

**UNU Geothermal Training Program
Graduation Ceremony
Friday 7 October 2016**

**Address by
Mr. Stefán Haukur Jóhannesson
Permanent Secretary of State**

Dear Fellows, Director, teachers and staff of the UNU Geothermal Training Program,

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends.

It gives me great pleasure to address the thirty-eight graduation ceremony of the UNU Geothermal Training Program. The Minister for Foreign Affairs was unfortunately not able to be with us here today but she sends her best wishes to all of you and extends her congratulations to the fellows graduating today.

Dear fellows,

Numbering thirty-four you are the largest cohort of fellows this Program has seen to date. Of these thirty-four, fourteen are women – making up 41% of graduates. That means that this cohort has the largest proportion of women graduating from the Program so far.

This is indeed very encouraging, because I know that the Program Director Lúðvík and his team have been striving for this for a long time.

The energy sector is for most part very male oriented – but I believe this may change very fast in the next years. The group of women graduating here today are very important role models and are paving the way for the next generation of women.

Among you are also the first fellows from Hungary to participate in the Program. By the end of this ceremony you will be among the six-hundred-and-forty-seven fellows from sixty countries having graduated from this Program.

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Allow me to thank Lúðvík as well as teachers and staff for consistently finding ways to improve the Program. The Program's success is a mirror to your hard work and dedication. I look forward to seeing you build on your good work in the future and to continue to strive for gender balance among the fellows and perhaps even break new grounds in the field of gender equality and geothermal development? Here the UNU Gender Equality Studies and Training Program continues to offer valuable expertise.

Speaking to this Program's success is the number of fellows continuing to pursue graduate degrees here in Iceland upon graduation. This year seventeen former fellows have been studying towards Master's degrees at the University of Iceland and Reykjavík University, and four more have pursued PhD programs. It is a particular pleasure to note that in September this year one of these former fellows became the second woman from Africa to complete a PhD program from the University of Iceland.

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Dear fellows,

Two weeks ago Iceland's Minister for Foreign Affairs had the honour to hand over to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Iceland's instruments of ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

I am immensely proud that my country was among those pushing for an ambitious deal in Paris. We may often think that our voices are small in the greater context. However, when we focus our effort and play to our strengths we really can make our contribution felt! But signing an Agreement is only half of the battle won. We will be judged by its implementation.

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The same can be said of the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals. Fuelled by information and advice from the UNU Training Programs, Iceland managed to advance ambitious positions in the negotiations preceding their adoption. Iceland's focus was on gender equality, land restoration, the oceans and – naturally – renewable energy. All the while the eradication of poverty and hunger served as overarching goals.

Your work, dear fellows, and the work of the UNU Geothermal Training Program, contributes directly to the realization of two of these goals: Towards ensuring access to sustainable and modern energy for all and Towards taking urgent action on climate change.

This is why the UNU Training Programs continue to be important pillars of Iceland's development cooperation.

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Dear fellows,

Energy lies at the heart of human endeavour and at the heart of development. Having gained from the exchange of intellectual capital and practice here at the Geothermal Training Program you are now poised to make your impact felt towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals in your home communities and in the wider world.

Allow me to congratulate you again on your graduation. Although six months may not be a long time in a geological sense it can be quite a while in the life of an individual. I hope you have made the most of your time here in Iceland and that you are leaving with positive impressions and an impetus for action.

Thank you