
AFRICA: Women scientists discuss new network

03 May 2009

Issue: 0028

Members of the International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists (**Inwes**) met in Abidjan last month to discuss setting up an African regional network.

Abidjan.net reported that delegates from 12 African countries attended the conference "What role for women engineers and scientists in the developing Africa" organised by CIFISATS, the Ivorian society of women engineers and scientists.

In his speech opening the conference, Laurent Dona-Fologo, President of Côte d'Ivoire's Economic and Social Council, said historically, because of men's frequently enforced absence in the Sahel, women had taken charge.

This was even more the case now in a world 'deregulated' through globalisation, Dona-Fologo said, and Africa must today constitute the alternative and propose ways for its own development with all its natural strength, reported *Abidjan.net*.

Inwes is a non-governmental organisation with links to Unesco, and supports women working in science, technology, engineering and mathematics by strengthening capacity of individuals, organisations and corporations through professional development.

The network's objective is to achieve the fourth United Nations' millennium development goal to "promote gender equality and work towards the education of girls and women in all nations, contribute to economic and social development of developing countries through participation of women in the sciences and mathematics, to reach a critical mass of women in them worldwide; and to respond to the need for human resources and capacity building".

It has been organising international conferences for women engineers and scientists for 25 years, and workshops such as the 2004 leadership workshop in Nairobi by African Women in Science and Engineering supported by Unesco and the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP).