



Key International Associations and UN Team Up to Provide More Opportunities for Women in the Cooling Sector

PARIS, 11 April 2022. – The cooling sector delivers a tremendous number of benefits ranging from public health to food security to productive and comfortable workplaces and homes. It is a truly vital, dynamic, and rapidly growing field that represents a significant source of high-quality employment worldwide. However, this sector has the potential to contribute even more by increasing the number of women in its ranks at all levels and types of jobs, which include diverse professions ranging from CEOs to professors, from engineers to servicing technicians, just to name a few.

To help accelerate this process, a new initiative called the **International Network for Women in Cooling (INWIC)** has been launched to advance the engagement of women, promote career opportunities, and increase their overall participation in the sector, which includes refrigeration, air-conditioning, and heat pumps (RACHP). INWIC is led by the World Refrigeration Day (WRD) Secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) OzonAction in cooperation with a highly-reputed group of founding partners, all of whom are active in this area – AIRAH (Australia), AREA (Europe), ASHRAE (Global), CAR (China), FAIAR (Latin America), IIR (Global), IOR (UK), ISHRAE (India), JSRAE (Japan), U-3ARC (Africa), and Women in HVAC&R (North America).

Although women make up half of the world’s population, they are significantly and visibly under-represented in the RACHP sector in all roles. INWIC seeks to reverse that trend. It is doing so while recognising that there are many excellent initiatives and structures established by different partners that are promoting women’s engagement in the RACHP field. However, more cooperation and information exchange at the global level is needed to link these individual efforts and make them even more meaningful and impactful, especially in developing countries.

There are over 300 national, regional, and international associations, organisations, and institutions in the RACHP sector, however initial research indicates that fewer than 20 (5%) of these have sections specifically for women. Corresponding data indicates that where these women’s sections do exist, there is a greater number of women who are actively involved in the committees and structures of these bodies, which in turn increases the opportunities to raise the visibility of women in the sector.

“AREA is delighted to participate in this important and international initiative to advance and promote the role of women in the RACHP sector. Women are very active among our members, as company owners but also as valuable advisors in the transition to new, energy efficient and environment friendly technologies.” said Susana Rodriguez, delegate for AREA, Presidenta AEFYT España

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“You can't be what you can't see! There are not enough visible 'women in cooling' role models. We want to change that,” said Stephen Gill – Head of WRD Secretariat. “We will create a resource for girls and young women to see bite-size videos and read real-life stories from a diverse range of women in different roles within the cooling sector. This will also serve to connect and inspire women currently working in the cooling sector.”

INWIC will connect women in this predominantly male sector, empowering them to succeed through networking opportunities, mentoring, education, to shine as visible role models to change outdated perceptions to leave a lasting legacy to inspire the next generation of women innovators and problem-solvers. It will also offer an opportunity to individual women, especially from developing countries, to get access to experiences and career development opportunities in the field that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

This initiative contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals : Gender equality for women, including equality of opportunity. Improving livelihoods through job creation and employment. Making cities and people’s lives more sustainable. Climate adaptation and mitigation. Regarding the latter, one of INWIC’s important roles is to serve as a platform to promote environmental stewardship as part of the cooling profession. This includes, among other issues, proper and safe management of refrigerants like HFCs, HCFCs, hydrocarbons and new alternatives.

“The cooling sector is critical for achieving environmental objectives, including the continued success of the Montreal Protocol and for addressing climate change. If they are to meet their compliance obligations, countries need a strong, vibrant, and inclusive cooling sector,” said James Curlin – Head of UNEP OzonAction. “Women represent a tremendous, largely untapped source of innovation and skills for this sector, and they need to be actively engaged if we are to solve the great environmental challenges of our time. INWIC seeks to do just that.”

In the next few months, INWIC founding partners will introduce several programs that directly support individual women and young girls to further engage and find opportunities that can support the advancement of their careers, the attraction to cooling education disciplines, and active engagement with the cooling community.

About AREA

AREA is the European association of refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump contractors. Established in 1989, AREA voices the interests of 24 national associations from 21 countries representing 13,000 companies employing 110,000 people and with an annual turnover approaching € 23 billion. <http://area-eur.be/>

About World Refrigeration Day (WRD)

World Refrigeration Day is an independent organisation formed in 2019 to raise awareness of the RACHP sector. Its primary focus is an awareness day held on June 26th each year. It is independent of all industry membership and trade associations/societies. It is widely supported and respected for both for its aims and its independence. This wide support makes it ideal to bring together different associations from around the world that may resist similar initiatives if led by one or a small group of associations.

Discussions with a number of these bodies (industry bodies and commercial businesses) and their women’s groups indicate enthusiastic support for the formation of INWIC with support provided by the WRD Secretariat. <https://worldrefrigerationday.org/>

About UNEP OzonAction

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development. UNEP is an Implementing Agency of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. OzonAction strengthens the capacity of governments - particularly the operational focal points known as National Ozone Units - and industry in developing countries to elaborate and enforce the policies required to implement the Protocol and to make informed decisions about alternative technologies.

<https://www.unep.org/ozonaction/>

INWIC Founding Partners

AIRAH: The Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air conditioning and Heating

<https://www.airah.org.au/>

AREA: the European association of refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump contractors

<https://area-eur.be/>

ASHRAE: The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

<https://www.ashrae.org/>

CAR: Chinese Association of Refrigeration

<https://www.car.org.cn/>

FAIAR: Federation of Ibero-American Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Associations

<https://faiar.net/en/inicio-english/>

IIR: The International Institute of Refrigeration

<https://iifir.org/en>

IOR: Institute of Refrigeration

<https://ior.org.uk/>

ISHRAE: The Indian Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

<https://ishrae.in/>

JSRAE: The Japan Society of Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

<https://www.jsrae.or.jp/jsrae/Eindex-2.html>

U-3ARC: Union of Associations of African Actors in Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning

<https://www.u-3arc.org/>

UNEP OzonAction: United Nations Environment Programme – OzonAction

<https://www.unep.org/ozonaction/>

Women in HVACR:

<https://www.womeninhvacr.org/>

WRD: World Refrigeration Day Secretariat

<https://worldrefrigerationday.org/>