Editorial

The United Nations has designated 'Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress' as the theme for 2024, emphasising the urgent need to address the economic disempowerment faced by women worldwide. Despite over a century of advocacy since its inception in 1911, International Women's Day remains crucial, underscoring the persistent struggle for women's rights and equality. Sustainable Development Goal 5 underscores the importance of gender equality, yet projections by experts in gender equality offer varying timelines for achieving this goal. UN Women estimates a daunting 285 years to close the gender gap, while the World Economic Forum predicts at least 131 years until gender parity is achieved. In this context, prioritising gender equality becomes not just a matter of justice but also a strategic imperative for building resilient societies and thriving economies. Science diplomacy emerges as a vital tool in this pursuit, bridging gaps and fostering inclusivity. The latest issue of the *Science Diplomacy* Digest explores the nuances of gender parity and participatory processes crucial for science diplomacy.

One of the articles examines the Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) program in India, initiated by DST in collaboration with the Advance Higher Education & British Council. This initiative evaluates the inclusivity of policies and practices, raises awareness, and promotes gender equality within research institutions nationwide, emphasising the significance of engaging stakeholders to foster gender equity.

Another article discusses the outcomes of a symposium series that addresses marginalisation in India's science, technology, and innovation sectors, highlighting the importance of tailored policy solutions grounded in intersectionality. Promoting gender equality in STEMM education, workforce, and leadership is crucial for cultivating a diverse talent pool and fostering a broader range of perspectives.

The role of science diplomacy in achieving gender equality is paramount. By fostering collaboration among nations and stakeholders, science diplomacy creates opportunities to exchange knowledge, best practices, and resources to address gender disparities effectively. The Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network) Charter is a global framework to promote gender equality in higher education. Through diplomatic channels, countries can share insights on successful initiatives and coordinate efforts to implement gender-inclusive policies and programs. By leveraging the power of science diplomacy, nations can accelerate progress towards achieving gender parity and creating a more equitable and inclusive world for all.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, let's continue striving for gender parity and inclusive decision-making processes in science diplomacy to create a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

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