

Concept Note

Building an equal and inclusive SERCOM: past experiences for future action

Side Event

First Session of the Commission for Weather, Climate, Water and Related Environmental Services and Applications - SERCOM-1 (II) – online

23 February 2021, 17:30-19h00 (Geneva time)

Background:

WMO achieved considerable progress in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in the past decade. It was among the few UN entities to have undertaken consistent and focused efforts on increasing the involvement of women in governance and decision-making. Facilitating factors for the positive outcomes achieved included:

- *A concrete target*: The 30% target on female participation in constituent body working structures, which Cg-17 approved as part of the updated WMO Gender Equality Policy, gave an initial push. The target was increased to 40% by Cg-18 in June 2019 when an updated WMO Gender Action Plan was adopted and priorities for 2020-2023 identified.
- *A standing agenda item*: In implementation of the Gender Action Plan, WMO placed gender equality on the agenda of all constituent body meetings in 2016-2019. Statistical analysis was presented as background information, including historical trends and comparative statistics on female representation. This combination of hard data + space and opportunity to discuss the topic turned gender equality into a genuine agenda item at meetings.
- *Targeted investment in female leadership*: Several technical commissions organized Women's Leadership Workshops for female delegates to their meetings. WMO analysis demonstrated that an 11%-20% increase in female representation was registered at constituent body sessions coupled with such workshops. In addition to strengthened leadership skills, the workshop participants gained important experience from taking part in a major international meeting, created informal networks of female professionals, and are increasingly involved in the work of the WMO technical commissions.
- *Making gender equality relevant to all*: The benefits of diversity and gender equality were made centerpiece to the WMO Gender Action Plan, with an emphasis on their positive effect for modern organizations in terms of performance, governance, innovation, and employee satisfaction. WMO also took a deliberate approach of framing gender equality as an issue concerning both women and men.
- *Gender champions (both male and female)*: the leadership and voice of key figures in the WMO community (presidents and vice-presidents of technical commissions, EC members), was key to mobilizing action and raising the profile of gender as a topic of discussion.

Overall, whenever there had been targeted action on behalf of WMO constituent bodies to increase female participation, tangible results were achieved.

Objectives:

1. Showcase good practice and success stories on increasing female participation in the work of the past WMO technical commissions;
2. Inspire action to accelerate efforts at building a gender-equal and inclusive SERCOM.

Focus:

- What was key to success?
- How were any challenges (e.g. lack of awareness or reluctance to act) addressed?
- What specific tools/mechanisms were used and could these be replicated/adapted?
- How can SERCOM build on these past accomplishments and sustain the positive results achieved?

Expected Outcome:

- Launch work on the creation of a SERCOM network of female experts;
- Identify concrete actions for potential inclusion in Doc 7 (SERCOM-1).

Modality: a moderated panel discussion followed by an interactive discussion

Duration: 90 min

Scenario:

1. Intro remarks by moderator and SERCOM President (Ian Lisk) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share a vision of SERCOM as a body which fully harnesses the scientific excellence and expertise of women 	10 min
2. Intro remarks by SERCOM Gender Focal Point (Bárbara Tapia) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlight past achievements (see bullets in the background section) 	5 min
3. First round of questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 question per panellist, to be provided in advance. - Focused on past experiences (e.g. participation in Women's Leadership Workshops) and effective approaches to increasing women's participation. Speakers (tbc): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SC-AGR: Elena Mateescu (Romania) - SC-MMO: Natacha Bernier (Canada) - SC-HYD: Hwirin Kim (WMO Secretariat) 	25 min
4. Present the idea of creating a SERCOM network of female experts and the gist of Doc 7 (Bárbara Tapia)	5 min
5. Second round of questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 question per panellist, to be provided in advance. - Future-oriented on how SERCOM can capitalize on these past experiences as well as innovate Speakers (tbc): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SC-AVI: Claudia Ribero (Argentina) - SC-CLI: Fatima Driouech (Morocco) - SC-DRR: Jitsuko Hasegawa (Japan) 	25 min
6. Ideas and comments from the audience	15 min
7. Concluding remarks by moderator (Ian Lisk) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refer to SERCOM session on the following day and potential actions to be included in Doc 7; - If possible, mention follow-up steps (who is expected to join the network, how, expected mode of communication); - Call on female experts in the audience to sign up, be active and make a difference. 	5 min