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EUROPEAN CELEBRATION OF GIRLS IN ICT  
10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY  
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>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the European celebration of Girls in ICT. Good afternoon everyone who is following us today. My name is Jaroslaw Ponder, I am the head of the -- we have some echo. Good afternoon to everyone. I apologize for the technical problems. I will start one more time. I ask the team to check. I see this is corrected. Ladies and gentlemen, one more time, welcome to the Girls in ICT celebrations, in particular, the European celebration. My name is Jaroslaw Ponder. I'm the head of ITU Office for Europe, U.N. specialized agencies in charge of the ICT. It is my pleasure to welcome you here with us. Before we start, I would like to give the floor to Antonela, our technical moderator, who is herself a Girl in ICT. The floor is yours.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. Dear participants, thank you for joining. My name is Antonela. I will be the remote participation moderator for this event. I would like to give some instructions for Zoom webinar platform. You can view and activate the captioning by clicking on closed caption in the bottom bar of the zoom interface.

Any question or comment, you can use the Q&A function on the

bottom bar of the Zoom interface. You can type a question and also up-vote someone else's question. Thank you very much and have a nice event.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Many thanks, Antonela. I would like to inform everyone this event is live streamed on YouTube, Twitter, and our official ITU webcasting services. I have now the pleasure to introduce a message from Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, and a role model in promoting the equality of gender. I would like request to play the video.

>> DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN: Its 10-year anniversary. This is a top event on my calendar every year. But this year is special as we mark 10 years, over which we have celebrated Girls in ICT events in more than 170 countries with 11,000 events.

I'm so pleased to see ITU European partners, stakeholders, and supporters are getting together to promote exciting career opportunities for girls and young women in the tech sector.

Collective cross-sectoral efforts are vital to empower girls in technology not only for the benefit of girls themselves but for society at large. By giving girls the tools to explore the world of tech with curiosity and imagination, we can stimulation innovations that use ICT to solve some of the biggest challenges of our times.

We do have a number of projects underway that give me great hope. Regional initiatives in Europe that target accessibility, affordability, and skills development continue to be crucial in advancing digital inclusion and Sustainable Development for all. New studies such as the ITU and UN Women report on women, girls in ICT in the context of COVID-19 are helping identify key factors and trends in the participation of women in the digital sector at a national level, and they also include several clear and implementable recommendations.

Partnerships such as the EQUALS-EU group promote gender equity and social innovation by drawing on the expertise of 19 organizations from 15 EU Member States and associated countries.

Looking back at my personal journey in the field of ICTs, I started off as a young girl intrigued by science and then became a young professional enthusiast about technology policy. And I'm now the first woman to ever hold a top elected management position in the UN Agency for Digital Technologies, the ITU.

If I could give my 10-year-old self a piece of advice, I would say explore, question, discover, and find ways you can make an impact.

Seize the moment to go after that which inspires you. And don't hold yourself back. Think about what technology could do for you and for the world.

I hope you will join us in more 10th anniversary celebrations by visiting the ITU Girls in ITC web page and following us at #GirlsinICT on social media. You will find information on events such as the 10 moments of girls in ICT and plenty of activities and events to join.

After this European celebration of Girls in ICT, I invite you

to take part in the global celebration event later today. Thank you and have a wonderful Girls in ICT Day!

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. After watching this inspiring video, I want to highlight this event that indeed is a significant milestone of ITU Girls in ICT Day which started in 2011 and has now seen 377,000 girls and young women taking part in more than 11,400 International Girls in ICT celebrations in 171 countries.

I'm very proud also to announce that also today, that all countries of the Europe Region are committed to support the movement, you will see on the global map so many events happening today. Governments, national ICT regulatory bodies, ICT companies, academic institutions, U.N. agencies and NGOs across Europe have all joined this movement and celebrated this day throughout Europe over the last years.

Today, I'm delighted to see so many young European girls representing their countries proudly and delivering important messages to all of us with regard to their hopes and wishes for future education, careers in science, technology, engineering, arts, math. As a father of two daughters myself who are curious when it comes to technology and science, I am a true believer, girls can do anything they put their minds to. I'm looking forward to hearing what the girls that have joined us today, as young as 11 years old, have to say. It is my pleasure to see so many incredible, courageous young girls take center stage.

At the ITU office for Europe, gender takes center stage. We are working with Member States to make sure gender is taken into consideration in every strategy iteration and implementation.

We could not have arrived today at this event alone. I'm delighted to have and to be joined and to join the forces in the organization of this event with our partner, EQUALS-EU. Represented by Anthony Giannoumis who is doing an incredible job in this area. We could not have done this event also without our support of the Regional Cooperation Council. Represented by Maja Handjiska, Head of Programme Department, and the Regional Director of the UN Women for Europe and Central Asia. Welcome to this event. As well as the CEPT represented by the Co-President of this organization, Christiania Fluature. And representatives of the Network of Women for Europe. Also we're joined by the ITU Generation Connect Europe group represented by Andrea Barbu and Development Goals Forum represented by Hamsika Premkumar CEO, Development Goals Forum. We also will be pleased to hear some special word from Commissioner Gabriel who cannot join us but sends special greetings to the community.

Without further ado, I would like to give the floor to Anthony Giannoumis, Social Entrepreneur, Advocate, and Researcher, OsloMet, EQUALS-EU the flagship project at the European level in advancing innovation and promoting gender equality. Anthony, you have the floor.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Jaroslaw. I am excited to be here today. I have been looking forward to this all week, and

we have been preparing for months. This is a culmination of hard work more recently, but something I have had a passion for, for many years.

I went to a technical high school, I studied electronics. I was doing work in the lab. I played around with circuit boards. Everything you can imagine. There was one, maybe two girls in the entire class. Like many high schools, the girls pretty much stuck to themselves.

If I could do it again, I would tell myself stick with the girls, the grades were better. They treated each other nicely, and they learned a lot more than I did. After high school, I went to work at an electronics company, there I met a woman named Barbara. She was the only one at the whole company that could put together a circuit board after our automated machine destroyed it. If I could do it all over, I would tell her how awesome I thought she was to be able to do that.

Later in college, at the university they made me take a modern drama class. I thought it was silly because I wasn't there to study drama. In class, the teacher made us read a play called a doll's house. By Henrique Gibson. It was about a woman's oppression in her own home, it changed my view of my mom and all the women in my family.

If I could do it again, I would tell my teacher she changed my life. Today, I have the privilege to lead a grassroots advocacy project focused on women in innovation.

We have recently launched a newsletter, which means you have the opportunity to learn more about how we can create a more gender inclusive world and especially how to involve women and girls in innovation. I would encourage eventual to sign up now, the QR code is on the screen. Grab your phone, take a picture of that. You can enroll in our newsletter.

Now, I'm very honored and privileged to announce we have a video from a special person. Maria Gabriel. She is the EU Commissioner on innovation, research, culture, education, and youth. She is a phenomenal human being. I would love if we can play that video now.

>> Commissioner Gabriel: Your talent, your potential, your leadership. Dear friends, today we celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

Knowledge, skills, and talent know no borders and gender. Let me extend my warm congratulations to all of you successfully pursuing your studies or careers in science.

Europe needs your creativity and entrepreneurial potential. In Europe 41% of scientists and engineers are women. It is clear without these women, Europe will not move forward. Although we reach 48% of female PhD graduates in Europe, Women make up only 33% of researchers, and 22% of the heads of higher education institutions in Europe. There are of course differences among countries.

Yet on the average, women make up 17% of tech sector jobs. Therefore, we need to encourage women to develop skills in science,

technology, engineering so we can finally take advantage of all our talent and diversity. In fact, we all know women scientists, but they all need more visibility.

And we firmly believe we need more women role models to inspire others to follow them. This is why I launch the EU Women for Future Campaign last year to celebrate and showcase Europe's talented women and also the European prize for women innovators, which awards the most innovative women researchers and raises awareness in the need for more women in science.

Within our initiative, the European research area and in the European education area we aim to build a pipeline for female innovation talents, starting with schoolgirls in throughout education and early stages of career.

The pandemic has demonstrated the critical role of women researchers in different stages in the fight against COVID-19. From advancing the knowledge on the virus to developing techniques for testing, and finally to creating the vaccine against the virus.

Now, we must ensure that women continue playing the key role leading the way out of the crisis. Girls and women in Europe, we need your ideas, your talent, your potential. I would like to call upon all of you, smart and strong women of Europe. Let's stay united to unlock the potential of women in leading Europe toward the green digital, healthy, and resilient future. Let's perform the International Day of Women and Girls in Science in everyday example of your talent, potential and leadership.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: I want to highlight something there that Commissioner Gabriel said that is so critically important. The issue of talent. The tech sector in Europe needs more talented people in the jobs to help solve the critical challenges in society. We cannot afford to leave out or exclude 50% of the population. So this issue is critical to our development as a society. I get to turn to my favorite part, the main event. We have so many young people here today to talk about their experiences in working with this issue. So we're going to kick off in Norway. We have a wonderful young woman there, Andrea Lyngholm who will introduce herself and the work she's doing.

>> Andrea Lyngholm: I am Andrea Lyngholm, I am 16 years old and from a city in Norway. And I will finish my sophomore year this summer and will start as junior in August 2021. I have not decided what to study in university, to make sure I can study anything I want in the next years in high school, I have included math and science in the high school degree. I am aware that the proportion of girls choosing a technical career is too low and the girls are encouraged to choose a technical career like S.T.E.M. and ICT. In Norway, I feel like I can study anything I like as long as my grades are good enough. The system is not stopping me from choosing a technological career. But more the opposite actually. As I registered universities are encouraging girls in particular to apply for places at the university. What is the reason for us girls not to seize the chance? I do not have the full answer, but I think maybe part of

the reason is the way we're raised. From the age of zero girls are given toys that are more feminine compared to the toys boys are given. Most girls get dolls, most boys get cars. Growing up, I registered it is more easy and natural for my mom to ask me to help her in the kitchen than to ask my brother. For my father it is easier to ask my brother to help him out in the garden compared to asking me. In this way, our parents without realizing it are preparing my brother for a more masculine career compared to me. Having that said, my mom is an engineer. In one way she's a role model to me. That is what she likes to believe. Her mother, my grandmother encouraged her to pick a career like her dad and avoid careers typically had as women. This was passed along for me as the time came for me to choose.

The last thing to say is the advice I would give my 10-year-old self. I would say be kind to everyone, do what makes you happy and what you are passionate about regardless of what others say, believe or think and try not to care as much about what others think of you. Thank you for listening.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Andrea Lyngholm those were amazing words. Thank you for coming. Let's turn to Netherlands we have Daphne Stevens there. Daphne Stevens, can you tell us your experiences.

>> Daphne Stevens: Yes, hello, my name is Daphne Stevens I'm 22, I'm from Netherlands. I am currently pursuing my studies in law, but it is very strong link to technology. I namely took a lot of science courses in high school, I absolutely loved it. But I never really received any support to pursue this in my father studies. It was more often said to me, your math skills aren't that good you shouldn't really do something technical. I decided to study law instead. On the day I graduated from high school, my professors came up to me and said why are you not doing something technical because that would definitely be your thing. But I had already enrolled in my law course, I decided to pursue that and see where I would end up.

In the times during my bachelors I really missed learning about science and I still learned a lot about science in my free time, because I really enjoyed it. I went on exchange to Ireland, where I learned about the intersection between law and technology, for example, through cybercrime and data protection, all of that. And that's what really piqued my interest, because I could follow my two biggest passions, which is both law and science and technology. So I started studying cybercrime and law and felt at home to be surrounded by the techies to say it like that. I became active in the Internet governance like through the ITU and IGF. Now I'm graduating soon and very actively looking for jobs that are tech related. Even though I took a small detour and even though people told me it may be difficult for me to follow a tech related course, I still end up where I planned to end up in the beginning. That links to the advice of my 10-year-old self. That is mainly don't listen to people when they say something is impossible. Instead prove them

wrong. That is what I have been doing over the past few years and really brought me where I am today. That is the advice I bring to my 10-year-old self and you all.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Daphne, if anyone needs a young, talented expert in law and technology, please check Daphne out. All right, go to Latvia. We have a wonderful young woman there Eliza Gulbe. Eliza Gulbe, can we please hear from you.

>> Eliza Gulbe: Dear girls, my name is Eliza Gulbe I'm first year computer science student at the business school. Today, I want to share my story and encourage other girls from all across Europe to become a part of ICT community. If you look around in your room, you will probably see many different technologies all around you. And now in times of pandemic, the life without technology seems unbelievable as technology now is the only tool how we can still connect across the world. Have you considered being a creator and not just user? For me it was in eighth grade, we had the subject programming. At first, I had a bad gut feeling about it. I had many different stereotypes in my heads. I thought it would be terrible. And it was! It was terrible! I completely hated it. I had the bad experience mainly because of incompetence of teacher blocked the idea of me joining ICT community. ICT doesn't only involve being a programmer, there are many different positions like project manager, website designer, many others that involve not only hard skills like programming, but rather soft skills like creativity, leadership, and many others.

As I told previously the first interaction with ICT was rather unpleasant, however as the years passed by, I started to hear more and more about the Latvia ICT community, the opportunities it can give and how technologies can change the lives of others. I saw that more and more girls are joining the ICT community and I got inspired by that. I started reconsidering my previous experience and tried it again. I applied to free online courses related to technology, to try it again. But now with my own learning base. Having given it a second chance to myself, I understood I actually really like technologies and I love programming. So I decided to apply to a business school which is a unique program that combines technology and business skills. And now I can say it is one of the best decisions ever made. The beauty of ICT technologies is they can be applied anywhere. For example, I really care about education. Students in rural areas have less opportunity in terms of education. As I originally come from the countryside myself, the accessibility of proper education is really important to me. I started to look how can I conquer this project? Now I work with the ministry of education and telecom operators in Latvia to improve all across Latvia. For me, it feels amazing with the help of technologies can I help people across my country to have a proper Internet access at schools and expand the classroom. And if I meet my 10-year-old self again keep learning and believe in yourself because amazing opportunities are waiting for you. Thank you.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: What an incredible story of resilience.

I absolutely love it. You are inspiring, let's turn now to Poland. We're slowly filling in the map. We have Marta Musidlowska. I am probably butchering your name, Marta, I will apologize.

>> Marta Musidlowska: No worries, everyone does it. Hi, my name is Marta Musidlowska, thank you for having me here in the high-level panel today. In the health studies, I study law, I struggled with not fitting in the will typical career path. I have always been drawn to work in international organizations, trying to fit the law into the changing reality. So when I started to be interested in new technologies, particularly when we started to create youth Internet Governance Forum Poland and when I joined women in AI organization last year at the end of last year, subsequent events were like domino, participation in one organization fueled another. I joined ITU for one project for example.

I started to meet more and more people with similar interests to mine one day I received a call from a Polish newspaper to talk about technologies for by for women. And I started recently, I remember that I was surprised how many women are actually involved in the ICT and new technology industry. More, I think for now, I met more women than men. And I think it is genuinely beautiful how we support each other. As I said, we have many organizations and events to share our experience, help each other, collaborate to make new amazing projects. I'm thankful to them for inspiring me every day to keep pursuing my dreams. As we have 10th anniversary, I was really thinking about my 10-year-old self and what I would say to her, young Marta. I would definitely say ... keep your head up, let your intuition guide you because it is always most important. Thank you so much.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: I love hearing how all your opportunities fell like dominoes, beautiful. Turn now to Denmark, continuing to fill in the map. We have a young woman, Mia Cass, we would love to hear from her.

>> Mia Cass: Hi, I'm Mia Cass I am 19, I live in Denmark, I would like to give thanks to all the amazing women that have spoken before me, all so lovely. As someone who is from a very privileged life and a privileged country, my views on girls and women in science has always been fairly positive. It wasn't really something I thought too much about. And personally never saw a problem in this field but after joining the ITU and becoming a part of the generation connect, it became apparent to me how important this issue was. This was something that we kept coming back to again and again. It kept surprising me how relevant it was. I was a part of the Cybersecurity group, so it wasn't something that I initially thought of. But it just occurred to me there how vital it was to have women in science, S.T.E.M., ICT, everything. It was an eye-opening and important experience for me to hear all the other girls and their hardships. In the end, it was something heavily focused on throughout our entire final project. I met some amazing women and girls that I believe are making a difference. I guess throughout this entire experience it got me to look back on my life and everything I have been through



and I was someone who was really interested in science and math at a young age. And it is something that I chose the classes when I was young. Of course, I ended up in a class with 12 boys and just a few other girls. We were a target. If I can go back to my 10-year-old self I would slowly deter from that field out of fear. I would grab her by the shoulders and say don't listen to the people around you. Because this is honestly something you truly love. And in the end, that's all that matters is sticking to the stuff that you love.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: That is such a story of bravery and perseverance. I'm grateful to hear those words. Thank you so much, Mia. Now we will turn to a special guest, Maja Handjiska Trendafilova the Head of Programme Department, Regional Cooperation Council. We're looking forward to hearing you speak.

>> Maja Handjiska Trendafilova: Thank you very much. Thank you for the opportunity to encourage and empower more girls and women in ICT, but also to be inspired by the passion and drive of all our fellow speakers. The positive messages [audio skipping] we're just few days after [audio skipping] to promote girls and women in S.T.E.M. education and careers as part of a broader women economic empowerment initiative. Actually what propelled us to take this agenda so resolutely. According to the Balkan survey we run every year, four times more business owners would prefer to hire men than women. In our observatory on employment also painted a rather bleak picture. Actually men outnumber women in the regional labor force more than one million. We truly believe this initiative, on empowering young women to enter S.T.E.M. as career comes at the precise moment especially with the economic difficulties that the Region is facing amid the COVID-19 crisis. In the Balkan Region, we are local women and girls as role models, this is only until now. Our network members and the girls and women we are honored to be joined with today at this important celebration are all outstanding girls and women in S.T.E.M., ICT, who succeeded despite all odds and branded themselves says as regional or global will European champions. So advice to my younger self or younger daughter for that matter, it is my pleasure to echo and amplify some of the key messages by the extraordinary girls and women and S.T.E.M. network members, so the credit goes to all of them. The first message is competence and confidence. No fear of failure, and you can do this attitude. It is the remarkable women around the Region kept pursuing their goals and passions despite the social obstacles and very open dominant male culture.

The second one is inspire but be inspired by others. Promote the successful girls and women as role models that can be identified and encourage [audio skipping] their increased participation in S.T.E.M. fields. And promoting is very important. Like we're all doing today to use real life testimonials and be at the platforms that the youth is. Another very important advice is to be someone's bedrock. And support framework. There is a need for the creation of mentoring and coaching programs for young girls and women entering S.T.E.M. education careers but also very importantly, switching to.

Because this is also visible, doable. Switching to S.T.E.M. careers and climbing the ladder when they're there. Because we are working as what is a sticky start, and we're still short and shy of parity. So there is still a road ahead. And the fourth, another message is to share fun and good practices to motivate practitioners to introduce the similar tools. A quick message, not just to our younger selves, but also to the policymakers, Academia, to the companies that walk the talk and don't just claim gender equality as the objective, but really enforce it actively in every single recruitment, every single enrollment and advancement. Another important message that our network members reminded us, something that the Commissioner also spoke about, one shouldn't forget the bigger picture. That all that we are today promoting and doing contributes towards the smarter, greener, digital, and inclusive Region and the women and girls' power is innate and platforms and tools are needed to flourish. So in closing, I really hope that even today, some personal story will inspire someone to pursue S.T.E.M. or any other profession that enables your or our authentic selves. So the demand for ICT jobs will continue to expand alongside the employment opportunities and many of these jobs can be filled by competent and confident girls and women. Girls and women are the greatest in tech population to become the next generation of S.T.E.M. professionals and economic engines of our Regions. So all here today have a role to play in terms of effectuating this potential. Thank you very much for this.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you Maja Handjiska Trendafilova I see you, hear you, love what you had as a message. Implementation, mentorship, these things are critical to moving the agenda forward. I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to be here. We're going to move now to Serbia. I'm so excited to hear from Milena Mistic. There you are. Let's hear from you, please.

>> Milena Mistic: Hello, my name is Milena Mistic I'm 14 and from Serbia. When people ask me why I'm a feminist, I tell them because feminism means all genders having equal rights, it is about leveling the playing field and ensuring diverse women and girls have the same opportunities available to boys and men. In the words of Maya Angelou, of course I'm a feminist, I would be stupid not to be on my side. Women and men have been fighting for rights since 1948. Despite the remarkable efforts made by the feminists, there is one country where women have the same rights as men. In Serbia, the gender roles are far from equal, we are working on it. We have a long tradition of great female leaders, heads of parliaments, engineers, architects, and there is more to go. Kamala Harris said I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last. Many girls see it as possibilities. We can see ourselves in ways we have not. I can't count the number of times the boys in my class have tried explain subjects like math, science, technology, physics and other ones that are related to the careers men dominated. But as I was always better than all of them, even in the subjects, these scenarios always end up in them asking me for help. I always stood

up for myself, even as a child. I will call them out. Unfortunately, many girls don't do that. Either because they are too scared, shy, or just because they don't want to get into arguments. We can learn so much from the powerful actions and inspiring words of women who came before us. But also there is still so much work we have to do. It is our duty to carry on their work, challenging and changing, speaking up for equality. Lucky me, my mother raised me to be an angry feminist, which is an awful way to say I stand up for myself, and I answer back. Not everyone has that privilege. There are people around the world, be comfortable seeking further education opportunities. Always remember that you get in life what you have the courage to ask for.

I hope to be able to meet all of you in person some time. Thank you to the organizations, especially to the EQUALS-EU team that invited me to this celebration. It is a privilege to be a part of the smart community celebrating with and learning from people with their hearts in the right place. Stay healthy and above all brave. Huge hug from Serbia. Thank you.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Milena Mistic. Your words are moving. I sincerely appreciate hearing from you. I'm a feminist, too. You can always count on me to have your back. Thank you, Milena Mistic that was phenomenal. We want to go to Albania now. We have a wonderful young woman Eljona Avdo. Eljona Avdo, I see you, the floor is yours.

>> Eljona Avdo: Hi. I'm Eljona Avdo. I'm delighted to be here today in this very important European celebration of Girls in ICT. I take this opportunity to thank the organizers for bringing us together to share our experiences and personal stories. When I think about Girls in ICT, I know that some years ago, maybe before I was born, this was not mentioned anywhere. There was just the field ICT and it was always related boys. Through the years, things have changed. The patriarchal society is still current in my country, Albania, things are changing every day for the better. Women are fighting for their rights. We see successful women everywhere. Doctors, politicians, S.T.E.M. related fields students, some leaders and CEO. Women empowerment came in like a breath of fresh air. We are more organized now, we know our value and overcome our fears. Yesterday's dream is today's reality. Do we need to stop doing it? Of course not. We just started. Not only in Albania. We live in a globalized world. I see this in every meeting about women empowerment. I'm seeing it today. We're all gathered to stop the stereotypes and celebrate the empowerment and tell girls nothing can break us if we stand united as we are today. I myself have difficulties when I want the chance to study ICT. I thought I would be the only girl in the class. It scared me. But I did it. I finished the Bachelor of Science degree and now I consider myself as a successful ICT professional. I'm happy to say we're creating a better future for our girls. I'm even more happy to know when I have a daughter, I will not have to stop her to play futbol, I shouldn't stop her to be an engineer and let her follow her dreams.

My mother was worried for me starting ICT. But every day she told me how proud she was, I was doing what she couldn't. I know I will be worried for my daughter, too. It is a mother's thing. As I learn from my mother, let your children follow their dreams, let them make their own mistakes and you will see how the world will change.

When talking about changing the world I thought I should think about the woman that created and named the world, and the frontier for another. I'm proud for them all. I will not talk about them today. Because I think the real heroes are the ones who keep fighting every day with inequality, those who work in an office full of men and make them show respect. Beside the fact if they want to or not. I'm talking about today about those women, leaders, that are making the world receive their perspective. I'm talking about girls in every field of life but I must say, girls in S.T.E.M. related fields have changed the game. I'm so proud for us and this is -- has to be celebrated every day. Happy 10 years and a lot more to go. And please, use technology to change the world. As girls, and woman. Everywhere. And for the message I would give to my 10-year-old self is explore. Explore until you find yourself. Thank you.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Eljona Avdo. You said your mother is proud of you. I am just proud to know you. This is wonderful. So nice to hear your words. We get to go to Bosnia and Herzegovina now. Which is going to be a really amazing presentation from Leja.

>> Thank you, I want to wish you all an amazing Girls in ICT. Let's celebrate the knowledge that women and girls across the world have come up with. I'm first year computer science, I currently work on several I.T. projects. In the past, I developed a few mobile and web applications that are available to all of you. But I have to say that once I was just a little girl trying to stand out with my own capabilities. I used to have a lot of ideas and the world of opportunities for me became computers. I decided to learn more about the world of zeros and ones, on my own. There were many times I was the only girl in my class. It is not something we should get used to. Courage is the key to achieving anything you want. We have to think about those who need to be encouraged. Boys and girls have the same rights. So let's try to think about this every time we hear someone saying there are jobs that are not meant for girls or for boys. We have a lot of examples of girls changing the world. In fact, you can become one of them as well. There are change-makers all around us. If we are all gathered around positive ideas, we can make a change. Now, along with the share a few messages on this important date. If you are a young girl wanting to become a part of ICT, don't be afraid. We're all there for you. Your ideas matter because you are working hard on it. There is going to be someone who is going to recognize that. Until then, be brave and be you. Nothing can ever stop you besides yourself. If you're successful woman in ICT, become mentor, share your knowledge with girls, become a role model. We need you so we can dream about becoming as successful as you one day. We don't need just another male role

model, there are plenty of them. If you are a teacher, teach us there are no male or female jobs, especially in ICT. Where all of us can be powerful. If you are one of these people, great! But also every individual can help, because if you help only one girl in her career, you never know maybe she will change hundreds of lives by evolution of her knowledge and possibilities in ICT. Thank you all for listening, and opportunity to be a part of this amazing event. Eljona Lejla, I love what you just said, it is beautiful to hear from you. We get to go to North Macedonia where we will have from Fiona Mandarova. I see you, let's hear from you.

>> Fiona Mandarova: Um, well hello to everyone. I would like to introduce myself. I'm Fiona Mandarova from North Macedonia. At first, I study at a school in Macedonia. There are many sections, but I choose electrical installer. Well, that is a hard section, but I thought I play futbol. That is hard. And this is hard. If I believe in myself and I would like to do that, I am going through everything. And everyone were making pressure and telling me how? You're a girl? How could you do that? And how it's going to be like when you grow up? Where are you going to work? And I thought, if I believe in myself and if I make many challenges to -- many challenges to myself, I can do it. I challenge myself. And like this section needs many practical work like climbing wooden poles, it is hard to install -- if you can do it, I don't know, like there are many things in practical work, like you have to work on yourself, to become installer. But I thought I could graduate and then go on faculty also study more.

If I could tell my 10-year-old self I would say do what you love and what you want. Don't listen to nobody. You are what you are. Don't try to break something for someone. And thank you for the time and listen.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Fiona Mandarova. I love how you completely defied expectations in your life and able to overcome all of these challenges. I see that you believe in yourself. Because you stand in your own truth and speaking truth to power. That is amazing. We get to go now to Montenegro, continuing to paint in this map of Europe with Nada Stojakovic. We will anxiously hear from you. There you are.

>> Nada Stojakovic: Hi, I'm Nada Stojakovic I'm 14 and joining you from Montenegro. My message today is find your passion and be ready to work hard for it. Usually want girls want and wish to be ballerina for theater. When they grow up, but when I was child, I want to really to be and Ambassador of Montenegro in heal. I needed to know Italian language. Once we started learning Italian in school, I was not really committed to learn it well. I didn't not try hard. My destine was not to be Ambassador at least not the one in politics. A couple years later. A new subject were added to our school like physics and chemistry. At first, I didn't understand these new subjects, but eventually, I develop a loaf for chemistry. As my love grew, I started working harder and harder on understanding and developing my knowledge and abilities regarding this field. And

I realize that when you have passion for something, it is not that hard to work to you.

Also, I realize that once I knocked on the door of [?] and the door opened and one of them is this conference we're attending today. Therefore, one day I hope to be an Ambassador that will use knowledge in chemistry to help and connect people around the world. And of course, to achieve this dream, I will need help from all of you because I will need ICT programs! Ha. We all know the importance of technology. Nowadays, it is hard to do anything without technology. That's why you are very important to me. The knowledge and sharing telecommunication sector. Telecommunication networks, broadcasting services can help all of us in science in research and developing new ways of improving living and doing it in harmony with the nation. Therefore, be open to obtain knowledge in our field of technology. Learn and probe, because maybe you may be a key player in the future of this planet. Thank you all. I hope that we will meet again. In meantime, stay creative. Bye.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, I see how passionate you are about your field. It fills my heart with joy. I am also passionate about my field. I never feel like I'm working, I wake up and cannot wait to start the day.

I get to take a break. I will turn over the microphone to Hamsika Premkumar. She's a good colleague of mine and a rock STAR in her field. Hamsika Premkumar, take us forward.

>> Hamsika Premkumar: I'm sitting here with goose bumps so many girls talking about important issues. I'm excited to see you in important positions in the future. Now we have a message from Alia El-Yassir. The Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, UN Women.

>> Alia El-Yassir: Thank you, Jaroslaw and all of those involved in this event, and others, and the inspiring young women that we have heard from and will continue to hear from during this event. I congratulate all of us on the 10-year anniversary of Girls in ICT. UN Women recently marked its 10-year anniversary. Despite this difficult moment with COVID, there is still a lot to celebrate. Because of what we experience in this moment, we can say that information communication technologies perhaps are more critical now than ever before. They're essential, as we have heard to education, accessing services, having decent work, getting access to information, maintaining social connections.

And we can only make this century the century for women and girls by addressing the gender digital divide, we need all actors in the ICT sector committed to this. We did a joint study with ITU that you heard briefly about. We did that looking at ICTs women and girls across the world. The study reconfirmed that technology is a game-changer. If you haven't been convinced by what you heard from the young women themselves, we hope you can use this study in your advocacy. And if this important resource we have through ICT is not inclusive and equal we will see many groups of young people, particularly women and girls at risk of becoming even more excluded

and discriminated against. As many of you know, last month was a super busy month for global action on gender equality. There was a huge focus on young people as agents for change. The generation equality Forum was held at the end of March in Mexico. And it gathered young people, Civil Society organizations, private sector, Government, international organizations including the U.N. to discuss how we can accelerate action to achieve gender equality once and for all by 2030.

The theme for this year for Girls in ICT Day talks about connected girls. And we see what the equality initiative is all about. In Mexico, there were over 13,000 that were under the age of 30. This gives me hope and for gender equality and building a brighter more connected future. We have only nine years left to achieve the ambitions of the 2030 agenda. If we were talking about accelerated action before COVID-19, I think we can all agree we need it now more than ever we are worried about losing the gains we have move so far.

This is one of the issues voiced during the Forum in Mexico and all along in the preparation. There is an action Coalition on innovation and technology for gender equality. It is wonderful to see ITU and also have UNICEF in the U.N. system taking a leadership role in this action Coalition and key partners from the Region. Including the Governments of Finland, Armenia and from Turkey leading on the private sector side. At Mexico there was a blueprint for this action Coalition and others. Maybe I can touch on the key actions, hopefully it can resonate with what you heard from young women and give us ideas in terms of the kinds of commitments we want partners to make as part of generational equality to have clear change happen. Transformative change happen by 2026 so we can have a better chance of achieving the 2030 agenda.

So what we are talking about is reducing by half the gender digital divide across generations by accelerating meaningful access to technologies and digital literacy leaving no one behind. Increasing investments towards feminist technology and innovation by at least 50% to support as innovators and the needs. Doubling the women in tech and innovation by setting up benchmarks to transform the ecosystem. And implement policies and solutions against online and tech facilitated gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls. The EQUALS-EU which is part of the EU is building member things today. The EU and Member States have leadership roles under the generation equality initiative. Now we need to continue this journey. We invite all of you to join us as partners and commitment makers to get ready for the second part of the Forum, which will happen in Paris at the end of June.

We have young people leading demands and leading the thinking about action. I invite all of the young people to join the youth in action. We need to join the youth and mobilize, because we have a once in a lifetime opportunity.

I'm using today as a way to listen and learn from girls and young women in the Region, not only about your experiences, but your

insights, your ideas, the suggested solutions. Whatever got us to this point is not going to get us to where we want to go. So we really need your voice and we need your action, if we have any chance of meeting the ambitious target. I really look forward to hearing more of you. To end, if I can go back and say something to my 10-year-old self, listening to you, I would say this even to myself today, especially as I hear the amazing things you have told us, but also, like if I think when I was 10 years old, there wasn't even the concept of a personal computer or a mobile phone.

Even when I was the age of some of you here today, I remember how excited we were by floppy disks and the concept of a web processing software. And when I hear your positivity, your intelligence, and your incredible power, I stand firm by what I would say. I would say that the best is yet to come. And the possibilities are endless. It's the responsibility of myself and others like me in these organizations to continue to chip away and remove those barriers and those discriminations that would otherwise deprive the world of the untapped potential of amazing young women and girls like yourself all over the world. Thank you so much.

>> Hamsika Premkumar: Thank you, Alia El-Yassir it was a great inspiration to hear from you at UN Women and I'm sure the girls will do a great job of working towards and achieving the agenda 2030.

So we're moving now to Moldova. We have an amazing woman, Alexandra.

>> Hi, I'm a high school student. Let's imagine for a second that you are going back in time and there is no technology. What would you do? You will definitely start looking for an idea to create something new and useful for people no matter the gender, age, race or nationality, you have to be motivated. Believe in yourself and not give up. If we refer to girls in S.T.E.M. education they can really believe confidence in themselves. And have the trust that their ideas can solve the problem. As girls' participation in ICT activities can expand the access to growth in high companies and all life domains. As a young person and participant in Girls in ICT from UN Women in Moldova founded in Sweden. Gave the foundation that ICT field is my future. I could say like in any other field you have to be per veer and start your own learning path acquiring step-by-step the many languages used in web development like HTML, JavaScript. Afterwards apply the knowledge to create interpretive websites aiming at solving community problems for a platform that teaches about the human rights as I did. I started to apply my knowledge with more confidence. One of the achievements I'm proud of it is the website that I have developed for monitoring the health status of people with breathing difficulties. The website consists of more categories. One is the value of humidity, temperature, and gas. One important issue that must be taken into consideration is that this kind of activity requires some steps to be followed. Personal attitude, exploration, that means to analyze and find a purpose, and try to predict the final result. ICT activities made it possible



for me and for my peers to express the reality of this century. If I were to give a piece of advice to my 10-year-old self, I would try to find what makes her heart fight. Don't be afraid of taking risks, with perseverance and willingness, you will see anything that you set out to. No limits only set by your mind. From the Republic of Moldova I wish you all a great Girls in ICT Day.

>> Hamsika Premkumar: Amazing. Thank you, Alexandra, thank you for the message and speech to all of us.

We're moving to Ukraine, we have Mariia Kolisnyk. Please.

>> Mariia Kolisnyk: Thank you, my name is Mariia Kolisnyk I am from Ukraine. This will open adventure, it will be good to travel, spoke foreign languages and look at the cultures, we spend time in oceans, parks, and ecological reserves. We might acquire knowledge in distance learning. There is many changes, physical environment, skills and S.T.E.M. The major things to impact on business. I would like to thank the opportunities of the concrete person, global economy, and physical environment. To keep up with the changes, it is necessary to acquire new professional and personal skills. Namely, adaptive thinking, intercultural competence, ability to use new media and effectively work remotely. In addition it is important to have knowledge from outside of the organization. That is something that is unusual for you. It is the intersection of this where set ups and the most interesting ideas emerge. Be yourself and improve your I.T. skills. [?] there is nothing impossible in the world. Thank you for your attention, best regards from Ukraine.

>> Hamsika Premkumar: Thank you very much Mariia Kolisnyk. Moving to Turkey. We have Selinnur Cakir.

>> Selinnur Cakir: First of all, I would like to introduce myself briefly. My name is Selinnur Cakir I'm from Turkey. I'm 13 years old. I don't have any plans about future because I'm too young for thinking this, but my older sister is studying industrial engineering and in her department, there are not many girls. She's a lucky girl, our mom is in computer engineers and she's leading an R&D for a famous technology group in Turkey. When my sister was a child, my mother was a role model for her. Mom always supports my sister, but most of the other families don't so such support. In the world there are so many problems about gender equality, we can see the problems in technology field, too. Society has an important role about choosing a career. For example, one of my girlfriend want to attend a class but she was the only girl in the class. For that reason, she didn't attend the class. But the teacher and her family supported her on attending the class. She inspired other girls about learning robotics. Families have an important role about choosing the career. Many families provide tablets, cell phones computers for sons at early ages, and don't do it for girls. Therefore boys meet technology before girls. Society has an impact on professions. Girls don't choose ICT career. One is can I do that, the second one is do I want to do this? If girls think S.T.E.M. is difficult, and more suitable for boys, they're more scent tick external bodies such as tradition and culture, stereotypes and lack of role models is

another reason why there are less women compared to men in the field. To encourage more girls to consider working ICT sector for careers in the future, it is important to introduce successful women that are role models for them. The role models can create society by women and men, girls and boys are equal. [?] and everyone have equal opportunity to participate and work in society. That's all, thank you for your time and participation. And thanks for the opportunity given to me.

>> Hamsika Premkumar: Thank you for pointing out the importance of parents and teacher in Academia have in this important process. We have a message from Cristiana Flutur, the Co-President of CEPT and representative of Network of Women (NoW) for Europe. So please Cristiana Flutur.

>> Cristiana Flutur: Thank you very much, I hope you can hear me well. It's really such a pleasure to be with you today and to celebrate the 10 years of the Girls in ICT project. Which is very dear to my heart.

I want to say to you that I started my day by asking my colleagues especially the female colleagues, what would they say to you? Or what would they like to hear from this discussion? It was very interesting. And every one of them, like all of you have brought their own experience to their answers. And I think it's an amazing when we all have our minds and our hearts aligned.

Okay. So I started thinking where was I 10 years ago when Girls in ICT started? Well, I was just starting my career in this field. Of course, I encountered all of the challenges, all of the stereotypes that you can encounter, but somehow, I was strong and I stood up for myself I persevered and continued to do the work. How I did that? I ask myself did I find myself in this field? Yes, I did find myself in this field. What is the impact of my work in the field? And if I found the right answers, I continued. So I think it is so important to have this conversation with yourself. I keep having it since 10 years ago at every step when I have an important decision to make or whenever I have to decide on my career path, whenever there is an intersection and you choose which path to go through, you have this conversation with yourself. You ask yourself what is the impact of the work. What the impact is on your personal life. Because it very important for us. I think also that our values and our principles have to be aligned with what we do. Especially for us women, it is very important to do that.

So after I started, I -- as I said, I followed many steps. Now I find myself being the first chairwoman of the Committee for ITU policies in the CEPT. I got here also with the help and encouragement of my colleagues, both the experienced colleagues and the ones that were very young like me and very enthusiastic but came with an open heart and open mind. It is very important to have a network of people and to support each other. It was key for me, actually. So I think this is how I'm starting to pay it forward. So we in Europe started this network of women in ICT together with the ITU and the CEPT and I think it will be a good way to discuss and to start breaking the

stereotypes, and to encounter -- I don't know, the challenges, to break them.

Also when I think about the 10 years, my colleagues were saying today to me we need to keep the way a 10-year-old child looks at things. They're curious but also courageous. And also hungry for knowledge. They take in all the information. So we -- let's look at this program as a 10-year-old child. And let's continue to have this spirit. And if I look back to my 10-year-old self, I would just say to continue to be strong and to follow the education path because it is so important if we are encouraged with the opportunities to follow education paths in S.T.E.M. I loved math and science since I was little. I had encouragement from the families. I think everybody says that the family is very important. So even if we think our family supported us, we needed to, as I said, pay it forward. Continue to support our families but also let's consider us a family for women in tech. Thank you very much.

>> Hamsika Premkumar: Thank you, Cristiana Flutur for your extremely inspiring story I'm sure it will motivate the young women listening to you. Thank you so much. It is great to see the map turning more and more blue. We are moving forward to Germany, we have Nellie Hedwig Horstmann. Hello.

>> Nellie Hedwig Horstmann: Yes, thank you, Hamsika Premkumar. Guten tag. Myself is Nellie Hedwig Horstmann as you introduced me. I am 23. I was born and raised in Germany. I would like to say it is my great honor to speak up on the International Girls in ICT as a representative from Germany, especially with all the amazing girls present today. So a little bit about me. I'm a fifth-year medical student. For the next year at least, I will be working in a surgical research laboratory in Cologne. In my hometown, pursuing my medical thesis. My dream job is working as a surgeon while continuing to do research as a clinician scientist. That being said, I would like to share some of -- sorry -- some of the challenging, awaiting and experiencing I have gathered as a girl working in S.T.E.M. As you might know, surgery is kind of a tough section to work in as a female physician. Long working hour, unpredictable shifts, physical strain make it very hard to grant a good work-life balance for surgeons. Family and career have gender stereotypes and disadvantages. Consequently, people working as surgeons, especially in the higher positions are male, in 72% of all the cases. This leads of course, to rather intimidating work environment for young female medical students.

I have been able to generate some personal experience as a female medical student because I have assisted in the operation room during some internships. For example, I have been approached unprofessionally by male colleagues, and I had to endure negative comments regarding my gender whenever I did something wrong. These are situations that happen in every hospital probably everywhere in the whole world. And feeling the need to ignore the comments as they come from your supervisor is a serious part of the problem. I felt unable to contradict my supervisors because I fear training

disadvantages or more negative comments. All in all it is a vicious circle because gender and equality and sexism at work can't be stopped easily. In my opinion, the change has to start in the minds of people. I won't be satisfied until this has happened. Accepting female colleagues and equals and accepting the difficulties women face and supporting each other will create an environment attractive for young surgeons. Tackling this change by setting an example is one challenge on my agenda. Once I finish my studies and start to work, I'm assured it is a long way with many sacrifices but I won't let this impact my choice of career. I will keep myself inspired by the many successful surgeons that make their way through the male dominated area without being intimidated. To round it up, one advice to my 10-year-old self never let anyone define your limits or goals. I hope my short intervention was encouraging for girls that wish to study S.T.E.M., contribute to healthcare or work information or communication technologies. I'm confident we can make a change together. Thank you for your attention.

>> Hamsika Premkumar: Thank you. Amazing. Thank you, Nellie Hedwig Horstmann I'm sure you will be a great medical doctor. Looking forward to follow your journey as well.

Then we're moving to France. We have Eve Delporte. Eve. Hi.

>> Eve Delporte: Hello, my name is Eve Delporte. I am 15 years old. I am from France. I attend this meeting today because I think girls and boys should have the same access to science and technologies. For me, it is logical that girls and boys have the same access in education in science and technologies because I had the chance to grow up in a family where I am offered the possibility of choosing myself what I want to do later and where I have the same education as boys. For example, in my school, we have the chance to have a laptop computer and lot of activities in sciences. Also a lot of science and technologies also is presented to us to teach us of medical school and the chance to look into sciences and education whether we are boys or girls. Unfortunately not all the girls have this chance. I would like this to change in the future. It is up to all of us to make this change. For us, girls must take our future. Plus girls who have the chance to access to education, succeed as much as boys in science and technologies. Girls have the same ability to learn as boys and same desire to learn. That's why I think that we should all have the same access to education and stop the stereotype about girls for science and technology should be abolishes.

I would like girls also have the chance in science and technology. When I grow up, I will be a graphic designer, it has always interested me. A like that, we can use two fields like art and technology can be used to communicate. Graphic design touches on a lot of things. There is graphic design everywhere. A poster on the street, social media, on the TV. That is why I think it is very important and interesting to engage with this. And maybe one day, I will use it to communicate for girls' rights. If I could give an advice to my 10-year-old self it will be to always keep your head

up and never let someone say mean thing to you or said that I can't do something because I'm a girl. Thank you for listening. And happy Girls in ICT Day.

>> Hamsika Premkumar: Thank you, it is an interesting field with art and technology. Good luck with that interesting field. We're moving to Spain now. We have Nuria Sanz. Nuria Sanz, hi.

>> Nuria Sanz: Hi. I'm Nuria Sanz from Spain. Firstly, I would like to thank everyone responsible for giving me this opportunity to be able to speak on behalf of girls who are pursuing or want to pursue a career in an ICT field. I am noticed that the reason more and more girls are getting interested in this sector as time goes by. And thus, find it hard to accomplish their goals, these are incredibly good news. Many of them have great ideas, are very creative and will surely make a change in the future.

In fact, in my high school, out of 23 students in the physics course, five of them we are girls. This is one of the years with the most girls in the course not only school, but also extracurricular activities this is something I noticed. As a kid I participated in different technology, like program. I remember being hiding behind my brother during the first days. Girls were the minority. I eventually stop hiding behind my brother and did socializing. My friends turn out mostly to be mainly boys. Of course there were girls, and as we were in minority, we tend to stick together.

Now, whenever in my school technology centered extracurricular activities, I notice there are more or less the same amount of boys and girls. To see that the numbers are increasing bit by bit, makes me happy and also the teachers and everyone involved. The world is becoming more and more technology centered. Young people will be living in that technology. Girls should be in that future. To speak about the future or the present, we need to remember the past. In our discipline with major seminar as a woman would give extra effort, especially in the last century. Many great scientific women have made incredible advances in which we have the privilege of using in our present. There are countless women that have had a hand in the fate of the future, which has become now our present. Not only did they fight for the girls, but also to be recognized and as valid as any other scientist. May have already paved the way we need to work on it and have a beautiful journey with advancement, development, innovation, and a bright future. However, there are so many countries all over the world where girls either do not or cannot have access to these S.T.E.M. programs. They're usually the fact that girls are sadly considered in some places as not capable of doing a what is considered a man's job. Those of us who can, we should stand up and use our voice for those who cannot do anything but to stay silent. If you look back on my 10-year-old self I note that self-confidence and getting as many opportunities as possible is important to achieve your goals. It is our time to work for what we love and make things work out for us all by working hard and pursuing the change, girls will get their brighter future some day in the future. Thank you.

>> Hamsika Premkumar: Thank you so much and thank you for addressing the situation in the world today for many, many girls. Thank you so much for letting me host some of this part. And I will give it back to Dr. Anthony Giannoumis.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Hamsika Premkumar. It is so exciting to hear from so many young women. When we were organizing this event, it was like well, we know it is a good idea, can't quite see the power or feel the power of the voices like we have today. I have been emotionally moved throughout the day. The panelists are sitting in chat telling each other how amazing it is to hear each story. I want to emphasize how important it is to hear their voices and hear the young women from all over Europe talk about their experiences.

I want to let you know there is a really special part of this event coming up at the end of our time. We are going to have a highlight reel of our campaign, advice for my 10-year-old self. It will be a really cool video that we get to watch together. I think it is something we can all share, little bit of laughter and little bit of joy together.

We get now to hear from a special woman, Andrea Barbu. She's leading the generation connect group, which is the Europe youth group the ITU. Andrea Barbu, it is nice to see you, can't wait to hear from you.

>> Andrea Barbu: Greetings fellow participants and friends. I wish to congratulate you at the Girls in ICT 10th anniversary and offer sincere thanks to the promoters of women studying and working in S.T.E.M. field.

This last decade has seen a shift in paradigm from the male-dominated industries to women-inclusive environment. In the generation connect youth groups girls have had the chance to communicate to the ITU the challenges, opportunities, and actions they wish to see. In order to have a world which is supportive towards girls enrolling in S.T.E.M. programs. A generation connect meeting in December, January, with young women from all over Europe, we have agreed on asking for enough universities to educate us on equal chances at a constant legal support of the workplace and to be taken seriously when we are voicing our opinion continue.

The generation connect strategy has enabled us to present our experience from over 15 European countries and to represent women from back home in an international space. Where cooperation has produced the youth declaration. We discussed about capacity development, Cybersecurity, environment, digital inclusion and so much more. We discussed about how women can get involved. How they can be protected and encouraged to act. I invite you to read it online, just Google ITU youth declaration and access it. With your joint efforts, for forward thinking Governments and well-planned projects by NGOs and corporations, women have found more jobs available to them. Sadly, when looking at the statistics, this is more to be done. There is more, more to be done over the next decade to ensure that the progress is not lost and that women will be better

represented in S.T.E.M. fields and others for that matter.

Beginning with education offered to girls, policies regarding educational strategies need to be enforced towards an early introduction of the use and programming of a machine to children, be it girls and boys alike with the advertisement of all jobs offered. In this side of Europe, there is a clear lack of trained professionals to tutor such children. Few cities with universities offer programs for engineering, ICT and so on. The lack of professors causes brain drain, crowding of cities and gap between rural and cities. The harsh competition of graduates of the field may be intimidating and discourage girls from applying. The amazing potential the girls have is the world's chance to a balanced workforce. Challenge girls are sometimes frightened and may give up. You should not give up. The equilibrium of the world will not be reached. The girl's option to take the studies she wants, it is the world's chance to solve the pains of starvation, malady, and corruption. The problems the world has right now is all revolving around women, we need to uplift women. Girls are faced with a history of 2000 years of being denied rights, education, and jobs.

When history seems so powerful, a little girl wishing to study engineering, may seem hard to conquer and may never see the light of day. However expanding the horizon has no limits. Jobs are open in companies for women with S.T.E.M. knowledge, universities have their doors open for international women, online platforms offer courses and millions of books on self-study.

So I want you girls to take any opportunity you find and go with it. Today's acute challenge is that women past a children age should not change fields should they wish from humanity centric to mathematics field. They're regarded as old and unproductive with a mind with an expiration date. That is not true. Women whatever age they have, they should be allowed to change their jobs. Success stories are all over the world. From Amelia Ehrhardt to Anna Kaja the first woman to receive a bachelor science degree in engineering from Columbia University. To modern day Donna Strickland and Sunita Williams. But women don't need success stories. We need to be appreciated for our talent. We need to be encouraged for our future and supported in our endeavors.

I would advise my 10-year-old self to focus on every subject in schools, become a jack of all trades because complex minds are those that find solutions.

>> See connections and have a world of opportunity in front of them. Thank you so much.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Andrea Barbu. What you said about appreciating someone's talent is critical to helping women move forward. So often their talents are unrecognized, just ignored. What we need to do is simply look at them and say yes, you are doing a great job, what you are doing is awesome. Andrea Barbu, what you are doing is awesome.

>> Andrea Barbu: What you are doing today moderating us is awesome. Thank you for being a man in a girl's world right now.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you. It is my privilege. It is absolutely an honor. We go now to the United Kingdom. We are continuing to color in this beautiful map. We have a very special girl here, Myra Agrawal. Myra Agrawal is the youngest young woman here today to speak to us. I think we all owe her our attention and our engagement.

>> Myra Agrawal: Thank you. Hell. My name is Myra Agrawal I'm from the United Kingdom. I'm a year six student at north London Collegiate school and I'm 11 years old. I'm happy to be here, but a little nervous about being the youngest speaker. These are the thoughts about S.T.E.M. There are lots of ways to think about S.T.E.M., to study science, art, and other lessons, we have technology days, S.T.E.M. club and other events. We make chutes to learn about gravity. I most enjoy it when it is hands on and involves a practical activity. As an engineering challenge, as part of a team, I had to design, build, and test a model airplane. Mine was called the sparrow. We had to think about the aerodynamics, and the wing structure. It was also fun flying them down the school corridors. I will start senior school next year. My teachers told me about chemistry lesson to expose metal in water.

Technology is changing the world around us. How much have phones developed? It seems like Apple releases a new phone. I have an iPhone and my parents didn't have one. When they did get one, it was like a brick with an antenna. They could only make calls and play snake. Today phones are slender and have software and I can watch net flex. To be honest, there was a time when I didn't like maths. It was complicated and scary. I'm lucky my mom helped me learn to see there can be fun to explore different ways of a maths problem using objects. Now I enjoy maths and it is one of my favorite subjects.

In some ways, technology brings risks the most obvious for me is the Internet. My parents give me lots of advice on how to stay safe online. We do lots of e-safety in school. Recently I looked up a bunch of fake stories including one that claimed a man pretended to be deaf for 60 years to avoid talking to his family. I know I am supposed to give advice to my 10-year-old self which feels strange since I have only been 11 for seven weeks. Anyway, don't be afraid to try something because you are young. There may be more young than women in some S.T.E.M. careers but we can change that. Thank you for listening to my thoughts on S.T.E.M.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: You are a gem. I enjoyed listening to you speak. I don't know if you will do any more lectures anywhere, if you want to do a lecture for one of my courses, I would love to have you talk to my students about all the things you mentioned. I can't imagine what it must be like at my age creating an airplane that goes anywhere. It would simply crash and burn. I loved hearing your story and having you here. Thank you, Myra Agrawal you are an absolute gem.

>> Myra Agrawal: Thank you.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: We move now to Italy. We have Sara



Matassoni.

>> Sara Matassoni: Thank you for introducing me. I'm an Italian girl, my name is Sara Matassoni. I'm a student of economics, I'm completing my Master of Science now. It is hard to get in after Myra Agrawal's astonishing intervention. We have to do what we have to do.

Anyway, I'm -- I wanted to start this intervention with an anecdote, something that happened to me. I am passionate about technology, I have always loved coding and studied technology for most of my -- economic student path. I had -- my computer broke, I needed to take it to the assistance center. I know the problem was a paste inside the computer. A thermal paste. Problems with the heating. I brought it to the assistant center. I explained it to the guy working there. The first thing he told me is no it is not. I was like no, no, I'm sure it is that. You should go for it. He didn't believe me. So I brought up this -- I invented that my father was an engineer and that he told me he was -- that that was the problem. So at that point he kind of believed me more. But I wanted to reason on this sense of this instinct I had to make up a man to make my word more reliable. It wasn't the first time that happened. It is a feeling we have often. I think this comes from the lack of or scarcity of role models in the field. We don't picture women as competent. We don't picture competent women easily in S.T.E.M. fields in general. When I started public economics, I was -- there weren't as many women in politics as now. Things have changed in five years. Presidents, very important politicians that are women. It is easy to look up to them and be like finally inspired and be able to picture ourselves in higher positions.

What I would give as a piece of advice to 10-year-old me, I couldn't choose one, I put two. The first would be not to settle. Don't think that if there is no one up there that you can look up to, you can't be one of them. I have made it. I'm still able to -- I don't have this feeling of wanting to settle. I have someone to look up to now.

The second piece of advice is be united with other women. From my personal experience they are the best shelter. And especially in sharing such feelings and situations very often. So yeah, this is pretty much it.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Sara Matassoni I tell my students that are young women the same thing. Having a connection to me will help you advance your career but the best thing for your career is connecting to other women in your field, that network will help carry you through your entire life. Thank you for being here and highlighting this important issue. It is so nice to see you.

We get to go to Belgium now, we have Audrey Gerken. Audrey Gerken. I'm sorry.

>> Audrey Gerken: Good afternoon I'm Audrey Gerken I'm 16 years old, Belgium from Brussels. I live a few steps from the European Union headquarters. When I was young, I struggle at school. School didn't give me the opportunity to understand math or sciences. We

had the program without feeling passion. School made me think I wasn't good enough. I had a feeling of failure. Luckily, thanks to other positive influences in my life, I decided to convince myself that I could be good at anything I wanted to do. I came to the conclusion that if you truly want to believe -- to achieve a goal you have to believe in yourself. As I grew more and more comfortable in math and sciences studies, I started to think it was important for me to know what career path I wanted to take. Computer sciences, mechanical engineering. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to study.

But what I knew is I wanted to be a part of the evolution of technology. To make an impact in society. To participate in a project that can be scaled globally and help others. When I started to talk about it, the answer I received were, are you sure? It is an immense job, you know? It is difficult. Are you going to make it? Science is often considered a male dominated field. Those answers make me doubt for a moment but as I grew to know myself better every day, I realize that the best way to motivate me is to tell me I can't do it. Because then I will fight for it.

Today, even in Europe, we are still surrounded by prejudice against the abilities of girls to fill any position in the society. I feel that is our mission to prove them that they are wrong! And finally, if I can give advice to my 10-year-old self, I would tell myself, you should spend more time understanding deeper the sentence we have at the entrance of our school that said let your dreams devour your life. Let your life devour your dream. Because as girls, everything, everything is possible! Thank you. I'm very grateful for being able to be here.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Audrey, those are powerful words. I can't say anything to fill in the gap here. You are awesome. Thank you for taking the time to be here. We will go now to Greece, flying into southern Europe with Anita Nomikos. Anita, I see you.

>> Good afternoon everyone. It is my great pleasure to be here today at this very important event for young girls like myself. My name is Anita. I'm 14 years old. I go to Saint Catherine's a British school in Greece. Living in a modern, evolving world, I think women pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering arts, math is more important than it ever was. Having three brothers puts into perspective that women and men are capable of the same thing. An example is when we fight. Sometimes I win, sometimes my brothers win. The message of this is that through women pursuing careers it will help bridge the gender digital divide. According to research the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated digital technology by three to four years. This shows how it is with greater reason to engage the European community and promote collaboration through partnerships. Despite significant improvements in the last couple of years, women are still underrepresented in science and technology. This is due to a variety of reasons. Mostly related to the role allocated to women in modern society as well as preexisting prejudices, form glass ceilings while encouraging male presence in the workplace. Also a

result of lack of information, which places young women in difficult position of making a career choice with little knowledge of available positions.

What seems to be missing are good role models that can add to the inspiration, source of against and offer a glimpse into reality of being a female employee in the field of science and technology. This is where we come in. We can form a community and go after what we want. It may sound straightforward there are many obstacles that don't allow this to be as easy as it should be. First of all, at school, a lack of clubs that do all the things like coding, computing, learning to use 3D printers. Along with this comes a fear that some girls face, like no girls will join or it will all be boys or maybe their friends think it is weird. As a matter of fact, we should normalize all of this and think of it as an advantage that we're educated and know about these things. In addition, parents, teachers, career guidance counselors all have a significant role in assisting or hindering the way young women choose their career path. That is early on in school through higher education. I'm certain if we follow-through and do these things, that we'll encourage girls all over the world to pursue these careers. If I were to give my 10-year-old self advice, it would be don't let things that don't matter in the future stop you from doing things that will matter in the future. Thank you.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Anita. I have to share my grandparents are from Greece. So I wish that you had a chance to connect with them. Because I think they would have been so inspired by your words today. Just hearing from you is so encouraging to see that path that you have charted for yourself. Thank you, Anita. It is a privilege.

We want to go now to Switzerland. To Yazmine Samawi.

>> I am 14, I am from Geneva Switzerland. Ever since I was young, my brother who had background in STEM encouraged me and pushed me to introduce me to things related to S.T.E.M. A thought a girl like me that does ballet wouldn't pursue these things. I was wrong. Later on when quarantine started, my brother showed me a shape that was designed to roll on forever. I was curious about how the object was fabricated. My brother said we could do some 3D printing and designing together. We sat down together and watched videos on 3D printers and the printing process. Then I decided to research the subject on my own. I learned different types of printers, programs, materials. My brother and I spent quarantine working on the 3D printer and creating models of rooms and houses, which is a great passion of mine. This pushed me to master this skill. I joined the school's 3D printing and designing class. I was surprised to be the only girl there. The guys in the class were shocked to see me while the teacher was happy. This showed me we as girls must be more curious regardless of whether the topic falls under certain stereotypes or not. That is to say, that not one thing is boys only or girls only when it comes to education. We as girls should not be afraid to follow and or try new topics. To this day, I continue

to design and can 3D model and continue to improve my level of skill. So, if I were to give my 10-year-old self advice after this experience, I would say that when something in the world catches your eye, find others who are willing to teach you. Also find others who share your passion and are willing to grow alongside you.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Yazmine. I love that message of curiosity, I see that in your eyes, in the world around you and area you're working in. That will serve you well throughout your entire life no matter what career you go into or choose. That sense of curiosity gives you purpose. I really admire you for that. Thank you very much. We have a special opportunity now. As I mentioned before, we have been running a campaign online. That focuses on advice for our 10-year-old selves. We have heard from so many women now about their advice for their 10-year-old self. We want to show you now a highlight reel that pulls out the best advice we have given ourselves over the last few weeks. I'm really excited to see this. Because we will see so many different people, familiar faces and new faces. So if we can go ahead and make that happen.

>> This video is the 10-year celebration of Girls in ICT. Amazing opportunities are waiting for you.

>> Don't be afraid of change. Never stop learning.

>> Just go for it. Don't be afraid of making mistakes.

>> Follow your dreams. Even though people may tell you it is difficult or maybe even impossible.

>> It doesn't matter how much money you will make. It won't matter how many degrees you have or how big your house is. What will matter is the people in your life who you care about and the people who care about you.

>> Don't be afraid to explore everything and come with the best version of yourself.

>> Amazing things are yet to come. The possibilities are endless. And make sure that you jump on the train. You can even drive it if you would like. And most of all, enjoy the journey.

>> Be brave. And don't give up on your dreams. You can do anything if you believe in yourself and your dreams.

>> Keep your head up, and never let someone say something mean you or say that I can't do something because I'm a girl.

>> Don't be afraid of trying new things. Don't let others influence you, especially when it comes to something you are passionate about.

>> Do what makes you happy regardless of what others say, mean or believe, be kind and try not to care about what others think of you.

>> Always keep your goals in mind, never let anyone keep you away from doing what you love. But to be able to do so self-confidence and self-awareness are fundamental to not get discouraged by comments you might receive or whatever people might think. Fight for your goals never let anyone tell you where you should or should not be.

>> Live your life to the fullest, be yourself, believe in your

exact to succeed. Try what makes your heartbeat. Practice it day-by-day, try it again. Just view your world being close and have the trust you will create anything you set out to.

>> Just stop caring about what other people have to say. Trust your judgment.

>> Keep developing new ideas. Share them with others. Never give up.

>> Dear Marta, you are perfect just as you are. Keep your head up, follow your dreams.

>> Don't be afraid to take risks, defy expectations, forge your own path.

>> Hang out with your friends, I'm not far from my 10-year-old self [?]

>> There is always a new adventure. I will speak foreign languages and discover a lot of cultures.

>> Life is full of challenges. Sometimes these can seem insurmountable, whether you prepare for an exam, practicing for a recital or trying out for a sports team. If you can take the challenges and break them into smaller pieces, it is easier to tackle each of the tasks and you are able to celebrate each small success along the way. Don't forget to take the time to celebrate the successes. You are amazing and you deserve it.

>> Never stop exploring as every new experience will take you a step closer to your purpose.

>> Keep trying your best in everything you do and don't underestimate yourself.

>> Be the best and do the best of all the times.

>> Let your dreams devour your life and not your life devour your dreams because as girls, everything, everything is possible.

>> Stand up for myself, to keep on exchanging with others, not be afraid to keep exploring the fields of my interest, whether it is science technologies or arts, just go and get it, you can do anything you want.

>> My advice to my 10-year-old self seems a little strange since it was only short seven weeks since I was 10. Anyway my advice is that maths and science are a lot more fun and lot less scary if you are a little brave. So don't be afraid to do something new because you are young.

>> Be inspired by digital innovation and encourage to find yourself in the digital space, simultaneously inspire others to build a digital future together. There is no limit to what you can do. All depends on you. I wish you all great Girls in ICT Day!

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: I just can't even express how awesome that video is. That is the coolest thing I have seen in a very, very long time. I'm going to have to play that over and over and over again after we finish this event. It is just I can't get enough of seeing all the amazing people talk about their experiences.

We're going to wrap up now. I want to hand over the microphone to Jaroslaw. He's been formidable in making this happen. I can't thank you enough. You are amazing.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you, Anthony and for the great moderation and great cooperation on this project. And thank you to all our high-level speakers and our incredible girls for the beautiful stories and insights they have shared with us. It has been personally inspiring and I hope that this celebration has inspired all the girls joining us today to consider careers in the ICT. This session not only inspired us but gave us practical advice moving forward on following our dreams. Not caring what others think, be courageous and taking chances.

I myself took the opportunity earlier this week to share the video on advice to my 10-year-old self. My advice is inspire others to build digital future together. No limits what you can do. All depends on you.

So let's make it all happen together. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, again, for this incredible event and remind you to join us at 16 hours for the Girls in ICT global celebration. When Anthony will also be speaking and sharing his wisdom. I would like to give a special thanks to Anthony who has been instrumental in organizing this event and all the partners who have nominated the girls speaking here today. Anthony, you have the last word as the leader of the EQUALS-EU being the platform that we are strongly supporting and looking forward to working with you on the innovation for empowerment of the girls in ICTs. I'm handing over to you.

>> ANTHONY GIANNOUMIS: Thank you, Jaroslaw, I appreciate that. I will end with thank you to the following folks.

[Listing names]

You guys are amazing. You hear this all the time, you are the future. That is the absolute truth. I want you each to know how much I appreciate what you have done here today for me. As a teacher, as a student. Because I learned from you as much as you do from me.

Tomorrow, next year, next week, if you ever need advice, if you ever need a connection, please reach out to me. I'm on all the social media, connect with me. I will do everything I can to help you accelerate your careers.

Finally, I want to encourage everyone, if you are into this gender inclusion thing which you all are by now. If you haven't been convinced by now, I don't know what would convince you. Please sign up for our newsletter. We're putting out a monthly newsletter that is about gender inclusion and innovation. It is good practices so you can take this idea forward. Thank you, again. I hope everyone has a great day.

[Concluded]

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