

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022  
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**Speech at the occasion of the WSIS TALKS 2023**  
**News and updates from WSIS gender trendsetters**  
*Swiss Engineering Geneva & WOMENVAI*

Dear participants, colleagues, and friends,

Good day to all and thanks to once again to enable us to give news and updates on our activities!

We mainly focus on 4 key activities: presence at UN events, workshops for kids, development of Gender equality plan in one Engineering Faculty, and our WOMENVAI academy programme held in Benin last month.

**(1) Presence at two major UN events:**

- The Science summit organized on the margin of the UN General assembly in September where 3 of us PhD candidates from the University of Lisbon, Portugal presented a side event on “women in STEM in Europe”
- The COP27 where I basically came from 2 days ago where we as WOMENVAI had 22 delegates from 15 different countries, with a focus on

**(2) Facilitating 30 workshops** of 3 hours in primary classes on STEM and gender issues named after **KidsVAI**, here in Geneva, representing approx.. 700 kids, girls and boys and presented games on breaking gender stereotypes in STEM + building in mixed teams an electrical game with digital basic skills

**(3)** In July then September, we did organize a workshop of 3 days (in 2 Steps) with gender referees from their different locations in France and Africa (they have 5 sites, including Dakar, Sénégal) and the Board of Administration of EPF, School of Engineers in France and helped them develop their **Gender Equality Plan aligned with the European guidelines**, especially very much necessary when you are in academia and want to get research funds from Europe, as this is a mandatory criteria since the beginning of the year.

(4) Organizing a **WOMENVAI Academy in Cotonou, Bénin, in October**, under the leadership of the Ministry of Digital Affairs, Ms Aurélie Adam Soulé, who invited us, 4 mentors of WOMENVAI to facilitate during 3 days to help 20 women entrepreneurs (aged 19 to 52 - average 28 years old) to pitch their project of business : bringing technology into a socio economic sector for the development of their country, with a sustainable approach! The same ladies did present their project in front of a national jury, 3 of them won the prizes and will be closely followed by the national stakeholders in their business sectors: agriculture, tourism, health. We then took the opportunity while in country to train this group of 20 ladies to facilitate the KIDSVAI project for younger girls aged 12-15 to raise awareness on Climate adaptation through technology.

WOMENVAI cofounders have tried hard to achieve all this on the field and at UN level since over 10 years before we legally kicked-off! Especially thanks to women engineers and scientists having a voice with our involvement at the WSIS process – World Summit of Information Society in Geneva, but also the UN WOMEN annual conference in NYC, and various UN spaces we have been engaged in, namely the Ocean conference, the WMO – congress, the WTO public Forum without mentioning annual COPs. Although technologies are becoming increasingly affordable, we know that the acquisition of basic digital skills remains a barrier and the digital divide persists. With our programme, we help strengthening Youth employability, creating new job opportunities, while ensuring the participation of girls and women in ICT in all socioeconomic sectors, and offering technological solutions to fight sexual harassment and violence at school, at the university campuses and at the workplace.

**Thank you very much for your attention!**