

## Report on the Women in Engineering Geology (WEG) Activities at ARC-15, Kathmandu

**Theme:** *“The Role of Women in the Development of Engineering Geology”*

**Session Convener:** Ann Williams (IAEG-WEG Chair)

**Session Coordinators:**

- Anjila Malla (NSEG-WEG Chair, IAEG-WEGC Member)
- Mahmuda Khatun (IBNG-WEG Chair)

### 1. Introduction

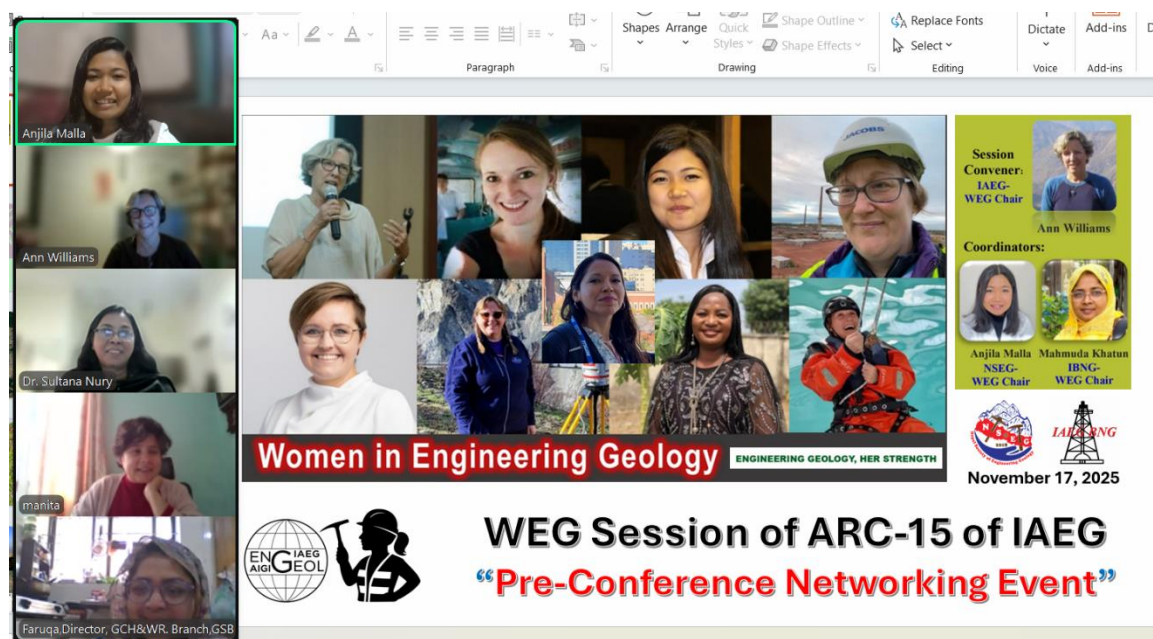
The Women in Engineering Geology (WEG) program at ARC-15 of IAEG successfully brought together women professionals, researchers, and students from across the world, highlighting the growing role and contributions of women in engineering geology.

The activities were designed to:

- Foster international and regional collaboration.
- Provide professional development and visibility for women in geosciences.
- Create a supportive platform for sharing experiences, research, and mentorship.
- Strengthening the visibility of the WEG Committee within the broader IAEG mission.

### 2. Pre-Conference Networking Event

The WEG activities began with an informal virtual networking session held via Zoom on 17 November 2025. This introductory meet-up allowed participants to connect before arriving in Kathmandu, helping to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for the upcoming in-person events.



### 3. Walk and Talk Trekking Session (Women-Only)

The first in-person event of the WEG program was the Outdoor Walk and Talk Session, held on 26 November in the scenic Chovar area of Kathmandu Valley. Participants embarked on a short, guided hike that introduced them to the region's distinctive geology and geomorphology while providing space for open conversations on academic journeys, professional experiences, and shared challenges in the field. Detailed field notes and handouts were provided to support learning and encourage geological observations throughout the trail. As part of the excursion, the group also visited the Department of Geology at Tribhuvan University, strengthening academic engagement and enhancing the visibility of WEG initiatives among students and faculty.

Following the hike, a reflection circle offered participants an opportunity to exchange insights and build deeper personal and professional connections. To commemorate the experience, each attendee received WEG bead bracelets, and WEG branded products (bag, diary and pen). The session concluded with a warm cultural experience—a traditional Nepali lunch provided by NSEG—fostering community and camaraderie among the participants.





#### 4. Technical Session and Panel Discussion

The WEG Technical Session, held on 27 November, brought together professionals, researchers, and students for an engaging and insightful academic exchange. The session opened with remarks from Prof. Vassilis Marinou, IAEG President, who emphasized the importance of women's contributions to the advancement of engineering geology and the need for continued global collaboration to strengthen their roles in the field. This was followed by a series of high-quality technical presentations centered on the theme of navigating gender stereotypes and promoting success in engineering geology. The invited lecture by Dr. Sultana Nasrin Nury and colleagues explored quantitative approaches to greening for sustainable urban development. Subsequent presentations covered a diverse range of topics, including earthquake-resilient school infrastructure, shear behavior of weathered granite soils, rheological characteristics of sand–clay mixtures, and the influence of joint orientation on interbedded rock slope failure.

The session concluded with a dynamic panel discussion titled “**Global Perspectives on Women's Careers in Engineering Geology: Overcoming Barriers and Creating Opportunities.**” Panelists Ann Williams (IAEG-WEG Chair), Ranjan Kumar Dahal (IAEG Vice President for Asia; NSEG President), Mahmuda Khatun (IBNG-WEG Chair) and Hiromi Kaji (JSEG WEG), moderated by Sweeta Sijapati (NSEG-WEG) and Anjila Malla (NSEG-WEG Chair), shared experiences on leadership, mentorship, field challenges, institutional barriers, and the evolving landscape of opportunities for women across regions. All presenters and panelists received tokens of appreciation in recognition of their valuable contributions to the session. The discussion encouraged audience engagement and highlighted actionable pathways for strengthening women's participation in engineering geology. Importantly, the discussion highlighted that the condition and representation of women in engineering geology are steadily improving, supported by growing opportunities, institutional recognition, and stronger international collaboration.



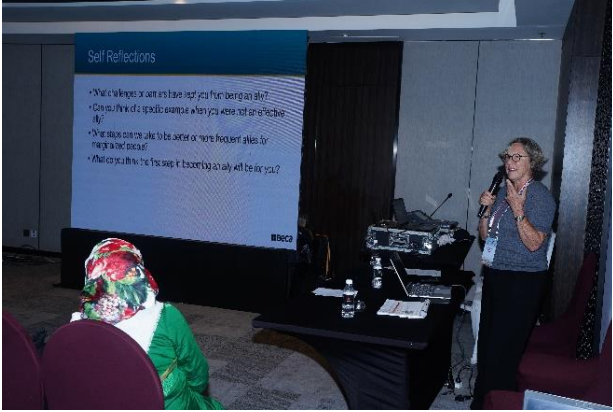


## 5. Career Development Workshop- “Essential Skills for Career Advancement”

The final WEG event, held on 29 November, was a highly interactive Career Development Workshop focused on strengthening essential soft skills for women pursuing careers in engineering geology and related STEM fields. Coordinated by Anjila Malla and Mahmuda Khatun, the two-hour session centered on the theme “Essential Skills for Career Advancement: Communication, Leadership and Negotiation.” The workshop featured two impactful presentations: Ann Williams delivered an insightful session on Allyship, highlighting the importance of mentorship, supportive professional networks, and fostering inclusive work environments; while Nurun Nahar Faruqa offered practical strategies on Leadership and Negotiation, tailored specifically to the challenges and opportunities faced by women in STEM professions.

The workshop opened with engaging ice-breaking activities that encouraged participants to connect and share their expectations. This was followed by group reflections, open discussions, and the exchange of personal experiences related to communication, professional growth, and navigating workplace dynamics. The collaborative and supportive atmosphere allowed participants to build confidence, learn actionable strategies, and strengthen their sense of community within the WEG network.





The workshop concluded with a small celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday of our WEG Committee Asia representative and Coordinator of the conference WEG programme, Anjila Malla! The moment was marked by warm wishes and appreciation for her dedication to advancing



women in engineering geology. The celebration added a friendly and positive atmosphere to the workshop and brought participants closer together.



## 6. WEG-Led 3-Day Post-Conference Excursion

Following the ARC-15 conference, WEG organized an immersive 3-day post-conference tour from 30 November to 2 December 2025, led by the WEG team of Manita Timilsina and Sweeta Sijapati from NSEG, the tour covered notable sites within the Kathmandu Valley, along the highway corridor, and in the Pokhara region. The carefully designed itinerary provided participants with opportunities to explore and examine key engineering geological features, combining field observations with discussions on regional geomorphology,



structural geology, and practical applications in engineering projects. The excursion fostered informal networking, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among participants, while offering a memorable hands-on learning experience that complemented the conference sessions.



**Some of the WEG faces of ARC-15 of IAGG**









## 7. Conclusion

The WEG sessions at ARC-15 represent a true milestone in the history of IAEG, demonstrating the transformative power of women's leadership within engineering geology. From the inspiring Walk and Talk session and the rich technical presentations to the interactive career development workshop and the post-conference excursions, every activity highlighted how women are shaping the future of the discipline through innovation, mentorship, and collaboration. Importantly, the commitment and leadership of the WEG of NSEG team were strongly recognized at the highest level. IAEG President Prof. Vassilis Marinos expressed heartfelt appreciation, commending the dynamic and dedicated women who organized and led the ARC-15 events with exceptional professionalism and energy. His acknowledgment underlines the growing respect and visibility of women's contributions within the global engineering geology community. ARC-15 now stands as a shining example of visionary women-led leadership, setting a benchmark for future conferences and initiatives within IAEG. The success of this program reinforces the importance of empowering women, strengthening international collaboration, and creating inclusive professional spaces where knowledge, experience, and inspiration are shared freely across regions and generations.

