



STATEMENT BY SARAH FLOU REAUBRON  
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UNITED NATIONS

TO THE  
FIFTY FIFTH SESSION OF THE  
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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Saint Lucia is pleased to join Member States in thanking the Secretary General for his comprehensive report on "Access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science, and technology" including for the promotion of women's equal access to "full employment and productive work".

We note the observation that "Science, technology and innovation are key to the progress with which we accelerate the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals." These goals are valid and indivisible, which can find greater realization with the full participation of women in our societies.

Saint Lucia is fully aware that the equal participation of women in this environment is a human rights issue that is enshrined in the very charter of the United Nations. We also recognize that it is also a common sense survival issue. Logic dictates that if 50% of a population does not play an integral role in science, technology or innovation that nation is hampered in its ability to contest effectively with competing groups.

Women bring unique talents to all spheres of human activity, and in no area is this more essential than in science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. These distinct capacities are encouraged to enrich, to enhance and to advance civilizations and cultures.

It is almost redundant but it is important in order to persuade the objectives of this plan, to remind us here today of some of the women who have played an important part in the development of science:

Marie Curie, the indefatigable Polish born French physicist, chemist, and astronomer, famous for her work on radioactivity, was awarded with two Nobel Prizes, the first to a woman or woman, to be so honored. Grace Hopper was a computer scientist in the United States Navy, whose ideas led to the development of the widely used computer language. At the beginning of her career, she developed a series of related products that she then manufactured and sold.

We also know that many other women throughout history played major roles in scientific discoveries but, unfortunately, these were down played or the names were passed for their male counterparts because science and technology were not seen as a woman's role.

Mr. Chairman, the Secretary General's Report shows that globally, there has been an overall increase in the enrollment of women in the science disciplines and points to the need to make science, particularly engineering and computer science, a more attractive career path.

Computer technology is a particularly compelling area in which to encourage the participation of women, as it is a field where the demands to balance work and family life can be met easily.

achieved. Promotion of women in computer technology has a social component as it lends itself to the dual career of a woman in science and a woman with motherly responsibilities with professional and private goals mutually reinforced. It is a challenge that is best addressed when encouraging greater participation of women in scientific fields. This can be practically implemented within a given career as a woman's goal to have children will be more likely if more of the women who enter scientific fields continue along in these careers.

We need to recognize that for women to have the freedom to choose science and technology careers, those careers must also respect their personal choices as she makes in her life to have a family and become a mother. To succeed in the integration of women in the science and technology fields, a woman's personal choices need to be respected and accommodated.

We are particularly aware of another positive role that can be made of women's emergence in this field. Parents are the first and most influential educators of their children. In this role mothers are able to encourage the pursuit and practice of science with both sons and daughters thereby making them more aware of these disciplines and their role in the future.

For the reasons suggested in the text, women tend to stay away from the fields of science and technology. From a lack of role models to a preference for professions that directly benefit society, we need to recognize the uniqueness of women in formulating solutions that ensure their increased participation in the fields of science and technology.

Our developing countries in particular need to address the talents of all. Our efforts to strive to bring our countries fully into the 21st century. Our governmental policies and decision making, along with our academic opportunities, must encourage women to enter the scientific and technological fields. The first step has already been taken, which is the recognition, in forums such as these, of the scope and dimension of the problem facing our nations. The next and most important step requires that the support programs already being implemented in concrete ways, thus securing the talents of our women to be developed and included in the work of our communities and nations.

I thank you.