

OECD WORKSHOP ON “WOMEN IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY (SET): STRATEGIES FOR A GLOBAL WORKFORCE”

DATES: September 28 and 29, 2006

VENUE: Victoria Ballroom, Marriott Hotel, 100 Kent Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Background: Addressing barriers to the education, recruitment, progression and retention of women in science, engineering and technology (SET), from school age-level, to university studies, to late career, is key for meeting the increasing demand for a skilled workforce. The OECD, together with the Canadian Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, will hold its 2nd workshop on "Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET): Strategies for a global workforce".

Objectives: The under-representation of women in SET has been well documented and the underlying causes of this problem well studied. In an effort to address these barriers and issues, many OECD countries have developed and implemented programmes, structures and policies on gender mainstreaming/gender equity. The objective of this one and a half day workshop is to assess the outcomes of solutions and programmes that have been put in place in OECD countries and to identify best practices. Small group sessions will facilitate discussion.

Topics of Discussion: This international workshop will bring together stakeholders from government, education and research institutions and the business community and will provide the latest insight on:

Session 1.A. Women in the General Workforce and in SET *What is the broader context for women in the workforce? What is the current ‘state of affairs’ for women in SET? What are the underlying reasons why women are under-represented in the SET?*

Session 1.B. Gender issues in the sciences: *How do the sciences benefit? What is the potential impact on the content and conceptual framework of SET that a strong presence of women, around the world, can help to make?*

Session 1C: Excellence, Science Cultures and Gender *What are the specific trends, issues, ‘cultural dynamics’ within specific disciplines that facilitate or inhibit the participation of women? Does the definition and assessment of excellence play a decisive role in this respect?*

Session 2: Programmes and initiatives focusing on changes in the scientific system

A substantial change in the position of women in SET and research will not be possible without changes to the scientific system itself. What initiatives have already been put in place to address fundamental change within the scientific system (universities, research institutes, funding agencies, industry) and what have we learned from both successful and unsuccessful initiatives, programmes, policies or mechanisms? What possible solutions should be explored for the future? Examples range from implementing gender-responsive budgets by governments, gender-balancing compositions of decision bodies, integrating gender in research agendas and programmes,

implementing diversity management in industry, to reflecting critically the definition and assessment of excellence with respect to funding and recruiting policies and practice.

Session 3: Programmes and initiatives focusing on the advancement of women

The barriers and challenges which exist for women in SET and research vary throughout the different stages of education and career. What initiatives have already been put in place to improve education, recruitment, retention and progression for young girls and women in SET? What have we learned from both successful and unsuccessful initiatives, programmes, policies or mechanisms? What possible solutions should be explored for the future?

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