**Women in Energy – Leadership in times of transition**

This year’s edition of Society of Petroleum Engineer’s Women in Energy revolved around the theme of ‘paradigm shifts’. The energy transition is well underway and technological innovations are re-shaping the energy and transportation systems.

A beautiful example of this is the Solar Impulse project [1], initiated by Bertrand Piccard in 2003, following a feasibility study in partnership with the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne. Funded by the Swiss government, as well as many private companies and individuals, the project demonstrated that a fuel-free flight around the globe is possible. Instead of waiting for new generation photovoltaic cells that would produce enough energy to pilot the airplane, the team decided to focus on ways to reduce the energy consumption of the airplane. The team changed the paradigm and made an extraordinary achievement possible.

Fundamental changes are occurring everywhere in the energy sector and old ways of thinking give way to new paradigms: from TINA (There Is No Alternative) to TARA (There Are Real Alternatives) [2], from scarcity to abundance, from products to services, from customer relations to prosumer interactions, from ownership to openness.

A paradigm shift is also necessary when it comes to diversity and inclusion, not only because creating equitable workplaces for a diverse workforce is the ethically right thing to do, but also because diversity and inclusion make better business. Research shows that organizations with 30% female leaders can add 6% to the bottom line; gender and ethnically diverse firms are 35% more likely to outperform and companies with inclusive cultures have 22% lower turnover rates thanks to higher employee engagement and satisfaction [3,4,5]. According to McKinsey & Co., full gender equality would add EUR 1.01 T to West Europe’s GDP alone by 2025 [6]. However, just like the energy transition, workplace diversity and inclusion cannot be tackled in isolation, but only by working together and across all levels of an organization.

The 2017 Women in Energy Event (WIE) provided an excellent platform to discuss these issues together with prominent industry leaders and decision makers John MacArthur (Vice President Integrated Gas Technologies Shell), Bert Stuij (VP Innovation EDI and Manager National Programs Energy NL Enterprise Agency), Katie Mehnert (CEO Pink Petro), Annabelle Vos (Chief Officer General Counsel Fugro) and Roberta Pacciani (Team Lead Gas Processing R&D and President Women’s Network Shell).

The highlight of the event was an insightful and candid interview with Marjan Van Loon, President Director Shell Nederlands, about her vision on the energy transition and Shell’s contribution in an increasingly decarbonized global economy, as well as the role women are playing in this field.

Thanks to a lively and inquisitive audience, an informative interview, inspiring talks, an engaging round table discussion and interactive workshops, we look back at a memorable day. A round of applause goes out to the organizers of this event: Diana Westerwaal (Shell), Eveline de Vaal (NAM), Raluca Ianoschi (Fugro), Leila Bagherian (Tebodin) and Tatjana Perederija (Akzo Nobel), to the event facilitator Safiyeh Salehi Mobarakeh (Innovation Quarter) and to our sponsors (Shell, SPE, Wintershall, Deltares, KIVI NVI and Fugro).

For more information about this event, please visit:

<http://netherlands.spe.org/activities/spenl/womeninenergy2017>

[1] http://aroundtheworld.solarimpulse.com/adventure.

[2] http://www.shell.com/energy-and-innovation/the-energy-future/scenarios.html.

[3] Mark Kaplan and Mason Donovan, ‘The inclusion dividend: why investing in diversity and inclusion pays off’, ISBN 978-1-937134-40-2, 2013.

[4] CEB, ‘Driving Retention and Performance Through Employee Engagement’, Arlington, VA, 2008.

[5] Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Melinda Marshall, Laura Sherbin and Tara Gonsalves, ‘Innovation, Diversity & Market Growth’, Center for Talent Innovation, 2013.

[6] McKinsey &Co., ‘Digital finance for all: powering inclusive growth in emerging economies’, 2016.