

# SPACE FOR WOMEN

***Space for Women (S4W) is an informal network of women who share the common goals of creating inclusive policy and advancement opportunities for women in space arenas worldwide, and of applying space technologies to improve the lives of girls and women around the world.***

***S4W has a commitment to work collaboratively as a global organization, to encourage and support formation of regional and local affiliates, and to highlight activities of group members and others working to advance our mutual goals.***

## HISTORY



In **October 2017**, UNOOSA and UN Women co-hosted an inaugural **“Space for Women” Expert Meeting** at the United Nations in New York, with the goal of creating and prioritizing specifics for an envisioned “Space for Women” project.

Attendees, including approximately 60 women from around the world, heard from government and private enterprise administrators and policy makers, scientists, aerospace professionals, engineers, educators, and arts/media professionals. Many made individual presentations and all participated in discussions on the topics covered. On the final day of the event, recommendations from the assembled group were considered at a high-level panel at UN Headquarters, including a proposal presented by Ghina Halabi to establish a

UN-endorsed “Women Ambassador Programme,” a global network of role models and mentors working to promote careers in STEM and the space sector. The high-level panel adopted these recommendations emerging from the Expert Meeting:

- Creating a UN-based online platform for exchange, communication and coordination
- Establishing global network of role models and mentors to promote careers in STEM and the space sector
- Conducting research on various aspects of women in STEM/aerospace, using this evidence to raise awareness
- Running a pilot program in capacity building in a selected country to assess enabling environment
- Planning a Space for Women forum, focusing on capacity building and awareness raising

Valuable contacts were made among those attending the 2017 Expert Meeting, resulting in a self-organized, global **Space for Women (S4W)** group who continued to work alongside the UN to further the advancement of women in space and aerospace sectors. Individuals within this informal network expanded use of online platforms to communicate, to collaborate on research and scholarship, to initiate and organize specifically focused interest groups, to plan and host events, and to share professional accomplishments within the network.



Expert Meeting group (Oct. 2017)

Here are some specific activities emanating from individuals within the S4W network soon after the 2017 Expert Meeting:

- Susan Murabana Owen and her Traveling Telescope featured in Jan Millsapps' *Madame Mars* newsletter
- *Model Mars* project advanced by Futuristas (Jen Breslin and others)
- Launch of *Scherezade: She Speaks Science*, a communication platform that aims to make science accessible, open and inclusive, by Gina Halabi
- Expanded Bay Area Space for Women group, with international outreach
- New York Space for Women group, with international outreach
- Adrienne Provenzano and others have included information about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, Space4Women, Space4Youth, and Space4All programs in various conference presentations
- Cassie Lee of Brooke Owens Fellowship connected with Charity Weeden, who is now a Brooke Owens Fellowship Mentor and part of the Fellowship Selection Committee

- Ghina Halabi has hosted programs by several women (Sara Langston, Jan Millsapps) from the S4W group at the University of Cambridge and at other locations in the UK
- Since presenting her paper at the Expert Meeting, Chidinma Iroka has continued to write about girls, women and STEM education. Her paper, “Space Science and Technology: The Future of Girls/Women in Africa,” will soon be published.



In **June 2018**, many of those who met at the 2017 Expert Meeting in New York reconvened and caught up with each other at the **UNISPACE + 50** event, held at UNOOSA headquarters in Vienna. Following an afternoon “Space for Women” panel, filmmaker and educator Jan

Millsapps presented her new documentary, *Madame Mars: Women and the Quest for Worlds Beyond*. After the screening, Millsapps moderated an international panel (Jen Blank, Jen Breslin, and Basuti Bolo), who discussed issues raised by the film, and possible solutions to challenges faced by women in the space arena, including STEM education, educating and empowering women globally, and ensuring female futures in space.



**UNISPACE + 50 group (June 2018). First row: Chidinma Iroka, Jennifer Breslin, Alessandra Abe Pacini, Ghina Halabi. Second row: Amanda Moore, Jan Millsapps, Alissa Haddaji, Jennifer Blank, Basuti Bolo, Guilia Persoz, Alice Gorman**

Further informal networking among the women who attended the UNISPACE + 50 event led to these new developments:

- Expanded and enhanced S4W web site, social media and communication

platforms ([Facebook group](#), What's App) to keep in touch and to promote both group and individual activities and accomplishments

- World Space Week (October 2018) events:
  - Women in Space Nigeria (Chidinma Iroka and others)
  - *Ladies Do Launch*, a series of coordinated panels of women in the space industry, held in New York, Washington, DC, Seattle and San Francisco Bay Area (organized by Allegra Searle-LeBal, Timiebi Aganaba-Jeanty, Jen Breslin and Jan Millsapps)
- Space Applications for Women's Empowerment Working Group (Jen Breslin, Cassie Lee and others)



In October 2019, the **Workshop on Space Technology for Socio-Economic Benefits: Ensuring Inclusiveness through Space-based Applications and Space Exploration**, organized by the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) and supported by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), offered another opportunity for individuals in the S4W community to reconnect and catch up in person in Washington, DC. Several women from the S4W group, including Susan Murabana Owen, Jen Blank, Alessandra Abe Pacini, Basuti Bolo, Pascale Lefebure, and Adrienne Provenzano, made presentations at the workshop.



**Workshop on Space Technology for Socio-Economic Benefits group (October 2019): Susan Murabana-Owen, Adrienne Provozenko, Jennifer Blank, Basuti Bolo, Alessandra Abe Pacini, Pascale Lefebure and Milica Milosev**

Pascale Lefebure volunteered to lead ongoing efforts to communicate and coordinate future activities within the S4W network, to include:

- Seeking support and recognition from UNOOSA
- Seeking support for some within the S4W group to attend the 2020 Space For Women Conference in Brazil

## CURRENT ACTIVITIES



In **January 2020**, a renewed S4W network set up monthly Skype sessions, a new Slack channel and an expanded email thread to share news, offer support, generate ideas and find more ways to work collectively.

The group has set its primary goal as finding ways to enhance and support women's voices in space sectors worldwide. Specifically, the group agreed to work toward answering the question: **how can space empower women around the world?**

These possible actions have been suggested:

- Engage with underrepresented women around the world to understand how data from space could empower their lives
- Synthesize the data and raise money in order to show up as an advocate at conferences, ask hard questions, and work to raise the visibility of women within space sectors worldwide
- Identify a project to complete, i.e. create a new program or act on behalf of an organization (i.e. NASA, GSFC) that is already working to solve this

Finally, the S4W group continues its commitment to work collaboratively with the UN as UNOOSA launches its new [Space for Women platform](#), advances a new mentoring network and online forum, and makes plans for the 2020 Space for Women meeting in Brazil.

*This history researched and written by:*

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