



BIEN 2025: IEM Women Engineers Join Global Dialogue in Daejeon

By

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She is a committee member of WE Session 2026/2027.

A Malaysian delegation consisting of Ir. Dr. Mah Siew Kien, Ir. Rusnida Talib, and Ir. Amani Syafiqah Mohd Razif proudly represented Women Engineers Section, IEM, at the 6th International Conference for Women in Science and Technology (BIEN 2025) from 20 to 22 August 2025. This year's annual event with the theme of *"Science and Technology Without Borders"*, was held at Hotel ICC in Daejeon, South Korea. It brought together international experts, researchers, industry leaders, and young scientists to exchange knowledge, showcase innovations and strengthen networks across disciplines.



A Platform for Global Knowledge Exchange

The opening ceremony of BIEN 2025 set the tone with keynote addresses from international leaders from academia and government, who emphasised the importance of inclusive participation in science and engineering. One of the most impactful highlights was the plenary address by Pam Melroy, Deputy Administrator of NASA, who was also a former astronaut. Her keynote, titled *"Better Together: Science and Technology without Borders,"* drew on her experiences as only the second woman to command a space shuttle mission. Melroy delivered an inspiring message on the importance of resilience, leadership and

diversity in advancing human exploration. She emphasised that addressing the world's most complex challenges from climate change to space exploration requires interdisciplinary collaboration at every level of science and engineering. Her words resonated strongly with attendees, reinforcing the message that inclusivity is not only a matter of fairness but also for scientific excellence.

Gender in STEM: Voices from Asia Pacific

Our WE team participated in the dedicated “Gender in STEM” sessions, which provided a platform to address the challenges and opportunities for women in engineering and science. Speakers and panellists from across Asia Pacific shared research findings, policy directions and grassroots initiatives designed to strengthen the participation of women in technical fields.

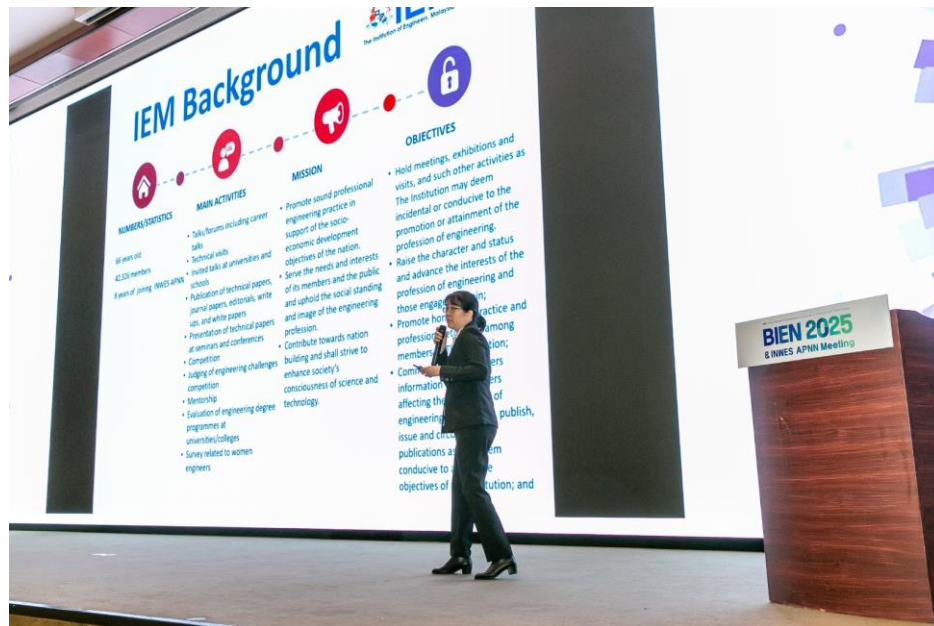
Topics discussed included the persistent under-representation of women in certain engineering disciplines, strategies for building more inclusive workplace cultures, and the role of professional institutions in providing mentorship and visibility. The sessions also highlighted successful outreach programmes targeting young girls in schools and underprivileged communities, aiming to cultivate early interest in STEM careers. These discussions provided valuable context on how other countries are tackling similar challenges. The importance of sustained institutional support, such as that provided by the Women Engineers (WE) Section of IEM, in ensuring that women not only enter engineering fields but also they thrive and progress into leadership positions, was also reinforced.

INWES APNN Country Reports

In conjunction with the conference, the Asia Pacific Nation Network (APNN) of International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists (INWES) held its annual meeting. A central feature was the presentation of Country Reports, in which each member nation shared updates on initiatives carried out in 2024 to promote women in engineering and foster STEM awareness among underprivileged communities. Countries including Australia, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and others highlighted efforts in these areas:

- **Mentorship and Leadership Development** – structured programmes to guide women engineers in advancing their careers and stepping into leadership roles.
- **Youth Engagement and Outreach** – STEM education workshops in schools and universities to encourage more girls to pursue engineering and technology pathways.
- **Community Impact Initiatives** – activities targeted at rural and underprivileged communities to build grassroots interest in engineering, particularly among young women.
- **Collaborations with Industry and Academia** – partnerships designed to increase the visibility of women in STEM and create platforms for professional recognition.

Malaysian's report, presented by Dr. Ir. Mah Siew Kien outlined IEM-WE's professional development programmes activities, networking and knowledge-sharing sessions, and outreach projects. Special emphasis was placed on community-based programmes that brought STEM exposure to rural schools, reinforcing the importance of access and inclusivity in engineering education.



Poster Sessions and Networking Opportunities

Another key highlight of BIEN 2025 was its poster sessions, covering themes from science and biotechnology to IT, environment, and energy. These sessions gave researchers, engineers and students a platform to showcase work, receive feedback and connect with experts. Posters were judged, with recognition for top contributions, reflecting the importance of nurturing young talent. Global participation reinforced BIEN's mission to empower early-career scientists and drive innovation.

Conclusion

BIEN 2025 showcased how science and technology transcend borders when anchored in inclusivity and collaboration. Malaysia's presence alongside global peers reflected the nation's commitment to advancing international dialogue on engineering, gender equity and innovation.

The conference delivered not only technical insights through sessions on gender in STEM but also lessons in leadership and community building. Through active participation in the plenary programme and APNN country report presentations, the Malaysian team amplified a collective voice for women engineers across Asia Pacific. Ultimately, BIEN 2025 reaffirmed women's vital role in shaping the future of science and technology and highlighted diversity's transformative impact on global progress.