

Press release

Schneider Electric confirms its commitment to promoting women by sponsoring the Chinese Delegation at the 2007 Women's Forum

Deauville, October 11, 2007 – This year sees a unique initiative for the Women's Forum, which will be held in Deauville from October 10 to 13, 2007 – focused on the topic of "Reinforcing confidence in our societies": the visit by a delegation of 50 Chinese women representing the role that women now intend to play in China. They are coming from different areas such as press, communications, bank, counsel or industry. All decision-makers, they will attend conferences and debates and share with other women their vision regarding the economic and societal subjects that are at the core of the preoccupations of our era.

Schneider Electric: a strong commitment in favour of gender equality

Schneider Electric's participation clearly indicates its engagement to promote the place of women within the company and its committed action in favour of greater professional equality and the importance of China in its strategy of growth.

"We are dealing with a society in movement, which is transforming and changing. Today, there is a real need to balance society, because a uniquely masculine society is much too monochromatic. Women have much finer comprehension. For me, the question is simple; I think we cannot succeed if we deprive ourselves of half the brains and half the talent on our planet" said Jean-Pascal Tricoire, President and CEO of Schneider Electric.

In December 2004, Schneider Electric signed a gender equality agreement to encourage gender diversity at every level of the company and reduce wage differential. This clearly defines rights and obligations. In this manner, a whole range of actions are introduced to encourage gender equality and these have three fundamental aims: attracting talents, taking action internally and encouraging women's career development.

1. Attracting talents: recruiting 30% of women Engineers and Managers at the end of 2007

- ✓ **Towards more women recruitment:** As an industrial company, Schneider Electric attracts a majority of men. To redress this imbalance, recruitment is more oriented towards women. For example, 25 % of the group's Engineers and Managers are now women, compared with a proportion of 24 % graduating from engineering schools. Another revealing indicator is that, in 2006, 25 % of the women joining the group had an MBA, compared with 21 % in 2005.

The group is interested in hiring young graduates, but also women with 10 years of experience so that they can immediately take up strategic positions...

- ✓ **"Choose your life":** Schneider Electric sponsored 20 female students from the INSA Lyon and ENSTA Paris engineering schools. The aim was to help these engineering graduates structure their careers by enabling them to participate in three-month internships with personalised monitoring. The project is being repeated this year with 30 students and 3 partner schools.



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2. Acting internally: more women to access strategic positions

- ✓ **Programmes to bring out women high potential:** Schneider Electric has introduced processes to identify women talents and to accelerate their careers. One of these aims to identify 100 women with high potential, to set up a think-tank and set out 10 major actions to be taken up in the company, with the aim of promoting the place of women.
This initiative is an extension of the People Review set up by the group to identify women potential around the world and in the group's units and follow their careers path.
- ✓ **Enabling women to access strategic positions:** Traditionally made up of men, Schneider Electric's Executive Committee welcomed its first women in June 2007 with the appointment of Karen Ferguson as Executive Vice President Human Resources.
Another woman present at a high level: Mariam Diakité Bamba, Country Manager for Côte-d'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo and Guinea Conakry.

3. Encouraging women's career development: 20% of women in international mobility programmes

- ✓ **Promoting career development:** Set up in 2001, the Marco Polo programme enables new hires to work abroad. The first class was exclusively male. In 2006, 23 % of the programme's participants were women.
In addition, Schneider Electric ensures that, in its international mobility programmes 20 % of the participants are women.
Another initiative introduced: training programmes delivering diplomas or certification have been set up to encourage women's professional advancement and develop gender diversity in traditionally male jobs. In 2006, 1,438 women, including 361 Engineers and Managers, did one or more internships.
- ✓ **Greater flexibility for mothers:** In the group, it is perfectly possible for a woman to hold a demanding, strategic job working on a chosen schedule.
Two inter-company day-care centres have been opened so that mothers can enjoy the same career development as their male colleagues by enabling a better work/life balance.
So, in September 2006, the Eybens (Isère) day-care centre enrolled 45 children of Schneider Electric employees, while the Rueil-Malmaison centre – opened in February 2006 – offered 20 cots.
The extensive open hours (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) are adapted to the professional activities of the parents, providing working mothers with greater flexibility.

About Schneider Electric

The world leader in electrical distribution and automation & control, Schneider Electric develops a global offer of products and services for the residential, buildings, industry, energy and infrastructures markets. In 2006, the 112,000 employees of Schneider Electric generated sales of € 13.7 billion through 15,000 sales outlets in 190 countries.

Schneider Electric

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to everyone, everywhere at any time**



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