

# International Experts Gather for Webinar on Women in STEM

*High-profile international speakers gather to discuss existing issues, best practices and recommendations to increase participation of women in STEM*

**Tokyo, Japan, February 7, 2023** - A free webinar titled “Women in STEM – An International Comparison on Current Challenges and Opportunities” is set to take place on Wednesday March 1, 2023, in recognition of International Women’s Day, organized by the Office of Global Communications at the Prime Minister’s Office of Japan.

**- Webinar -**  
**Women in STEM**  
*An International Comparison on Current Challenges and Opportunities*

**Wednesday March 1, 2023**

NEW YORK (EST)	08:00 – 09:15
BRUSSELS (CET)	14:00 – 15:15
TOKYO (JST)	22:00 – 23:15

**Yumiko Murakami**  
Moderator  
General Partner, MPower Partners

**Dr. Nergis Mavalvala**  
Speaker  
Dean, MIT School of Science / Curtis (1963) and Kathleen Marble Professor of Astrophysics

**Dr. Rie Kijima**  
Speaker  
Co-founder, SKY Labo / Assistant Professor, University of Toronto

**Debora Comini**  
Speaker  
Director, UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific

Increasing the participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is an internationally shared challenge. The most recent G7 Summit held in Germany in 2022 recognized the importance of gender equality as well as digitalization. As one of the G7 nations, the Government of Japan also understands the importance of increasing participation of women in STEM and raised this issue as one of the topics at the World Assembly for Women (WAW!) – an annual international conference aimed at promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment held in Tokyo in December 2022.

To further enhance the discussion held at the WAW! Conference ahead of Japan’s G7 presidency this year, this webinar welcomes international experts in STEM as speakers. Guided by moderator Ms. Yumiko Murakami, Dr. Nergis Mavalvala from MIT, Dr. Rie Kijima from University of Toronto, and Ms. Debora Comini from UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific will be sharing their insights on the current state of the following two main issues:

- 1) Low proportion of women who study STEM
- 2) Low participation of women in the STEM labor market

They will discuss their thoughts on possible causes of the above issues as well as the best practices to address them. The discussion will provide the speakers and more so the audience with valuable cross-border insights and introduce them to different initiatives and programs in STEM.

This webinar will aim to develop initial recommendations on how educational institutions, international organizations and the private sector can work together to address these international challenges.

The Japanese Government welcomes audiences across the world from all sectors and of all ages, including students, to participate. The webinar will also include a Q&A session, providing an opportunity for the audience to ask questions directly to the panelists.

### **Webinar details**

**Title:** “Women in STEM – An International Comparison on Current Challenges and Opportunities”

**Date:/Time:** March 1, 2023

08:00 EST/14:00 CET/22:00 JST - 09:15 EST/15:15 CET/23:15 JST

### **Speakers:**

- Yumiko Murakami, General Partner at MPower Partners (Moderator)
- Dr. Nergis Mavalvala, Dean, MIT School of Science/ Marble Professor of Astrophysics
- Dr. Rie Kijima, Co-founder, SKY Labo/Assistant Professor, University of Toronto
- Debora Comini, Director at the Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific UNICEF

**Program:** 1) Presentation from each speaker 2) Panel discussion 3) Q&A session

**Place:** Online - zoom (Available via PC and mobile devices)

**Language:** English

**Organizer:** The Office of Global Communication, Prime Minister’s Office of Japan

**Cost:** Free of charge

**Registration:** Please access the following URL to register:

<http://bit.ly/3Rfkm7E>

### **About the speakers**



#### **Yumiko Murakami**

General Partner at MPower Partners (Moderator)

Yumiko is the former head of the OECD Tokyo Centre. Prior to the OECD, she worked for 20 years in the global financial industry, mostly as a Managing Director at Goldman Sachs in New York, London and Tokyo. She is a leading authority on a wide range of economic policy issues such as corporate governance, tax guidelines, diversity, education, trade and innovation.

She sits on several Government advisory panels, including Prime Minister Kishida’s panel on “the New Form of Capitalism”. Yumiko has an MBA from Harvard Business School, MA from Stanford University and BA from Sophia University.



#### **Dr. Nergis Mavalvala**

Dean, MIT School of Science/Curtis (1963) and Kathleen Marble Professor of Astrophysics

Dr. Nergis Mavalvala is an award-winning Pakistani-American physicist, a pioneer in the detection of gravitational waves and of quantum measurement science. She is a longtime member of the scientific team behind the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO), which in 2016 detected the gravitational waves resulting from colliding black holes. For her groundbreaking research, Mavalvala has received numerous awards, including a MacArthur Fellowship and the Gruber Prize in Cosmology. She is a fellow of the American Physical Society and a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

Mavalvala is an outspoken voice for equality and women’s access to education; she is also a dedicated mentor and a role model for the LGBTQ+ community. In 2014, she was honored as the LGBTQ Scientist of the Year by the National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals.



**Dr. Rie Kijima**

Co-founder, SKY Labo/Assistant Professor and Director of Initiative for Education Policy and Innovation at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, University of Toronto

Dr. Kijima's research addresses topics such as international assessments, education reforms, gender and STEAM learning. She received her Ph.D. and M.A. from Stanford University, and her B.A. from International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan.

She has worked at aid agencies such as the World Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency. At the World Bank, she was an education consultant specializing in monitoring and evaluation. She helped advance equity-focused education projects in Morocco, Tunisia, Vietnam, and Laos.



**Debora Comini**

Director, UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific

Debora Comini is the UNICEF Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific, based in Bangkok, Thailand since November 2021 and is responsible for programme coherence and advocacy for UNICEF across the region. UNICEF has 14 country offices in the East Asia and the Pacific region: Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pacific Islands (based in Fiji), Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam.

Ms. Comini started her UNICEF career in 1991 in UNICEF Headquarters, New York, and held several senior positions including UNICEF Representative in Indonesia, UNICEF Representative in Cambodia, and UNICEF Deputy Regional Director for Latin America & Caribbean among others. On secondment to the Resident Coordinator system, she also held the UNRC and UNDP Resident Representative position in Mongolia.

She holds a MA in Economics from Columbia University, New York, and a BSc in Economics from University College London. Ms. Comini is a national of Italy.

**Media Contact**

Kekst CNC

Ai Saito/Sawaka Romaine/Teruka Katayama

[pmo.japan@kekstcnc.com](mailto:pmo.japan@kekstcnc.com)