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Panel discussion on applying a gender lens to science, technology and innovation

Statement submitted by

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In a larger discussion of Science and Technology for Development, I am honored to participate in today's panel focusing on "Applying a gender lens to science, technology and innovation."

Science, technology and innovation are at the heart of development. The Sustainable Development Goals will not be realized without the input of STI. STI depends on mobilizing the talent that diverse people bring to the world's challenges, including the input of women as well as men. Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine need the energy, dynamism and diverse perspectives they bring! Many scholars are exploring the relationship of diversity and excellence, innovation and productivity. We are beginning to understand that our research and education cannot be excellent unless they are inclusive—that the lenses that difference brings to scientific research and discovery improve the inputs and the outcomes.

We have numerous examples of problems that have emerged from our failures to include gender perspectives, (e.g., from research on women's health, early air bag technology, and recent reports on artificial intelligence and facial recognition technology). But others point to **opportunities** that come from diversity such as in convergent research: "Harnessing human diversity effectively can have major implications for the advancement of science and society."

The Commission on S&T for Development is providing leadership within the UN system on incorporating a gender perspective into its deliberations: In its discussions; in the ministerial statements; in the consideration of the themes and its programming. There has been incredible growth in understanding the impact on its work over the 26 years since the Commission first began its exploration of the gender dimension of STI for development.

Why are we still discussing issues related to a gender lens? Because the issues are still here and deserving of discussion and because our understanding of a gender lens has evolved:

- Women's participation in STI compared with men's (representational issues—impact on women's income)
- Women's right to STI (to participate as full members in harnessing these fields to address the challenges that women face within development).
- Women as a specific target of development (SDG 5)
- The need to consider gender perspectives in addressing any aspect of development (how do men and women define and experience climate change, food security, energy and water)
- Science's need for the perspectives that women bring (when you look, what do you see... It matters what lens you use.)
- The need to look beyond "gender lens" as an add-on but as a way to "review and transform" the existing systems where STI are done: re-thinking the development agenda; reviewing the policies, programs and practices of our governments and its agencies, universities, research centers, industries and more, social media and frontier technologies emerging that can

marginalize the role and position of women. Professor Hall, noted “In AI, if it isn’t diverse it isn’t ethical.

- Gender lens within the design of new systems, processes, policies, practices....