 February 2024

United Nations Headquarters, New York

10:00 – 11:00 (US-EST)

General Assembly Hall

Opening Segment:

Welcoming Remarks

HRH Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite, *Executive Director, Royal Academy of Science International Trust*

Opening Statements:

H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, *President of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*

H.E. Dr. Helena Dalli, *European Union Commissioner for Equality (pre-recorded)*

H.E. Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, *Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (pre-recorded)*

H.E. Mr. Nikhil Seth, *Assistant-Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) (pre-recorded)*

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the World Women's Health and Development Forum

Dr. Meghna Badami, *Research Officer, RASIT World Women's Health and Development Forum, Peer-Mentor of Girls in Science 4 SDGs International Platform*

11.00 – 13.00 (US-EST)

General Assembly Hall

High-Level Panel 1 on
**Women in Science Leadership for Peace and Security
a New Era for Sustainability**

“All human rights issues have sustainable development dimensions... To ensure peace and prosperity in any society, we need to recognize science and culture as the foundations of sustainable and equitable programs... To achieve a sustainable development, we need to promote excellence in education ...”

--- 17 April 1968

*the late HRH Prince Mohammad bin King Faisal (I) of Iraq El-Hashemite
The Founder, Royal Academy of Science International Trust*

Humankind is facing global challenges, pressures on global commons and natural resources, the impact of emerging technologies, and not least the wars in different parts of the world that are placing people and the planet under stress and in great uncertainty. Women's important role in policy and decision-making is as yet not adequately reflected in political representation. Getting women in top leadership positions is critical, but it is also not enough. Traditional gender roles, conscious and unconscious biases, and discriminatory attitudes and norms continue to pose barriers to women's full and meaningful participation. World's societies will not enjoy peace for equitable inclusive socio-economic sustainable development if they do not benefit from women experts and professionals' leadership.

In view of the increasing complexity and interconnectedness of global challenges, it is essential to mobilize all available diplomacy tools to help achieve the 2030 Development Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Goals. In this regard, the Global Approach for peace and prosperity should focus more on women and science diplomacy. This High-Level Panel will discuss both at institutional level and with relevant stakeholders:

- Strategies and best practices for increasing women's meaningful political participation from around the world;
- Women in science added value in policy and decision-making;
- Women and Girls in Science and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325;
- The role women in science can play for the development of an International Science Diplomacy Framework and Agenda; and
- The inclusion of Women with Disabilities in National and International Affairs as a practical necessity.

Moderator:

H.E. Ambassador Krzysztof Maria Szczerski, *Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations*

Remarks and Statements:

H.E. Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva, *Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations*

H.E. Ambassador Ernest Rwamucyo, *Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations*

Video Messages:

Chief Scientists of WHO

Dr. Esraa El-Babli, *First Deaf Arab Doctor, Egypt*

Panelists:

Mr. Hemant Taneja, *CEO and Managing Director, General Catalyst, USA*

Ms. Hulya Gedik, *Chairperson of the Board, Gedik Holding, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Gedik University, Türkiye*

Dr. Mona Minkara, *Blind Assistant Professor of Bioengineering, Northeastern University, Director of RASIT Science in Braille Program, USA*

Dr. Helmy Eltoukhy, *Co-Founder, Guardant Health, USA*

Interventions:

Ms. Reema Khan, *CEO, Green Sands Equity, USA*

Ms. Talya Ozdemir, *RASIT Girls in Science 4 SDGs International Platform, Türkiye*

Closing Remarks:

15.00 – 16.30 (US-EST)
Trusteeship Conference Room

High-Level Panel 2:
Women in Science Leadership in the United Nations

“For all countries striving to use scientific advancement for transformative development programs, it is necessary to grant women equal rights to men, empower women specialized in all fields of sciences and invest in their creative capabilities, recognize their achievements, and involve them in planning and decision-making processes...”

--- 17 April 1968

the late HRH Prince Mohammad bin King Faisal (I) of Iraq El-Hashemite
The Founder, Royal Academy of Science International Trust

The sub-title of the 2030 Agenda is "**Transforming our World**". It is clearly indicated at the 2030 Agenda that "there can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development". Indeed, fundamental transformations in the way the world lives, works, and does business are needed to: End poverty; to achieve food security and promote sustainable agriculture; to Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all; to Ensure inclusive and quality education for all; for building the low carbon, climate resilient, green and inclusive economies and societies of the future; and to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The Agenda 2030 challenges us in three major points:

- to transform for "people" and for "planet";
- to transform how we understand and how we strive for "prosperity"; and
- to travel a road to transformation based on peace, stability, inclusion, and partnerships.

This High-Level Panel will discuss the **Role of Women in Science in supporting the UN System to strengthen the Organization and help achieving the 2030 Development Agenda and its 17 Global Goals**. More specifically, it will focus on SDGs 16 and 17 and its nexus, namely: SDGs 1, 2, and 13:

- Advising for science-based solutions to end poverty and hunger.
- Highlighting green technology-based solutions for Climate Action.
- Highlight the role of women in science leadership in Diplomacy and International Affairs.

Moderators:

H.E. Ambassador Ana Paula Zacarias, *Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations*

H.E. Ambassador Leila Lora-Santos, *Deputy Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations*

Remarks and Statements:

Video Message:

Dr. Justyna Marchewka-Długońska, *Department of Human Biology, Faculty of Biology and Environmental Science, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland*

Panelists:

Prof. Dava J. Newman, *Director of MIT Media Lab, USA*

Ms. Violette Khairallah Safadi, *CEO, Indeed Better Together Foundation, Lebanon*

Dr. Ola Zahran, *Director, WIPO Representative Office in New York*

Ms. Julia Stankiewicz, *Aerospace Engineer, NASA JPL Student Researcher, Poland*

Dr. Sheri Wells-Jensen, *Blind Associate Professor of Linguistics at Bowling Green State University, Ohio; Literacy Officer, RASIT “Science in Braille” Global Program*

Interventions:

Ms. Olivia Cohn, *Girls in Science 4 SDGs International Platform, USA*

Dr. Abdelwahab Tbyshat, *World Youth League, Jordan*

Closing Remarks:

16:30 - 18:00 (USA-EST)

**Closing Ceremony:
THINK SCIENCE ... THINK PEACE¹**

Celebrating the 9th Anniversary of #February11 Global Movement

The Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT), co-organizing and co-sponsoring UN Member States, departments and agencies are celebrating the **9th anniversary** of the **#February11 Global Movement**.

Statements to be delivered by Heads of State or Government, and other dignitaries of the United Nations, and Inter-Governmental Organizations. Statements are expected to highlight the role of women leadership in peace, diplomacy, and development, and to ***acknowledge a woman in science and leader that inspired them, whether from history or modern world.***

Moderators:

Dr. Tahani Amer, *Associate Director for Flight Programs- Acting, Astrophysics Division, Science Mission Directorate, NASA*

Ms. Rafah Ayoup Zaid, *14 years old Girl in Science, High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at City College, Libya*

¹ Quote for HRH Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite

Remarks and Statements:

H.E. Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director, UN-Women (tbc)

HRH Prince Zain El-Hashemite, *Founder of Y 4 X Global Movement for Equality in Science, and Founder of Value Veda International Initiative for Science Education*

Heads of States and Governments and Dignitaries Pre-Recorded Messages

H.E. Mr. Nikos Christodoulides, *President of the Republic of Cyprus*

H.E. Prof. George Vella, *President of the Republic of Malta*

H.E. Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, *President of the Portuguese Republic*

H.E. Mr. Filippo Tamagnini, and H.E. Mr. Gaetano Troina, *Captains Regent of the Republic of San Marino*

H.E. Ms. Nataša Pirc Musar, *President of the Republic of Slovenia*

Interventions by Member States:

Ceremony of endorsing Outcome Document

Closing Remarks:

HRH Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite, *Executive Director, Royal Academy of Science International Trust*