



ARAB INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S FORUM
المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

AIWF and PwC hold 10th successful *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference in London on 'Women Led Innovation in STEM' in partnership with the Royal Academy of Engineering and the World Bank

12 December 2017 – The Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) held the 10th edition of the *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference series on **11 December 2017** in London on 'Women Led Innovation in STEM', in partnership with the **Royal Academy of Engineering, PwC** and the **World Bank**, and with the support of **PepsiCo** and **Shell**.

Young Arab Women Leaders is AIWF's keystone initiative, launched in 2011 in London with AIWF Global Partner PwC. The conference on 'Women Led Innovation in STEM' was designed to promote the development of leadership skills and confidence in the next generation of young women leaders in STEM, and welcomed members, guests and delegates from over 40 different countries, including the US, UK, the EU and the Arab States.

The 2017 London conference followed successful events in Amman, Beirut and Dubai in 2012, Palestine in 2013, London in 2014, Doha in 2015, Kuwait City in 2016, and Fez, Morocco in early 2017. All conferences have been heavily subscribed to and attended by young women from across the MENA region and internationally. For each conference, AIWF and PwC have joined efforts to deliver a high-impact programme of sessions in a one-day, highly interactive format and in a supportive environment. Through the *Young Arab Women Leaders* initiative and indeed in all its work and programmes, AIWF is nurturing the next generation of young women and is committed to helping to empower them as they break new ground in business and in public life.

The 10th *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference was hosted at and in valued partnership with the **Royal Academy of Engineering** in London as Host Partner, and AIWF was proud to continue its longstanding partnership with **PwC** and all AIWF Global Partners to further develop the initiative and celebrate this important milestone in the city in which *Young Arab Women Leaders* was first launched.

For this edition of the *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference series, AIWF, PwC and the Royal Academy of Engineering enjoyed the partnership and support of the **World Bank**, building on past collaborations between AIWF and the World Bank to bring into focus challenges and opportunities for STEM women leaders in the MENA region, the UK, EU and internationally. AIWF Benefactor Partner **PepsiCo** and AIWF Global Partner **Shell** also lent valued support to 'Women Led Innovation in STEM' as Conference Networking Partners.

All conference programme sessions were aligned with the core priority policy areas of AIWF, the Royal Academy of Engineering, PwC, and the World Bank, and included:

- **Educating and empowering the next generation of STEM women leaders**
- **Women-led innovation and new solutions to the global energy, food, water, and climate change crises**
- **Women-led innovation in medical technologies and healthcare AI**
- **Supporting diversity, inclusion and innovation in energy, engineering, and infrastructure**
- **Advancing gender diversity in tech entrepreneurship and the digital economy**

Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, said: "AIWF clearly sees the advancement of opportunities for women in STEM as a national education priority not only in the UK but across the EU and in most MENA countries. Supporting women and young people to enter into STEM careers is critical not only to advancing innovation in the knowledge economy but to creating the decent jobs that are so desperately needed in the Arab world as well as elsewhere in the world. We see STEM jobs as the jobs of the future, and supporting women-led innovation in STEM could make a game-changing contribution to narrowing the gender pay gap whilst levelling the playing field in STEM for future generations."

Mrs Al Kaylani continued: "In both the Arab world and in the UK, new opportunities in STEM are being driven by women leaders with the passion, ideas, confidence and skills to launch new platforms, drive new projects, and work productively and collaboratively. AIWF's Benefactor Partner PepsiCo and all AIWF Global Partners in the STEM sectors, including PwC, Shell and Pfizer (among others), are wholly committed to recruiting, training and retaining the best STEM talent in the region and internationally, and equally to supporting initiatives such as *Young Arab Women Leaders* which aims to develop women's confidence, leadership and entrepreneurial skills, and STEM proficiency. We are delighted to have welcomed distinguished speakers and delegates to the Royal Academy of Engineering in London for what was undoubtedly a unique and exceptional opportunity for established and emerging women leaders in STEM to develop new competencies, new connections and engage in valuable dialogue with each other."

Dr Hayaatun Sillem, Deputy CEO and Director of Strategy of the Royal Academy of Engineering, said: "The Royal Academy of Engineering is delighted to host the 10th *Young Arab Women Leaders* STEM conference in London in collaboration with the Arab International Women's Forum, PwC and the World Bank. The Academy has a vision of an inclusive engineering profession that inspires, attracts and retains people from all walks of life. It wholeheartedly supports events such as this to encourage the next generation of diverse leaders."

According to Dr Sillem, only 9% of UK engineers are women and 6% are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. Recent Royal Academy of Engineering research shows that both these groups experience the culture of engineering as less inclusive than white and male engineers do. For this reason, the Academy works collectively to address barriers faced by under-represented groups by bringing together employers, professional institutions and others through its Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Programme. Dr Sillem said: "As a national Academy with a global outlook, it's also crucial that we learn from similar efforts around the world and share our insights and approaches with international partners. We are proud to have welcomed these talented women from across the UK, the Middle East and North Africa to London in December."

Hani Ashkar, Territory Senior Partner at PwC Middle East, which launched the *Young Arab Women Leaders* initiative with AIWF in 2011, said: “We are completely – and boldly – confident of one fact about PwC: to build trust in society and solve the region’s most important problems we need diverse talent. That’s why we feel so strongly about creating and nurturing a diverse work environment for our people, one in which they feel they can thrive. We ensure that our people all come from a vast array of backgrounds and with an equally wide range of experiences - this means they each think differently from one another, and apply varying approaches to problem solving. And we’re committed to helping each and every one of them - both men and women - build a rewarding career and achieve their full potential. We do that by providing them with the resources, role models, mentors and support that contribute to their successes.”

He continued: “Women today already make up a third of our regional workforce and around 43 per cent of our graduate intake - we’re on the right track but there’s more to do. We know that we’re only just getting started and are committed to keep investing in and targeting highly talented and ambitious young women from across the Middle East. As a founding partner of the *Young Arab Women Leaders* initiative, we are proud to support AIWF drive that same vision of creating more opportunities for our next generation of women leaders and drive gender diversity, top to bottom.”

The conference opening session was addressed by **Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani**, Founder Chairman of the Arab International Women’s Forum, Fellow of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative and Commissioner on the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work; **Philip Greenish CBE**, CEO of the Royal Academy of Engineering; **Blanca Moreno-Dodson**, Head of the Center for Mediterranean Integration, The World Bank; **Dr Hayat Sindi**, Founder and President, Institute for Imagination and Ingenuity (i2institute), Co-founder & Director, Diagnostics for All, Scientific Advisory Board of the UN Secretary-General and Advisor to the President of the Islamic Development Bank; and **Pam Jackson**, Regional Deals Leader, PwC Middle East.

As with previous editions, all five panels of the *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference in London were designed to be highly interactive and discussion-based, with valuable personal strategies for success shared between speakers and delegates and between emerging and established leaders in STEM. Each session delivered key recommendations and impact-driven action points, which AIWF shall follow up on in future programmes and initiatives in collaboration with all Global and Institutional Partners.

#yawISTEM #EngDiversity

Editor's Notes

Speaker list and images

The full speaker list (in English) accompanies this release, together with images that can be used alongside reporting of the event. For additional images, or interview requests, please contact the AIWF office in London at info@aiwfonline.com.

Conference Partners



Arab International Women's Forum

The Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) is a non-profit development organisation that has members and contacts in more than 45 countries and links Arab business leaders with each other and their counterparts in the international community to exchange knowledge, experience and develop their business potential.

AIWF has been an agent for change for women in the Arab region encouraging their potential and has received international recognition in the Arab world and internationally as a powerful advocate for women in business and their empowerment. International conferences have been held in London, Paris, Dubai, Doha, Damascus, Washington DC, Madrid, Brussels, Sharjah, Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Palestine, Kuwait and Morocco, examining strategies for job creation, inclusive sustainable growth, economic competitiveness, development of human capital, increased innovation and collaboration through public-private partnership.

Please visit www.aiwfonline.com for media resources and past papers, or contact:

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Royal Academy of Engineering

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