



ARAB INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S FORUM
المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة



The Arab International Women's Forum and The American University in Cairo to hold major conference in Egypt on *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* in September 2019 as part of AUC's Centennial Celebrations

MEDIA ADVISORY

September 2019 – The **Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF)** and **The American University in Cairo (AUC)** are proud to announce that as part of AUC's Centennial Celebrations they will jointly hold a major conference on *Women as Engines of Economic Growth: Empowering women innovators, entrepreneurs, executives and educators towards fulfilment of the SDGs in the MENA Region* in Cairo, Egypt on September 17, 2019. The conference will be held in partnership with PepsiCo Egypt as Lead Conference Partner and valued support of PwC Middle East as Conference Supporting Partner.

Arab and international women leaders will convene at The American University in Cairo, a leading hub for academic excellence, innovation and research in the Arab world, to share perspectives on opportunities and challenges for women's leadership and examine current and emerging 'future of work' barriers to women's participation in the economy, sustainability, political life and public service, in Egypt, the broader MENA region and internationally.

Women as Engines of Economic Growth will bring into focus the vital contributions of women leaders to economic growth across the MENA States, and the importance of supporting their development in key positions in public institutions and companies, which is a key national priority in Egypt. Women's leadership is at the core of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, a rights-based approach grounded in the SDGs and Egypt's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, endorsed by the President in March 2017.

The conference will therefore elaborate on critical themes around women's leadership in the economy, entrepreneurship and SME growth, on corporate boards and in family business, executive leadership, innovation and economic development. The programme will also recognise women's valuable contributions to the rural and agricultural sectors and identify successful strategies to strengthen women's engagement in political life and public service, whilst emphasising the vital role of women in achieving legislative reform and gender balance in policy formation.

The conference will conclude with key reflections on future of work challenges and opportunities in the MENA region and globally which will be chaired by **Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani**, Founder and Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum who in 2017 was appointed as the only Commissioner from the Arab world to serve on the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work.

The conference programme has been designed to align closely with priority policy areas of AIWF, AUC, PepsiCo Egypt and PwC Middle East, with all sessions emphasising the important role of women to include:

- *Advancing women's leadership and gender diversity on corporate boards and in family business: Best practices from Egypt, the broader MENA region and internationally*
- *Women in entrepreneurship and SME development, the rural / agricultural sectors and the informal economy*
- *Women in public service and leadership: Towards gender parity in parliament and women's inclusion in policy-making*
- *Reflections on the future of work for women and young people in the MENA Region*

The themes of the *Women as Engines of Economic Growth Conference* are at the heart of what AIWF has been leading with at the Arab and international level for over 18 years. As a development organisation, AIWF is dedicated to supporting a more prosperous and equitable future for women and youth in the MENA region and internationally. AIWF works closely with a network of global and institutional partners from the private and development sectors to champion the empowerment of women in the economy and in entrepreneurship, in education, and in public service.

Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, said: "*Women as Engines of Economic Growth* comes at a pivotal time for women leaders in the MENA States and in Egypt, when we are witnessing greater involvement of women in the economy and in public office. We are all exceptionally proud of women's achievements in these and all spheres, and we see their successes as key to addressing the empowerment challenges that remain. This is why AIWF is leading on this initiative: to bring into focus the unprecedented opportunities for women to lead as drivers of economic change and growth in the Arab world and elaborate on how to develop those opportunities by working together to specifically address and overcome the challenges that remain. In doing this, we can open doors even wider for women's economic participation across the region."

Mrs Al Kaylani continued, "AIWF is proud to have the opportunity to partner with The American University in Cairo as part of AUC's Centennial Celebrations in 2019 on *Women as Engines of Economic Growth* which we see as providing a vital and powerful platform for women leaders to be empowered to support regional achievement of key SDGs. Our joint conference, which has been deeply enriched by the partnership of PepsiCo Egypt as Lead Conference Partner and the invaluable support and expertise of PwC, is an opportunity to move momentum forward on women's economic empowerment in Egypt and the wider Arab world. At the same time, we aim to collectively deliver a robust strategy and framework of recommendations to support women in reaching their full leadership potential, in all sectors and spheres."

Ehab Abdel-Rahman, Provost of The American University in Cairo, said: "We are so fortunate to partner with AIWF to convene this conference on AUC's Centennial Celebrations. Promoting an inclusive and empowering environment for women-led innovation and leadership is the core of what we do at AUC. As a Provost, empowering women has been a top priority both in terms of my work at the university, and in terms of my outreach at the national level. For me, the empowerment of women cannot be achieved without women assuming leadership roles in all aspects of society, and no society has ever liberated itself economically or socially without a sound base of educated women. Indeed, joining the AIWF reflects our conviction in this much-needed initiative which brings into focus key challenges and opportunities for women's leadership in the economy in Egypt and the MENA region."

Mohamed Shelbaya, Chairman & CEO of PepsiCo Egypt, said: “We are honoured to be part of AUC’s Centenary Celebration in 2019 and partnering with the AIWF, a fundamental platform for women empowerment. This comes in line with the national agenda that is witnessing a rise, with six female ministers in the Egyptian cabinet.”

“At PepsiCo, and as part of our strategy and commitment to Egypt, we support several sustainable programs for women empowerment in partnership with the Ministry of Social Solidarity, WFP and other parties to raise awareness and back this vital cause. Also, out of our belief in women empowerment, we are proud that more than 40% of managerial roles in PepsiCo are held by women, and we have the first female in the ME managing our factories,” added Shelbaya.

Women as Engines of Economic Growth will be held on September 17, 2019 at the AUC New Cairo Campus and will engage delegates and stakeholders from the private and public sectors, civil society and NGOs, women’s advocates and change agents, entrepreneurs, social enterprise founders, senior professional women and policymakers from Egypt and the broader MENA region, women’s networking organisations, academia, students, PhD and early career researchers, and Egyptian, regional and international media.

The conference will proudly welcome distinguished guest speakers representing the International Labour Organization, the League of Arab States, The World Bank, The American University in Cairo, the Egyptian Parliament, the National Council for Women in Egypt, PepsiCo Egypt, PwC Middle East, L’Oréal, the GCC Boards Institute, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Anna Lindh Foundation, AFI Malaysia, Ashoka Arab World, the Mohammed Bin Salman College for Business and Entrepreneurship, the University of Geneva, and Cairo University, among others.

The Arab International Women’s Forum and The American University in Cairo look forward to working closely with all distinguished guest speakers, delegates, and all conference partners to deliver a unique and exceptional opportunity for women leaders in diverse sectors to learn from each other and exchange valuable insight and experiences whilst examining development challenges relevant to women leaders and aspiring women leaders in both the MENA region and internationally.

To register your interest in attending the AIWF / AUC conference in Cairo on *Women as Engines of Economic Growth*, please visit <http://womenenginesgrowth.eventbrite.co.uk>

About the Arab International Women’s Forum

The Arab International Women’s Forum (AIWF) is a non-profit development organisation focused on women’s development and youth empowerment headquartered in London and founded in 2001 by Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani.

AIWF’s Annual Programmes have featured over 40 high-level international conferences since inception in 2001, in London, Berlin, Paris, Dubai, Doha, Damascus, Washington DC, Madrid, Brussels, Sharjah, Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Palestine, Kuwait and Morocco. Conferences and international initiatives have covered a broad range of women’s and youth issues and examining strategies for job creation, inclusive sustainable development, the role of women as engines of economic growth, economic competitiveness, early stage entrepreneurship in the MENA region, women-led innovation in STEM, and important challenges related to women’s peace and security and the impact of water scarcity and food insecurity on women and refugees in the MENA region as well as refugee maternal health.

AIWF works closely with a global network of corporate and institutional partners to promote and prioritise the engagement of women and youth towards finding innovative and actionable solutions to the multi-faceted and complex environmental, economic security, gender and developmental challenges the MENA region faces. AIWF and all AIWF Global Partners are committed to giving women across all sectors and spheres a powerful platform to voice and examine critical issues of global and regional concern that deeply impact women's lives, their livelihoods and their security, wellbeing and prosperity.

Women as Engines of Economic Growth builds on the AIWF high-level agenda for action over the last eighteen years under the guiding principle of *Building Bridges, Building Business*, and takes forward AIWF's successful advocacy on women in business, as engines of economic growth and drivers of sustainable change.

The American University in Cairo

The American University in Cairo (AUC) was founded in 1919 and is major contributor to the social, intellectual and cultural life of the Arab Region. It is a vital bridge between East and West, linking Egypt and the region to the world through scholarly research, partnerships with academic and research institutions, and study abroad programs. An independent, nonprofit, politically non-partisan, non-sectarian and equal opportunity institution, AUC is fully accredited in Egypt and the United States.

The University offers 36 undergraduate, 44 master's and two PhD programs rooted in a liberal arts education that encourages students to think critically and find creative solutions to conflicts and challenges facing both the region and the world. It also offers a globally recognized professional community-based education in English to meet the needs of the dynamic Egyptian and broader regional economies.

The University's educational assets include the largest English-language academic library collection in Egypt, three modern theaters and 15 cross-disciplinary research centers. The University's modern, 260-acre New Cairo campus constitutes a visionary investment in the future of Cairo, Egypt and the region — a state-of-the-art facility for advanced research, innovative teaching, lifelong learning and civic engagement.
