

TWOWS Fourth General Assembly and International Conference Report

Background

The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) hosted the TWOWS Fourth General Assembly and International Conference at the Beijing International Convention Center (BICC), Beijing, China, on 27-30 June 2010. The International Conference on "**Women Scientists in a Changing World**" covered a critical range of socially relevant scientific topics of interest to the overall objectives of TWOWS.

The aims of the Conference were to:

- Explore and identify new dimensions for women's research in science and technology, education and training
- Identify ways of promoting the involvement of women in harnessing science and technology for sustainable development
- Explore opportunities and develop strategies for the participation of women in the development and utilization of new technologies
- Examine the role and develop strategies for the participation and leadership of women in national innovation systems
- Explore gender dimensions and effects of scientific and technological research for development.

The aims of the TWOWS Fourth General Assembly were to:

- Determine the future guiding principles and strategies of the Organization
- Discuss and approve the Organization's programmes for the period 2010-2014
- Elect a new Executive Board for TWOWS to serve during the period 2010-2014

Leading scientists from developing countries were invited to present keynote papers, followed by workshops with papers and discussions on the scientific contribution of women to these critical areas. Eminent women scientists from the South presented their research work, stressing policy issues pertaining to the participation of women in science and technology in their countries.

Attendance

Over 600 participants attended from 55 countries to present papers and hold discussions on the scientific contributions of women in four areas: Women Scientists and Frontiers of Sciences; Women Scientists and Global Change; Women, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Leadership Capacity; and Gender Mainstreaming in the Global Scientific Community. A Young Women Scientists Forum was also featured as part of the Conference.

From TWOWS SA, DST and SET4W, the following people attended the conference:

- Minister Naledi Pandor (DST)
- Ms Nasima Badsha (Ministerial Advisor, DST)
- Prof. Roseanne Diab (TWOWS SA)

- Dorothy Ngila (TWOWS SA)
- Dr. Romilla Maharaj (SET4W)

The conference was also attended by South Africa women scientists that presented papers on different topics.

Minister Pandor's Keynote Address

Minister Pandor presented a keynote addressed to the conference delegates where she emphasised the following;

- the importance of recognising the role of national, regional and international activities in promoting greater participation of women in science
- the importance of mentoring for young girls
- the importance of recognising young women scientists awarded prizes at the conference

The Minister also called for continued support of campaigns and activities that promote greater participation of women scientists

Significant outcomes of the conference

1. The name of the organization was changed to Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSDW), to better reflect its focus on promoting both the greater participation of women in science, technology and innovation as well as the use of science, technology and innovation to better the lives of both women and men in the developing world.
2. A new President was elected: Prof. Xin Fang is a research professor and member of the Presidium of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).
3. The following members were also elected to the Executive Board:
4. Africa: Dolly Ahbor Ighoroje (Nigeria), Vice President; Esi Awuah (Ghana), Member
5. Arab States: Samira Omar (Kuwait), Vice President; Rokhsana Abdul Raman (Yemen), Member
6. Asia and the Pacific: Farida Habib Shah (Malaysia), Vice President; Sudha Nair (India), Member
7. Latin America and the Caribbean: Mayra de la Torre (Mexico), Vice President; Miriam Diaz (Venezuela), Member
8. A revised set of statutes was presented and approved by the General Assembly.
9. The Beijing Statement (<http://www.twows.org/about-twows/beijing-statement>) was approved by the Conference and released on June 29, 2010. In view of the commitments in the Platform for Action of 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, and the recommendations in Para 90 of the Framework for Action of the World Conference on Science held in Budapest in 1999, the participants called on governments and the international community to recognize, document and highlight the contributions made by women to science, technology, engineering and innovation and to take steps in policy and programming to ensure the full participation of women and girls in all aspects of science and technology.