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Higher Education, Gender and Equity: Making SDG 5 part of universities' strategy and activities

Date: Tuesday, 7 March 2023 (14:00-15:30 CET) – [register here](#)
[IAU Webinar Series on the Future of Higher Education](#)

Thematic focus:

This year's [International Women's Day 2023](#) (8 March) is taking place under the theme **#EmbraceEquity**: *"Equality is the goal, and equity is the means to get there. Through the process of equity, we can reach equality."*¹

[EWORA](#) and [IAU](#) invite interested participants and experts from higher education to discuss how universities can be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive across their activities, and in particular when working with local communities. Amongst the speakers, we will give the floor to university leadership and other representatives of IAU and EWORA Member universities, presenting examples of good practices, and institutional and organisational perspectives.

The discussion will focus on leadership, resources and tools, and social responsibility towards equity. In this context, the semantics around equity will also be addressed, including the critical need to understand the difference between **equity** and **equality**:

- *Equality* means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities.
- *Equity* recognizes that each person has different circumstances, and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.²

Therefore, universities are called on to not only create equal opportunities but to seek equity and play their part in creating a more inclusive society – starting at the institutions and their positioning in local communities.

EWORA and IAU have been advocating jointly for more gender equality and equity in higher education, in particular in leadership positions, in the past years. Furthermore, the IAU created a network, the [IAU HESD Global Cluster](#), in 2018 with the aim of connecting universities around the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

¹ <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Theme>

² <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Missions/18707/Equality-versus-Equity-What-s-the-difference-as-we-EmbraceEquity-for-IWD-2023-and-beyond>



The UN 2030 Agenda and associated SDGs are a framework for higher education institutions (HEIs) to contribute to such transformation through its core activities of Education, Research, Community Engagement and Campus operations. Not only are HEIs educating the citizens of today and the leaders of tomorrow; they are important actors at the local level, and inform policy nationally and globally. For this session, the Goals *SDG 4: Quality Education*, *SDG 5: Gender Equality*, *SDG: 10 Reduced Inequalities*, as well as *SDG 17: Partnerships* are of high importance.

During the panel discussion, the speakers will be invited to answer the following questions:

- How can universities contribute to narrowing the gender and equity gaps?
- What did you find challenging when integrating Gender and Equity principles in your university's/organisation's strategy and actions?
- Do the SDGs present a sufficiently comprehensive framework for work on Gender and Equity? If not, what needs to be considered for a follow-up mechanism beyond 2030?

Session structure:

- Welcome by IAU and EWORA ([Hilligje van't Land](#) and [Gülsün Sağlamer](#))
- Presentation EWORA: Gülsün Sağlamer, President, EWORA
- Moderated panel discussion, to include perspectives from experts from universities around the globe. Invited Panellists:
 - [Sae Okura](#), Assistant professor, University of Tsukuba, Japan (*pre-recorded message*)
 - [Gülsün Sağlamer](#), President, EWORA
 - [Jouhaina Gherib](#), IAU Board Member and President, University of Manouba, Tunisia
 - [Alexandra Seybal](#), Steering Committee Member, Equity and Inclusion Portfolio, Global Student Forum, Austria
 - [Vianne Timmons](#), President and Vice-chancellor, Memorial University, Canada
 - [Cristina Gamberi](#), Researcher, University of Bologna, Italy

The session will be moderated by IAU Secretary General Dr. Hilligje van't Land; participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and engage with the speakers, through the chat box and Q&A.

About the event organisers:

The **European Women Rectors Association (EWORA)** is a full-fledged International Non-Profit association established in Brussels under Belgian Law in December 2015 to promote the role of women in leadership positions in the academic sector and to advocate gender equality in higher education and research at European and international scales. EWORA is the continuation of European Women Rectors Platform (EWRP), which has been active since 2008 in organizing biennial European Women Rectors Conferences. EWORA is committed to providing opportunities for women rectors to share their experiences to improve the situation of women academics and to remove the barriers to horizontal and vertical segregation in academia.

EWORA's website: <https://www.ewora.org/>



EWORA social media accounts [Instagram](#) • [Twitter](#) • [Youtube](#) • [Facebook](#)

The **International Association of Universities (IAU)** has advocated for the role universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs) have played in support of sustainable development since the early 1990s. Already in 1993, the *IAU Kyoto Declaration* called for higher education leaders to better articulate HE's work to achieve a sustainable future. This was reaffirmed in 2014 with the *IAU Iquitos Statement* in which the IAU called for stronger connection between knowledge systems, including indigenous knowledge systems around the world. IAU was one of the strongest advocates for the inclusion of higher education as a key stakeholder for achieving Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. IAU was one of the Key Partners in UNESCO's Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (GAP ESD 2014-2019), and is currently a partner to the follow-up initiative, the *ESD for 2030 Global network*. IAU's strategic priority [Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development \(HESD\)](#) includes surveys on HESD, the IAU Global HESD Cluster Network, specialized publications, the IAU HESD portal, representation at events and more around sustainability in higher education.

IAU Website: <https://iau-aiu.net/>, IAU HESD Portal: <http://www.iau-hesd.net/>
Twitter [@IAU_AIU](#) and [@IAU_HESD](#) LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/iau-aiu