

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Enabling the Future - Developing the Space Workforce (5)

Author: Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Austria, simonetta.di.pippo@unoosa.org

Mr. Scott Ritter

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Austria, scott.ritter@un.org

Mr. Martin Staško

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Austria, martin.stasko@un.org

Ms. Julia Milton

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), United States, jmilton@mit.edu

Mr. Markus Woltran

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Austria, markus.woltran@un.org

SPACE4WOMEN: A UNOOSA STRATEGY TO ENABLE AND DEVELOP THE SPACE
WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE**Abstract**

Disparities exist between men and women within the space sector and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Less than 30 percent of STEM researchers are women and less than 20 percent of the space workforce comprises women. Achieving the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires increased participation from women in STEM and in the space sector. SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 5: Gender Equality are specifically focused on these topics. To support the achievement of these goals, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) has launched a global Space4Women project, which aims to strengthen awareness, capacity, and skills of individuals and institutions to promote gender equality in the space sector. It also helps to communicate and facilitate access to opportunities in STEM education and the space sector itself. This is achieved through four unique activities: (1) a global Space4Women Network, which brings together female role models and mentors to inspire, guide, encourage, and support women and girls in pursuing STEM education and careers in the space sector; (2) a platform to submit capacity building ideas and needs to facilitate tailored advice, expertise, knowledge, and data to improve access to and use of space; (3) a global discussion forum in which women and girls can share experiences, opportunities, and obstacles about working in the space sector, and exchange information on STEM fields; and (4) annual conferences and events that facilitate multilateral and global dialogue on gender equality in the space sector. To date, the most important lesson learned has been the importance of direct outreach in growing the interest in and support of project activities. Altogether, Space4Women activities provide opportunities to enable, develop, and inspire women and girls to become leaders in the future space workforce.