

2026 International Day of Women and Girls in Science

“From Vision to Impact: Redefining STEM by Closing the Gender Gap”

Wednesday, 11 February 2026, Room I, UNESCO Headquarters

Background

On 22 December 2015, the UN General Assembly established 11 February as the [International Day of Women and Girls in Science](#) (IDWGS) through the adoption of resolution A/RES/70/212. This Day unites the international community in emphasizing the need for gender equality in science to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Each year since then, the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, along with associated events worldwide, celebrates the remarkable contributions of women in science and raises awareness that science and gender equality must advance hand-in-hand to address the world's major challenges.

The 2026 IDWGS theme

Today, women remain a minority among the world's researchers, representing less than one third on average (see the [UNESCO factsheet](#)). This proportion matters not only for fairness, but also for the quality, relevance and impact of science itself. Closing the gender gap is essential to advancing more ethical, inclusive and socially responsive science, technology and innovation.

Building on the previous editions of IDWGS – first in 2024 with the launch of the [UNESCO Call to Action “Closing the Gender Gap in Science”](#), which pinpointed the factors behind the gender gap and called for accelerated collective action, and then in 2025 with the [#EveryVoiceInScience campaign](#), which brought forward scientists' reflections on how their fields could change if the gender gap was closed – this year's theme shifts the focus from recommendations and reflection to showcasing existing good practices and practical solutions for building more inclusive STEM ecosystems. It will explore how effective measures have been implemented worldwide, with the aim of inspiring sustainable change.

The 2026 IDWGS's celebration at UNESCO Headquarters

This hybrid, one-day event will take place on Wednesday, 11 February 2026, at UNESCO Headquarters, with online participation via Zoom, under the theme *“From Vision to Impact: Redefining STEM by Closing the Gender Gap”*. It will bring together Member States, rising and renowned scientists (including from the L'Oréal-UNESCO *For Women in Science* Programme and OWSD Chapters), stakeholders from the public and private sectors, UNESCO scientific networks, journalists and students.

This edition's roundtables will highlight the positive impact of inclusivity through personal testimonies and evidence-based discussions. Panelists from diverse regions and professional backgrounds will share concrete measures that have proven effective in reducing the gender gap in their respective fields – health research, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and scientific entrepreneurship - and will explain the conditions that enabled their success.

Organized in collaboration with [Femmes@Numérique](#) as part of their *Assises de la féminisation des métiers et filières du numérique*, the event will place a particular emphasis on the use of new and emerging technologies in STEM fields and their impact on the gender gap. By bringing together expertise from across UNESCO's sectors, the discussions will explore the growing influence of digital transformation on scientific research and innovation, from education to employment, and the need for gender-transformative approaches to ensure that technological progress benefits everyone.

Expected outcomes

Through insights shared by panelists and interactive exchanges with the audience, the event aims:

- to raise awareness of the essential contributions of women to scientific and technological innovation;
- to provide participants with a clearer understanding of practical measures that have proven effective in reducing gender inequalities across different STEM sectors, and how these approaches can be adapted, scaled, or replicated in their own institutions and context; and
- to invite stakeholders to consider how solutions must evolve in an era where new and emerging technologies increasingly shape scientific research, and how gender-responsive approaches can ensure these technologies are developed and used ethically and inclusively.

By fostering dialogue across sectors, from governments and private industry to academia and civil society, the 2026 IDWGS celebration seeks to strengthen collective commitment, encourage new partnerships, and generate follow-up actions that contribute to advancing gender equality in science. The discussions and outcomes will also feed into UNESCO's ongoing work in this field and the implementation of the UNESCO Call to Action.