

International Women's Day 2021

8 March 2021

Message to BR Staff

**Mario Maniewicz,
Director, Radiocommunication Bureau**

Today, 8th of March, is the International Women's Day.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the women staff of the BR, the ones in the general services, and those in professional and higher categories. Your work is fundamental to the ITU-R and we certainly would not do as well without your perspective, resilience and commitment.

This year's International Women's Day comes as the world continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and its staggering impacts on women – from being pushed into poverty, to loss of jobs as the informal economy shrinks, to an alarming spike in domestic violence and the unpaid care burden.

Under the theme “Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world,” we all celebrate the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and highlights the gaps that remain.

Women continue to be at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19, as front-line and health sector workers, as scientists, doctors, teachers, mothers, and caregivers.

Since 1945, when the Charter of the United Nations affirmed the principle of equality between women and men, the world has made great advances. Nevertheless, more effort is needed to transform this principle into reality, especially in the technical field of radiocommunications.

In the Radiocommunication Sector, we have taken bold steps forward to increase and promote the active participation and leadership of women in all our activities and meetings. Currently only 15% of chair and vice-chair positions in ITU-R study groups are occupied by women. Participation by women in our study groups is only at 19%. There is still much work to be done.

As you know, the WRC-19 adopted a Declaration that commits us all to actively promote gender equality, equity, and parity in the work of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector. One of the steps toward implementing the declaration was our launch in December 2020 of the Network of Women for WRC-23 (NOW4WRC23). The aim of this initiative is to start building capacity and to encourage a larger participation of women in key roles in the next WRC, and in our meetings and conferences as delegates, chairs, and vice-chairs. This initiative will go a long way to inspire a new generation of women in radiocommunications and contribute towards exceeding the 30 per cent threshold of women in key roles at ITU-R.

In addition, the RAG Correspondence Group on Gender is already working towards identifying how our membership can reduce the gender parity gap.

In the BR, I embrace the challenge to reach gender equality, equity and parity, and to improve the representation of women in professional and higher categories. I reiterate that working toward gender parity does not advantage women over men. The BR should benefit from the contribution of the most competent staff possible, regardless of considerations of gender, race or religion.

I wish you all a Happy International Women's Day!!!