

**International Workshop on  
'Empowerment of Women through Science and Technology  
Interventions'  
Tehran, Iran, 14-16 December 2008**

***PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES:*** 14 Countries (Including 12 Member Countries and 1 S&T-Industry Network Members of the NAM S&T Centre

***NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:*** The Workshop was attended by about 60 experts and senior professionals from 14 countries including the host country Islamic Republic of Iran.

Women are a great human resource in all countries and the role of women in society is critical for development. Arguably, to empower women is to increase their control over the decisions that affect their lives both within and outside the household. There are many developing countries where women are not even listed in any citizen registration database, which makes it very difficult for them, especially the poorer ones in rural areas and of under-privileged class to assert social security, social protection, legacy, land etc. as there is practically no proof of their existence. Through their empowerment women gain greater share of control over resources - material, human and intellectual such as knowledge, information, ideas - and financial resources involving access to money and control over decision making in the home, community, society and nation. It leads them to become a critical and vital stakeholder among the human capital and their strategic presence in the society is widely accepted. Market economy trends in the new era of globalization have widened the gap between education and technology opportunities for men and women. Worldwide the capacity of women to engage in the knowledge society is grossly underutilized. In the knowledge society they need access not only to new technologies but also to education, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities as well as the ability to participate fully in knowledge based activities.

Women force comprises only a small percentage of the scientific and academic community barring teachers at the school and pre-school levels. But they have an attitude to work with sincerity and loyalty while keeping pace with the required timings, and given proper own space, they can play an increasingly important role in social, industrial and economic development of the country. The involvement and engagement of women in the Information Society on an equal footing with men would directly contribute to improving the livelihood of people, making it more sustainable and thereby promoting the social and economic advancement of societies. Governments must design and implement national policies and programmes that promote science and technology education for women and girls and which encourage women to enter into high value added ICT career. Programmes should be strengthened to bring about a

greater involvement of women in science and technology. These should include measures to motivate girls to take up science and technology for higher education and also ensure that development projects with scientific and technical inputs have a total involvement of women. Efforts to develop a scientific temper and awareness need should be stepped up. Special measures should be adopted for their training in areas where they have special skills like communication and information technology. Efforts to develop appropriate technologies suited to women's needs as well as to reduce their drudgery have to be given a special focus too.

Women should be encouraged to bring their vision and leadership, knowledge and skills, views and aspirations into the development agenda from the grassroots to international levels. Science and technology brings economic growth and well-being to people and it is not only the empowerment of women through science and technology, but also the enrichment of science and technology through women's participation. It is not the concern of one nation only, but there are many players and stakeholders in the aim to reach this millennium goal. Programmes should be worked out to empower women through innovative scientific activities integrating action oriented literacy, sound micro-finance and micro-enterprise training as well as an understanding of legal rights and advocacy. Apart from the efforts of United Nations family of organizations, multilateral bodies and civil society, the positive role of women also depends on the supportive attitudes of their local family unit, the local community in each village and town. We just hope that women become empowered at 100% and become equal to men so that both of them may work side by side for a better world of today.

In order to deliberate on the emergent need for capacity building for women in order to economically empower them, the Centre for Science & Technology of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre) organized a 3-days International Workshop on Empowerment of Women through Science & Technology Interventions from 14-16 December 2008 at IROST Headquarters in Tehran, Iran jointly with the Iranian Research Organization for Science & Technology (IROST), Ministry of Science, Research & Technology of Iran and Iranian Association of Women's Studies (IAWS), Tehran.

The Opening Session commenced with the traditional recitation of Holy Quran and National Anthem of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was followed by the welcome remarks by Dr. Nasrin Mosaffa, Head, Iranian Association for Women's Studies (IAWS). Prof. Arun P. Kulshreshtha, Director, NAM S&T Centre gave introductory address highlighting the background of the Workshop. The Keynote Address was made by Dr. M.H. Entezari, Vice-President, Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST). Dr. Arsalan Ghorbani, Acting Minister for International Scientific Cooperation in the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran made the Inaugural Speech as the Guest of Honour.

The Workshop was attended by about 60 experts and senior professionals from 14 countries including the host country Islamic Republic of Iran. The overseas participants were from Botswana [Dr. (Ms.) Gloria Tiny Seitei, Botswana Technology Centre]; Germany [Prof. (Ms.) Felizitas Sagebiel, Associate Professor, Faculty of Educational and Social Sciences, Bergische University of Wuppertal]; India [Dr.(Ms.) Vinita Sharma, Director/Scientist-F, Science and Society Division, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, New Delhi; Prof. (Ms.) Nirupama Prakash, Chief, Women Studies & Societal Development Unit Group Leader, Humanistic Studies & Coordinator, Hospital & Health Systems Management Program, Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani, Rajasthan; Prof. Pranav N. Desai, Chairperson, Centre for Studies in Science Policy, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi; Dr. (Ms.) Kavita Mehra, National Institute of Science, Technology & Development Studies, CSIR, New Delhi; Mr. Ratan Kumar, Vice-President, Mekaster Engineering & Equipments Ltd., New Delhi; and Mr. Kapil Vermani, General Manager, Mekaster Engineering & Equipments Ltd., Gujarat]; Indonesia [Mrs. Siti Nurul Aisyiyah Jenie, Researcher, Research Centre for Chemistry, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Jakarta]; Malawi [Mr. Symon Osman Mandala, Principal Science and Technology Officer, Department of Science and Technology, Lilongwe]; Malaysia [Mrs. Choo Poh Sze, Science and Policy Specialist, The WorldFish Center, Penang]; Mauritius [Mrs. Shamima Abdul Carrim Delbar, Industrial Analyst, Ministry of Industry, Science and Research, Port Louis]; Myanmar [Dr. (Ms.) Khin Htike Htike Lwin, Principal, Technological University, Kyaukse]; Nepal [Dr. (Ms.) Kayo Devi Yami Tuladhar, Chief, Science Faculty, Nepal Academy of Science and Technology]; South Africa [Ms. Naadiya Moosajee, Co-founder and Director SAWomEng (South African Women in Engineering), Department of Civil Engineering, University of Cape Town]; Sri Lanka [Ms. Jayasamara Gunaratne, Coordinator, Technology Transfer Unit, Ministry of Science & Technology]; Tanzania [Dr. Rose Rita Kingamkono, Director, Research Coordination and Promotion, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, Dar es Salaam]; and Zambia [Ms. Atridah Mulonga, Programme Officer - Promotion and Grants, National Science and Technology Council, Lusaka].

The Workshop was conducted in seven technical sessions broadly categorised under the themes 'National Policies and Programmes', 'Role of Information and Communication Technologies' and 'Women and New Technologies', six of which were held at the IROST Headquarters in Tehran and a 7<sup>th</sup> special session on 'Development of Entrepreneurship and Women's Empowerment' was organised during a study tour to the Faculty of Entrepreneurship in the University of Tehran. The overall technical programme of the conference was coordinated by Dr. Nasrin Mosaffa, Head, IAWS and Prof. A.P. Kulshreshtha, Director, NAM S&T Centre. The sessions were co-chaired, respectively, by Dr. M. Molanejad, Prof. Shokouh Navabinejad, Dr. Akram Ghadimi, Dr. Nasrin Mosaffa, Prof. A. Irazi Zad and Dr. Mina Mehrnoush from Iran and Prof. Nirupama Prakash, Ms. Naadiya Moosajee, Prof. Pranav N. Desai, Dr. (Ms.) Vinita Sharma, Dr. Rose Rita Kingamkono and Prof. Arun P. Kulshreshtha from among overseas participants.

Among the foreign participants, Mrs. Gloria Seitei (Botswana) made presentation on 'Areas of Weaknesses, Obstacles and Challenges to Economic Empowerment of Women in Developing Countries: Botswana's Current Status'; Mr. Symon Mandala (Malawi) on 'Taking Action to Empower Women Scientists and Technologists through Women in Science and Technology Network (WISTNET) in Malawi'; Ms. Aisyiyah Jenie (Jakarta) on 'Women, Science and Technology: An Overview from Indonesia'; Mrs. Choo Poh Sze (Malaysia) on 'Economic Empowerment of Malaysian Women through Science and Technology: identifying Bottlenecks, providing Solutions'; Ms. Atridah Mulonga (Zambia) on 'Empowerment of Women through Science and Technology Interventions – The Case for Zambia'; Prof. Pranav Desai (India) on 'Gender in Indian Science & Technology: Recognition of Excellence'; Ms. J. Gunaratne (Sri Lanka) on 'Various Mechanisms used by "Vidhatha" Technology Transfer Programme for Economic Empowerment of Rural Women through S&T Interventions'; Dr. (Ms.) Vinita Sharma (India) on 'Reaching the Unreached: Technology Model for Women Empowerment and Sustainable Development, Prof. (Ms.) Felizitas Sagebiel (Germany) on 'Career Barriers for Women Engineers in Europe – Transferability for Developing Countries', Prof. Nirupama Prakash (India) on 'ICT as a Tool for Empowering Women – A Case Study of Rural Rajasthan', Ms. Naadiya Moosajee (South Africa) on 'The Status of Women in Engineering in South Africa and the Efforts of SAWomEng to facilitate the Absorption and Retention of Females in the Engineering Sector'; Dr. Khin Lwin (Myanmar) on 'The Performance of Myanmar Women in the Field of Science & Technology'; Dr. Kavita Mehra (India) on 'Women Empowerment to Women Capabilities: Bridging the Gap'; Dr. Kayo Devi Yami (Nepal) on 'Empowerment of Nepalese Women through Establishment of Biovillages in Nepal'; Dr. Rose Kingamkono (Tanzania) on 'Production of Low-Cost Complementary Foods Using Locally Grown Foods in Tanzania'; and Prof. Arun Kulshreshtha (NAM S&T Centre) on 'South – South Cooperation through NAM S&T Centre'. Mrs. Shamima Delbar (Mauritius) presented a Country Status Report.

The participants from Iran, who made presentations during the workshop were Dr. Mahnaz Mazaheri Assadi from Environmental Biotechnology Group, Biotechnology Department, IROST on 'Women Scientific Movements' and 'Are Women Behind Biotechnology Gun in Iran?'; Prof. Shokouh Navabinejad, Psychologist and President, Women NGO's Network in Iran on 'Scientific and Women Empowerment in Iran'; Dr. Masoumeh Simbar, Assistant Professor in Reproductive Health, Shahid Beheshti Medical Science University on 'Women Empowerment and Gender-Sensitive Health Services'; Dr. Shahindokht Kharazmi, Founder and Vice-President, Iranian Studies for Information Society Association on 'The Impacts of ICT on Human Life'; Dr. Bahram Mostaghimi of the College of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran and Member, Iranian Association for UN Studies on 'Women Empowerment and Digital Divide'; Ms. Kharazmi, Post-Graduate Student, Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran on 'Iranian Young Female Generation, Iranian Cultural Engineering and Globalisation: The Content Analysis of Iranian 18-25 Year Old Females Weblogs and Iranian Cultural Map in Cyber Space'; Prof. Azam Iraj Zad, Head, Physics Department, Institute for Nano Science & Nanotechnology, Sharif University of Technology, Tehran on 'Iranian Women

in Nanotechnology'; Dr. Mina Mehrnoush, Vice President, Institute of Development and Economic Research, Tehran, Iran on 'Impact of Knowledge Economy on Entrepreneurship'; Dr. Zahira Arasty, Faculty of Enterprises, Tehran University on 'Women Entrepreneurs and Challenges'; and Dr. Parvaneh Gelard, Faculty of Enterprises, Tehran University on 'Why do Women become Entrepreneurs?'

The Plenary Concluding Session was led by Dr. Nasrin Mosaffa, Head, IAWS and Dr. M. Molanejad, Head, International Relations, IROST when a Tehran Resolution on 'Empowerment of Women through Science and Technology Interventions' was adopted after considerable deliberations and debate. The workshop ended with the distribution of the Certificate of Participation to the participants.

The participants thanked the organizers of the Conference and unanimously hoped that more similar events will be held in future with a focus on South-South cooperation for the capacity building and empowerment of women.