



COG signs on to industry diversity commitment

CANDU Owners Group has joined many of its members and partners by signing on to the Equal by 30 global initiative, an aspirational goal it has already achieved a decade early

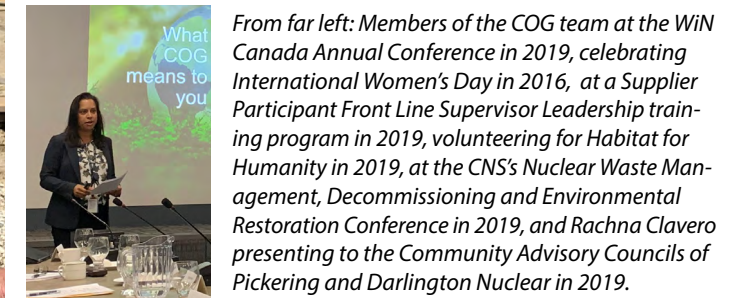
Even a casual observer will have noticed the difference in the composition of the CANDU Owners Group (COG) team over the past several years. Once a decidedly homogenous group, COG has become a poster child of diversity, with a wide-ranging mix of age, gender, cultural diversity and skillsets teaming up to deliver excellence in collaboration to its members.

COG celebrated its commitment to diversity this week by joining the [Equal by 30](#) global campaign, a joint initiative of the Clean Energy Ministerial and International Energy Agency. Equal by 30's signatories include public-and-private organizations, across the nuclear industry and beyond, who have committed to work towards equal pay, equal leadership and equal opportunities for women by 2030.

"I am proud as a Canadian to say the nuclear sector in Canada has been one of the best contributors and strongest voices in Equal by 30," said Diane Cameron, Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) Nuclear Division Director. Cameron was speaking at the NRCAN Quarterly Nuclear Energy Session (QNES), July 28, when COG announced it is the newest member of the campaign.

In his remarks to the QNES, COG President and CEO Fred Dermarkar said, "COG is really following in the footsteps and the paths that have been opened by its members, participants and partners who are already on the campaign. Although COG is a bit later joining, we have by no means been quiet in driving to achieve the goals of Equal by 30."

The proportion of women in senior leadership roles at COG has increased from less than 15 per cent in 2014 to more than 60 per cent over the past six years. When Stephanie Smith joins as COG CEO, later this summer, by coincidence, the management team will be 75 per cent female. Across COG, just over half of full-time employees are female and many manage projects, programs, or lines of business.



From far left: Members of the COG team at the WiN Canada Annual Conference in 2019, celebrating International Women's Day in 2016, at a Supplier Participant Front Line Supervisor Leadership training program in 2019, volunteering for Habitat for Humanity in 2019, at the CNS's Nuclear Waste Management, Decommissioning and Environmental Restoration Conference in 2019, and Rachna Clavero presenting to the Community Advisory Councils of Pickering and Darlington Nuclear in 2019.

"This achievement was not a result of a quota system," said Dermarkar. "Rather this was achieved as a result of creating an environment that promoted external hiring of diverse high-potential candidates that could grow into senior leadership roles."

COG management team members Rachna Clavero and Sonia Qureshi both joined COG as program managers. Since joining COG in 2015, Clavero has progressed to the role of Deputy CEO and provides leadership to some of the industry's highest profile initiatives, such as SMRs and nuclear waste.

Qureshi joined COG in 2016 and has become Director of Joint Projects and Services and leads a line of business responsible for a portfolio of \$30 million per year. She represents COG alongside Information Exchange Project Manager Laurie Fraser on the Women in Nuclear Canada (WiN Canada) Board. Qureshi also serves as the Chair of the WiN Canada Golden Horseshoe West Chapter. Each year, COG employees participate in the WiN Canada annual conference and COG has also hosted WiN chapter events.

Other COG employees, like Clavero and Nuclear Safety & Environmental Affairs Program Manager Natalie Alderson are frequent conference speakers while COG board member, Carla Carmichael, an OPG Vice President, regularly contributes to nuclear industry professional development events for women.

As COG has achieved many of the objectives of Equal by 30, it will turn its sights on collaborating with the nuclear industry to achieve these objectives industry-wide, including through member engagement in its development programs. And, it will work to maintain its own momentum, through development of governance and policies that will sustain the progress made.

Internationally, women represent 35 per cent of the clean energy workforce and only 22 per cent in the traditional energy sector, a metric the campaign is looking to improve upon. The campaign seeks to demonstrate that gender equality is good for business and innovation.

"COG is uniquely positioned to implement initiatives through our many collaborative venues such as peer groups and senior leadership forums where we can encourage our member utilities and supplier participants to engage more diverse staff and organizational leaders in these activities," said Qureshi at the announcement. "We know that increased diversity in collaborative teams results in significant increases to efficiency and effectiveness of teams.

"When you include a diverse set of women, you know you're going to succeed."

COG will be reporting on its Equal by 30 commitments and progress through channels like [COGonline.org](#), its public website [CANDU.org](#) and the [Equal by 30](#) website.