



CANEUS STATEMENT

Sixty-first Session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Vienna, 29th January – 9th February 2024

Agenda Item 4: “General Exchange of Views”

Strategies for Nurturing Talent and Inspiring Women in the Emerging Space Economy

By
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Madam Chair and Distinguished Delegates & Observers,

Today’s space industry appears very different than it did more than 51 years ago when Neil Armstrong spoke the historic words, “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind”.

There is considerable excitement about the future of the space sector. Whether it’s reaching a trillion-dollar market value, optimizing the industry by utilizing emerging technologies, improving climate science, embracing the limitless possibilities of women, or simply making space more accessible and inclusive.

As space exploration and commercial ventures continue to expand, the demand for the workforce in the growing space sector is undoubtedly on the rise, but will it be cohesive to the anticipated future of the space economy?

I am pleased to share the strategies developed by CANEUS to help build a conducive workforce toward the growth of the future space economy, contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals #4, #5, #8, & #9 in the 2030 Agenda and the proposed key points #5 & #11 in the Summit of the Future.

Madam Chair,

Today, I share this floor surrounded by esteemed people from around the world, which would have been surreal for my younger self.

As a child growing up, I was inspired by the incredible Kalpana Chawla. With time my passion for space intensified. Despite my determination and relentless pursuit of knowledge, it seemed like an insurmountable task. I wish the world was as small as it is today, I could have found the right guidance and support from initiatives like UNOOSA’s Space for Women, to identify a pathway that could accelerate my trajectory into this sector.



It is truly inspiring to witness the efforts being made to increase the representation of women in the space sector, particularly within organizations like ISRO in India.

For example, from breaking glass ceilings and gender norms to taking the nation to new heights and horizons, Dr. Ritu Karidhal, the Rocket Women of India & Dr Tessy Thomas, the Missile Woman of India exhibit their relentlessness that shines bright and serves as an inspiration for the future generations of changemakers.

Over the years, CANEUS has been working actively to involve and empower women in the space sector, to tap into a vast pool of talent and perspectives that will contribute to building a highly skilled workforce for the sustainability of the future space ecosystem.

Madam Chair,

Emerging technologies such as AI, big data, and quantum computing are revolutionizing the space sector. AI has become an integral part of various aspects of the space industry, from satellite operations to data analysis. For example, AI played a significant role in contributing to the success of ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 mission.

Therefore, one avenue to build a highly skilled industry-relevant workforce is to incorporate emerging technologies into space skill force development programs, thereby students and/or young professionals like me can gain hands-on experience with cutting-edge technologies and be better prepared for future careers in this field.

Moreover, with the space industry growing at an unprecedented rate, educational programs need to converge with the changing dynamics of the sector.

Madam Chair,

CANEUS is developing new and innovative approaches to address the challenges with emerging space technologies and their important role in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the sector.

We believe that it is important and valuable to develop partnerships to benefit from our complementary expertise and undertake initiatives/projects at the intersection of our respective mandates.

I take this opportunity to invite COPUOS Members to join and support these efforts which would make an enormous contribution to humanity.

Thank you, Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates & Observers for your kind attention!