

FROM DREAM TO REALITY!

It starts with an individual action, that leads to collective power, and translates to exponential impact!

Ms. Rola Dahlan
Secretary General

RASIT Women in Science International League

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Corresponding Author:

Ms. Rola Dahlan
Secretary General, RASIT Women in Science International League.
E-mail: wisil@rasit.org

On December 22nd 2015, the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a groundbreaking resolution to establish an annual International Day of Women and Girls in Science. This resolution demonstrates the commitment of Member States to achieving gender equality for women in science which remains a major challenge. Inequality hinders the capacity of nations to unlock the full transformative contribution which women in science can make to our world.



The dream was an idea that originated at the Inaugural World Women's Health and Development Forum in February of 2015. The idea of the Forum was developed and brought to fruition by Her Royal Highness, Princess Dr. Nisreen El Hashemite, Executive Director of the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT).

The Importance of the World Women's Health and Development Forum, organized by RASIT in partnership with the Division of Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) United Nations, and held at the UN HQ, can be summarized by:



H.E. Mr. Sam K. Kutesa, President of 69th Session of the General Assembly, United Nations

"Allow me to congratulate you on the creation of this Forum designed to address the links between women's health and sustainable development. From the Overview of the program, with its focus on health economics, health disparities and health systems and innovation, the event promises to yield useful outcomes as a contribution to the discussions on the Post-2015 Development Agenda".



Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director of the Sustainable Development Division at that time, and now is the Executive Director of UNITAR said:

"It is very encouraging this kind of engagement in the United Nations, because it enriches the debate beyond what we hear in the political debates in this great organization. Too many meetings consists of speeches at the UN, and these speeches are important, but all of us has noticed that the participants in this Forum brought not only ideas but brought a certain passion and a deep commitment to the issue of women's health and development, it is that passion that is sometimes lacking in the great halls of the UN organization.. I would like to congratulate Princess Nisreen El-Hashemite and the Royal Academy of Science International Trust for having been able to succeed when others have failed in the past".



H.E. Hon. Minister Dr. Helena Dalli, Minister of Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Malta

"This Forum gave us all a very good opportunity for exchange of knowledge and expertise between various nations, various cultures and various ages, particularly when listening to youth speeches.. I really appreciate what we learned and achieved together here and also that the development and empowerment of women is our role together. We need more follow up meetings in order to take concrete steps to implement this Declaration."



H.E. Prof. Veronika Skvortsova, Minister of Health, Russian Federation

"This Forum discussed different aspects on the important role of women in sustainable development process including health, economic, social and other significant segments... To implement this declaration, important steps are needed at national and international levels starting with World Women's Health and Development Institute, and further collaboration with the United Nations entities and member states."



H.E. Mrs. Marta Arsovska Tomovska - Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

"We have to celebrate what we achieved in this Forum. However, we have a lot to do in the following months and years to deliver and to ensure sustainability of development for women and all human kind. I would like to thank Princess Nisreen El-Hashemite for the energy and dedication to make this world a better place for girls and women."



H.E. Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary-General, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women

"Congratulations for adopting this comprehensive and very important Declaration, I am sure this Declaration will contribute to the next WHO World Health Assembly and will have an important input in the next United Nations General Assembly when world leaders will meet to take action for the Post 2015 Development Agenda... We are here to support this Declaration we adopted and build on it."



Dr. Amir Dossal, the Founder Chairman of the Global Partnerships Forum

"The World Women's Health and Development Forum brought together an amazing group of global policy makers and practitioners and inspired the International Community to make a difference for humanity".

Most of the distinguished guests and speakers at the Inaugural Forum, whether at ministerial, intergovernmental, diplomatic, academic or professional levels, were Women in Science.

The Outcome Declaration of the Inaugural World Women's Health and Development Forum, which the participants contributed to and approved by acclamation, reflects an ambitious global action agenda and as a Road Map for women's health and development.

Enabling us to discuss the many existing problems, issues facing women and societies today, and then to determine the indispensable solutions, actions, policies and programs to overcome these problems and issues, we need to recognize the role of Women in Science in the sustainable development process. Such recognition should be through acknowledging the accomplishments and the achievements of Women in Science.

The participants clearly indicated in the Inaugural World Women's Health and Development Forum Declaration, the need to ensure sustainability of development for women and all humankind, to achieve equality and full participation for Women in Science in decision making and sustainable development programs, and to build political, international and scientific support for the improvement of Women in Science education, employment/right livelihoods and provision of services such as nursery at work.

- ***It is not acceptable that in many countries including USA and UK, women in science are paid less than their male colleagues;***
- ***It is not acceptable that girls do not have the equal quality of science education in many regions around the world;***
- ***It is not acceptable that women in science are not well represented in policy-making process including in Intergovernmental Organizations. This is not the future we want!***

In terms of women and girls in science, it is valuable to note that a thorough search through Google reveals that women have literally played a role with men through 4,000 years of recorded history in terms of science.

Nonetheless, even though the accomplishments of women rank with those of their male counterparts, only 46 women have won Nobel Prizes, and if one eliminates those who have won for literature and who have been Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, the actual number is barely 25.

There have been many women scientists in all fields, and many have worked during humanitarian emergencies or made contributions in the field of nursing, botanists, physicists, mathematicians,

economists, very often relegated to footnotes in history.

RASIT strongly believes that the Sustainable Development Goals to a great degree need a strong science base, and this cannot be achieved at any level unless girls and women have an incentive, such as recognition and the example of role models, to have in front of them.

In implementing one of the points of the Inaugural World Women's Health and Development Forum Declaration, RASIT's Executive Director wrote a letter on April 30th 2015 to H.E. Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly, requesting

"on behalf of all participants at the Inaugural World Women's Health and Development Forum, the Women in Science International League and the Associations of Women in Science worldwide, I would like to ask you kindly to take the necessary steps to adopt the call of all participants: governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academic institutions, professionals, youth and non-governmental organizations, and declare February 11th an International Day for Women in Science".

As soon as Her Royal Highness communicated to President of the General Assembly Sam Kutesa concerning next steps in creating the foundation for the proposed International Day of Women in Science, RASIT sought the further counsel of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, who provided suggestions for consideration of a proper orientation for a way forward.

Upon crafting language for a proposed draft resolution prepared by RASIT for consideration by Member States, "place holder language" needed to be developed since the SDG Summit had not yet been held. Member States eventually crafted the "horizontal language" that would be the language used to refer to the SDG Summit and to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Therefore, the original draft resolution for consideration eventually by Member States included references to the consensus declaration adopted by Heads of State and Government at Rio +20, "The Future We Want."

Important to the draft was the inclusivity of all stakeholders, emphasizing the social dimension of sustainable development and the overarching importance of equality, especially for the most marginalized.

RASIT Executive Director Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite contacted the Hon. Minister Dr. Helena Dalli, Minister of Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties of the Republic of Malta. During the Forum, the Minister and her Royal Highness agreed that RASIT had great

expertise in the issue of women in science, and therefore, a draft concept note and the form of the draft was presented to the Permanent Mission of Malta for its consideration. The informal consultations among Second Committee Experts were to be conducted by the Delegation of Malta and commence at some time after the SDG Summit. The Permanent Mission of Malta introduces the draft resolution in the Second Committee under Agenda Item 22(b), Globalization and interdependence: science and technology for development.

During October and early November, the Delegation of Malta met with Member State delegates for the purpose of perfecting the draft resolution create an annual commemoration to be inscribed on the official UN Calendar of Observances for an International Day for Women in Science.

From the time of the first consultation, RASIT was doing work to obtain pledges from around the world that demonstrated support for the draft resolution, and within 32 days, RASIT received almost 4 million pledges electronically from around the world.

RASIT's interpretation of the word "science" was in its broadest context, ranging from economics and library science to law and biological sciences.

Member States also broadened the idea of the Day, including girls in the title of the proposed Day and within the text of the draft resolution.

As consultations proceeded, a number of Member States decided to join the list of co-sponsors, with eventually 65 Member States supporting the final draft.

On Friday, 4 December, a dream became a reality, when the Second Committee adopted without a vote a draft resolution, A/C.2/70/L.4/Rev.1, proclaiming annually on 11 February a

commemoration of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

The next stop for the now-adopted Resolution would be the UN General Assembly, where the entire formal Membership of the United Nations would take note of the Resolution.

On 22 December 2015, the President of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly, Mr. Mogens Lyketoft of Denmark, asked Member States if they would adopt this Resolution. When the President of the General Assembly heard no objection, the Resolution now would receive its own document number, A/RES/70/212 and would appear in the Annals of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Affectionately referred to worldwide as "The Science Princess", Her Royal Highness Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite, because of her status as a renowned medical doctor and scientist herself, was able to bring together government Ministers from 12 countries and a wide range of women in sciences of all kinds to aid in the creation of this Day.

RASIT commends the Hon. Minister Dr. Helena Dalli, Minister of Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties of the Republic of Malta, the Delegation of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Malta and the Government of Malta for their tireless efforts and work in the crafting of the draft resolution and for the leading of the consultations. Also, thanks to all delegations for the flexibility and constructive spirit with which they reacted to the consultations leading to this important outcome.

For more than 47 years, RASIT is at the heart of Science Education Economy Arts & Sustainable Development with an infinitive vision into the future, and will continue this tradition of measure less services for the benefit of mankind.