

W.I.S.E. CF Pps.

THE WOMEN'S ENGINEERING SOCIETY

(INCORPORATED 1920)

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Secretary:
MRS. A. SOTERIOU

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, FRS, MP
10 Downing Street,
London S.W.1.

1 November 1984

GR

PM asked me to thank.

Dear Mrs Thatcher

The PM was grateful to you for drawing her attention to the resolutions agreed at the WISE Conference, and has noted that you will be in touch directly with Departmental Ministers.

We have pleasure in sending to you a statement of the resolutions agreed at the WISE Conference on Education and Training, organised by the Women's Engineering Society, which took place in London on 26-27 October.

Copies have also gone to the heads of the relevant government departments and organisations, and will be followed by copies of the detailed recommendations. We hope that these recommendations will serve as guidelines for action to implement the objectives of WISE Year, which we know have received your sympathetic interest.

We should be most grateful for your support.

Yours sincerely,

D. F. Jackson

Plaid J. Christie

D. F. Jackson
President
The Women's Engineering
Society

Chairman
Equal Opportunities Commission

PRESS RELEASE



PRESS RELEASE

**ACTION NOW,
SAY WOMEN ENGINEERS**

Government, industry, educationalists, trade unions and professional institutions were asked this weekend to declare their commitment to encouraging more women into engineering and science at a London conference.

There were more than 200 delegates from all over the United Kingdom at the Women's Engineering Society conference on education and training ranging from educationalists to employers and students to chartered engineers.

In their demand for action now in the WISE '84 (Women Into Science and Engineering) campaign, they called on :

- The Confederation of British Industry and the Engineering Employers' Federation to ask all their members to state that they are committed to employing women in technical, supervisory and management positions, and to advancing the careers of these women in accord with their abilities.
- The Department of Education and Science to make a firm commitment to supporting improvements in the teaching of mathematics, science and technology for both sexes and all abilities and to provide special help and consideration for girls.

more follows

Action 2

- The TUC General Council, professional societies and institutions to state that they are committed to the employment and advancement of women in technical, supervisory and management positions in industry and educational organisations.

All four bodies were also asked to work for the acceptance of a number of detailed recommendations and to implement them where they fell within their authority.

The conference called upon The Engineering Council and the Equal Opportunities Commission to continue the initiatives of WISE Year, their campaign to encourage more girls and women to take up careers in science and engineering.

The conference called on the Government to assist engineering employers to cover the costs of retraining women who return to their careers. Senior industrial speakers said that such training will benefit the United Kingdom economy as a whole and help to reduce the national skill shortages.

The conference also recommended that help should be provided for girls on science and engineering degree courses where they are in a minority; that there should be more female lecturers in these subjects; careers services and advice to parents should be improved; and companies should adopt more flexible employment policies to overcome career breaks. It called on industry to monitor the career developments of women and to bring more women into senior posts as fast as possible, in the interim bringing them in on a part-time basis such as visiting professors and non-executive directors.

The conference passed several resolutions on primary and secondary education and recommended that more girls should be encouraged to study mathematics and physical science to 16+ by making it much more difficult than it is at present to "opt out" of such subjects, preferably by the introduction of a compulsory science element in a core curriculum. "Unless this is achieved all our initiatives will be remedial," said Professor Daphne Jackson, President of the Women's Engineering Society.

more follows

Action 3

Schools science teaching must be improved, particularly in primary schools, to overcome the sex differentiation that starts early with home experiences. "We should ensure that girls are shown at an early age that they can do science and enjoy it," she said.

The science curriculum should be revised to offer practical interest and appeal to girls, particularly by increasing its relevance to their present and future lives. Stronger links between schools and local industry should be developed, with scientists and engineers speaking in schools, visits to the work environment and practical work experience, where possible.

Issued by The Engineering Council on behalf of the Women's Engineering Society, on October 27, 1984.

Media inquiries to Ron Kirby, Director of Public Affairs at The Engineering Council, on 01-240 7891.

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WISE



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 November 1984

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you and the Baroness Platt of Writtle for your letter of 1 November.

The Prime Minister was grateful to you for drawing her attention to the resolutions agreed at the WISE Conference, and has noted that you will be in touch directly with Departmental Ministers.

DAVID BARCLAY

Professor Daphne F. Jackson.

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