

International Women's Day 2019

Message to BR Staff

Geneva, Switzerland

Friday, 8 March 2019

Mario Maniewicz

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Today, 8 March is International Women's Day, the day honouring women's achievements and the struggle for equality.

In 1945, the [Charter of the United Nations](#) became the first international agreement to affirm the principle of equality between women and men. With that belief in mind, the UN celebrated its first official International Women's Day in 1975, 42 years ago.

Since its inception, International Women's Day has grown into a global celebration of past and present accomplishments of women, and as an opportunity to look ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities for future generations of women.

This year's theme, "*Think equal, build smart, innovate for change*" resonates with the work being done at the ITU. Innovations in ICTs that we are seeing in the today's wireless world are based on the use of radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits. We must therefore ensure that technologies of today benefit men and women, and are designed equally by men and women.

On International Women's Day, I am proud that an ITU-led initiative [Network of Women for WRC-19](#) mentorship programme #NOW4WRC19 to actively support women in the field of Radiocommunications and in technical fields is making strides to encourage innovators and leaders in the sector.

As the lead specialized UN Agency on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), ITU works every day to promote inclusive access to the infrastructure that supports connectivity in today's world. Radiocommunication has been a key element in the expansion of the information and communication society. It has allowed us to reach a large number of people around the world, even in the most remote and least developed areas.

Leaving no one behind is a central promise of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ITU is committed to the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), the accountability framework applicable to all UN entities. ICTs are an essential pathway to gender equality and empowerment, and contribute towards SDG 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

We are represented on the United Nations Chief Executives Board Task Force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system, and ITU is working to scale up prevention and response efforts to maintain a safe and harmonious workplace for all.

For International Women's Day, I encourage BR staff to take action for gender equality in the following ways:

- BR staff should complete the gender training course: 'I know Gender: An Introduction to Gender equality for UN staff' Register for the course [here](#).
- ITU's Secretary General has committed to the IGC [Panel Parity Pledge](#), and has extended the pledge ITU-wide. Therefore, ITU will organize for a balance of men and women on panels and avoid single-sex panels. When ITU is invited to speak elsewhere, ITU will request gender parity whenever possible in panels before accepting. I will encourage you to do your part to uphold this pledge.
- I encourage our Sector Members and Member States to aim for gender balance in their delegations at ITU meetings and events
- Lastly, I encourage BR staff to support the important work of #NOW4WRC19. Watch the interview series to learn how this initiative is helping women into leadership positions for the upcoming World Radiocommunication Conference. Watch the video series '*Women spurring innovations in Radiocommunications*' [here](#).

I know that by working together we can make gender equality a reality.

Mario Maniewicz
Director
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