



**Statement by
Elizabeth Maruma Mrema
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
International Day of Women and Girls in Science
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*Innovate. Demonstrate. Elevate. Advance.***

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It is with great joy and deep respect that, on behalf of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, I join this commemoration of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

Throughout the years, the gender gap has been persistent at all levels of science and technology across the world. Though there has been remarkable progress towards increasing participation in higher education, women and girls are still under-represented in these fields.

We need to work harder to break these gender barriers and open the door for more women and girls in science. Diversity equates to a variety of perspectives and ideas – something that is fiercely needed as we work to put our planet on a path to a sustainable future.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) places a huge emphasis on the full and complete inclusion and participation of women and girls throughout. In fact, Target 23 aims to ensure gender equality in the implementation of the framework through a gender-responsive approach where women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention. This includes recognizing their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity.

In order to successfully implement the GBF and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we need to ensure increased representation of women in science. There is no simpler way to state it. Young girls need strong role models in the field – they need to see that science is not confined to a gender. Science transcends gender, race, age, sexual orientation, and every other invisible barrier that may stand in the way.

Today, and every day, let us encourage and enable women and girls to, not only take an interest in science, but to innovate, demonstrate, elevate, and advance in a field where they are greatly needed and genuinely welcomed.

