

# Sisters in STEM

WOMEN ENGINEERS SECTION

reported by



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**INWES Europe Regional Conference 2016:** The International Network of Women Engineering and Scientists (INWES) established INWES Europe Network last November. This milestone means women scientists and engineers in Europe are now connected and will join the influential INWES Asia Pacific Nation Network (APNN, 2009) and INWES African Regional Network (ARN, 2010).

Ir. Mah Siew Kien, Honorary Secretary of IEM Women Engineers Section, attended the INWES Europe Regional Conference in Freising, Germany, on 4-6 November, 2016.

After Dr Lutz Möller, Deputy Secretary-General of German Commission for UNESCO, gave the opening speech, INWES President Prof. Kong-Joo Lee spoke about her vision for a better future in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Keynote speakers included Tina Müller (Chief Marketing Officer, Opel Group GmbH), Dr Alexandra Borchardt (Managing Editor, Süddeutsche Zeitung), Karin Huttoetz and Melanie Vogel.

Ir. Mah presented a talk on big data development in Malaysia, stressing on the importance of a female talent pipeline and how it can contribute to a developing nation. She also shared the current state of big data development, future perspectives, opportunities and challenges including the integration of gender diversity to enhance efforts to accelerate big data developments in the country.

Other panel speakers – Dorothee Anderman, founder of Visio2Actio consulting, Sandra Becker, Director of Medienwerkstatt at Kulturwerk and Bettina Hirdina-Falk from DIB – discussed security and privacy concerns, trade-offs between convenience, benefits and dangers



Group photo at the closing banquet



Roundtable and Panel Discussion

for organisations and end-users as well as the aggressive behaviour of companies using available data for business.

There were also views on European projects and panel discussion on Young Leadership for women in technology. Participants also took part in yoga, power games and a Reiki energy workshop to refresh the mind and reawaken the body. Networking programmes were held in the evening.

On the last day, kids' workshops and a student congress were held for international participants and students. An interesting session during the students' congress was the discussion about the first German female astronaut. The speakers, Anja Hofmann, Susanne Peters, Magdalena Pree and Johanna Maislinger, are candidates of Germany's Die Astronautin, a project by HE Space, which plans to send a female German astronaut into space before 2020.

**Young Woman Scientist Camp:** Then on 22-23 November, the Young Woman Scientist (YWS) Camp, sponsored by Korea Women Scientists and Engineers (KWSE) and Asia & Pacific Nation Network (APNN), was held in Asia's Silicon Valley, Daejeon, in South Korea. The camp, initiated in 2012, started with an exhibition of country-themed booths decorated by the students.

Seventy-seven female scientists from 22 countries in the Pacific and Asia region as well as from other parts of the world, took part.

Malaysian representatives were Cik Kamila binti Ab. Hanid and Ir. Jeyanthi a/p Ramasamy while Ir. Assoc Prof. Leong Wai Yie (IEM Women Engineers Section) was the invited keynote speaker.

Day 1: In the morning, Dr Sung-Mo Steve Kang, President of the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, delivered the plenary talk on strategies

for female science and technology professionals, followed by talks in the afternoon by foreign students in South Korean universities.

Day 2: There were four lectures – “Strengthening Women’s Network in STEM is a Global Priority” by Dr Kim Jung Sun (Vice President, Dongseo University), “INWES APNN - Introduction & Activities” by Dr Kayoko Sugahara (Chair of APNN, President of INWES), “Cracking the Inclusive Code for Asia Pacific” by Ir. Dr Leong Wai Yie (Chair of Women Engineers Section, IEM Malaysia) and “Be a STEM Woman In The Coming Society” by Dr Wu Chia-Li (Emeritus Professor, Tamkang University).

There were lots of interactive activities to keep participants engaged. Students were divided into nine groups led by mentors. The theme was “Recreate Yourself, Enhance Ability and Be Strong”. They had to put their ideas on a poster for presentation. The theme for global issue discussion was “How to Face the World Food Crisis in 2050 from the Perspective of Gender in STEM?”. Students learnt from each other and realised that there might be different solutions for different parts of the world.

The YWS Camp is a platform for young women scientists to develop their strengths, feel the sisterhood and make friends internationally. The KWSE or APNN will keep track of participants and follow up on their work after 10-20 years. ■

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