

## **UEF25-022- Executive Summary**

### **North American Representation at the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) to Unify Engineering Voice at the United Nations**

#### **Executive Summary**

The World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) is a global organization representing over 30 million engineers in all disciplines of engineering through 100 plus national and international engineering organizations. Founded in 1968, under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WFEO is accredited through United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) as the Co-Chair of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group (STC MG).

WFEO has a strategic plan, [2030 Engineering Plan](#), that aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and operates under certain values and principles. The leadership of WFEO constitutes a representative of a National Member elected by the General Assembly and serves a two-year term. The various positions, terms and conditions including the various categories of membership are spelled out by the [Rules of Procedure](#) that are maintained by the Executive Council and approved by the General Assembly. Of the various membership categories, only representatives of National Members are eligible to run for Office.

Since its inception, the founding members of UEF (namely ASCE, ASME, IEEE, and SWE) have participated for many years in WFEO, under the umbrella of the American Association of Engineering Societies (AAES). After the sunset of AAES, their participation was subsequently continued through Engineering Societies of America LLC (ESA LLC). Unfortunately, due to financial and other reasons, both these organizations were unable to sustain themselves and as consequence, the United States of America (USA) lost its National Membership standing and its ability to nominate eligible candidates to serve in leadership roles, and more importantly, its voting powers on critical issues.

Since 2022, ASCE renewed its affiliation with WFEO as an Affiliate Member and submitted a winning proposal to host the UN Relations Committee (WURC). As the host of WFEO's UN Relations Committee (Working Group), ASCE served as the CoChair alongside the International Science Council (ISC) of UN's Scientific and Technological Community (STC) Major Group. ASCE has been actively engaged in this capacity collaborating with twenty other Major Groups (MGoS), including serving as the Co-Chair of the Advocacy Task Force in voicing the opinions of the engineering community and hosting events including side events on various relevant topics during the Science Technology and Innovation Forums (STI Forum) and High Level Political

Forums (HLPF) and other major events such as Summit of the Future, SDG Summit, Partnership Forums, Decade of Transportation Kickoff meeting and participated in SME discussions on various topics.

However, the opportunity to represent the whole of the USA engineering community with a single voice and to be able to influence the outcomes for the global good requires a National Member position within WFEO. This will provide the ability to lead the organization with input from the USA.

Based on this view, ASCE and ASME collaborated to again invite other USA engineering organizations that were previously part of the alliance. Positive feedback was received and several of the organizations committed to partner once again, under the umbrella of ESA LLC. With support from UEF and the member organizations, ESA LLC submitted an application to become a National Member of WFEO. The application was unanimously approved by the Executive Council in March 2025 at the Executive Council meeting in Paris. At that meeting, a number of other National Members approached the ESA representative (Dr. Kancheepuram Gunalan) to submit a nomination for the position of President Elect as the last time there was a candidate from the US was over 30 years ago. After some internal discussions, Dr. K. N. Gunalan submitted the necessary paperwork along with the endorsements and was approved as an official candidate to run for office.

On October 17, 2025, at the General Assembly meeting in Shanghai, China, Dr. Gunalan was elected to be the next President Elect of WFEO. This was an affirmation of trust and confidence in the leadership of the USA to lead the organization.

In conclusion, through the UEF grant we were successful:

- In reestablishing ESA such that the USA would become a national member of WFEO and have a unifying voice for the engineering community not only at WFEO but more importantly a global voice at the UN
- Actively engage with other stakeholders on an ongoing basis and contribute to policy discussions and papers
- In hosting a STI Summit on “Leveraging AI to Accelerated Sustainable Development and SDGs”
- Convening a meeting of the core ESA leaders and allied organizations with the WFEO President
- Participating at the GEC, in WFEO Committees and Working Groups with the aim of creating opportunities for ESA members to become active members of WFEO
- Winning the office of WFEO President-elect which culminates in becoming WFEO President in 2027