



ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

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AIWF Founder & Chairman's Message

As Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF), I am proud to share with you this edition of the AIWF Newsletter for July / August 2020, which reports on AIWF's international advocacy and outreach over the course of an unprecedented few months in which the world has had to 'reset' and learn new ways of working, collaborating and communicating amidst a global pandemic which has touched the lives of us all.

I take this opportunity to first acknowledge the women at the frontline of the coronavirus crisis - women policy makers, healthcare practitioners, researchers, teachers, media professionals, caregivers, volunteers, working mothers and community leaders. At this time of crisis, women's roles are more important than ever, and we express our sincere gratitude and admiration to all who are keeping our essential services running all over the world, often at great personal burden.

The coronavirus pandemic has presented the most serious global public health crisis of our time and the impact will be felt for many years to come, not only in the field of health but also in the economy, in job creation and in civil protections. Whilst the international development and humanitarian communities have been greatly preoccupied with managing the spread of COVID-19 and rolling out crisis and disaster management plans that, just a few months ago, were considered purely hypothetical, governments and the global business community have had to come together to urgently mitigate the social and economic impact on whole economies and populations, especially the most vulnerable - among them, women, young people, and refugees.

It is the collective responsibility of us all to stand together to overcome the lasting challenges that this virus will leave in its wake. The Board of the Arab International Women's Forum and I pledge our full support to all our partners in the international development and business communities to ensure that vital progress made by women does not regress in economic reconstruction efforts, and that all women across the globe retain their vital voices in efforts to restore and renew our communities, our societies, and our economies.



Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum

Early this year, due to the current global situation with limitations around travel and international participation at key global events and conferences, AIWF of course took the decision to postpone our planned conferences and Keynote Reception events that were originally planned for 2020. AIWF therefore launched its 2020 Annual Programme on 01 July 2020 as a high-level series of webinar discussions and virtual events addressing issues of global and regional concern that deeply impact women's lives, their livelihoods, their security and prosperity. Each AIWF webinar will feature high-impact Keynote Speakers who are visionaries, thought leaders and experts in their fields, engaging in frank moderated discussion on wide-ranging development topics of critical importance and all drawn from the Arab world and the international community.

We are especially proud to have launched the series with an inaugural webinar featuring **Saroj Kumar Jha**, Regional Director, Middle East Department (Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Iran, and Syria), The World Bank Group, who addressed us on the World Bank's mission to lift both formal and informal constraints to women's economic participation in the region and to brief us on the recent *State of the Mashreq Women Report* launched by the World Bank on 23 June 2020. During his intervention, Mr Jha kindly shared key insights on

the economic situation for the Mashreq countries and updated us on the Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF) launched in 2019 to support the governments of Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon in their efforts to increase women's economic opportunities and achieve specific targets the governments have set to increase women's labour force participation. The webinar also covered the Mashreq countries' handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and outlined what the World Bank is doing in Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon to mitigate the adverse impact of unprecedented economic and social disruption.

The webinar took place just a week after the launch in Beirut of the World Bank's *State of Mashreq Women Report*, and so we also had the privilege of hearing directly from Mr Jha on the Report's findings and important recommendations for supporting women, who have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, through the difficult years of economic recovery that lie ahead. Women, in many parts of the MENA and globally, have seen their microenterprises and SMEs collapse under lockdown, have been disadvantaged by poor public health infrastructure and the lack of social protection mechanisms, have been most heavily burdened by childcare and other care responsibilities, and have been first in line to lose jobs, livelihoods and economic opportunities.

The *State of the Mashreq Women Report* delivers a viable and dynamic plan for supporting women long-term structural change, stronger economic growth, effective policy action to close legal and regulatory gaps, promotion of a more egalitarian society overall, and a digitised economy. We look forward to supporting the World Bank in their strategies to promote the necessary reforms as these action points are at the core of AIWF's advocacy. In all that we do, we are keen to reflect and reinforce our strong belief that empowering women is key to peace, progress and security in the MENA Region. Therefore, we are proud to feature the AIWF webinar welcoming Mr Jha and the World Bank, as well as the excellent *State of Mashreq Women Report*, in greater detail in this newsletter.

Our AIWF Webinar Series 2020 Report within this edition of the newsletter also covers the second session of the series, which took place on 08 July 2020 in co-operation with Pfizer, a longstanding AIWF Global Partner and world leader in the global journey to find a vaccine towards securing an end to the pandemic. Moderated by AIWF Board Member and an accomplished woman leader in health, **Dr Oualae Al Alami**, Vice President Cluster Lead at Pfizer, a longstanding AIWF Global Partner, we welcomed distinguished Guest Speakers **HE Dr Maryam Matar**, Founder & Chairperson of the UAE Genetic Diseases Association; **Dr Fadi El Jardali**, Professor of Health Policy & Systems, the American University of Beirut;

and **Dr Graciela Morales**, Vice President Vaccine Lead, Pfizer.

The webinar explored opportunities open to Arab and global leaders in policy, the private sector, healthcare practice, and research to apply diversity, inclusion and innovative thinking towards current and future global public health challenges. AIWF is exceptionally proud to have Pfizer as a Global Partner and acknowledges all esteemed colleagues at Pfizer on the valuable work being done on the COVID-19 crisis across the globe, with diversity and inclusion at the heart of Pfizer's research and innovation culture.

I am pleased to share that both virtual events were highly successful for AIWF, with excellent engagement and interaction from throughout the region and internationally (with, I am proud to share, over 31 countries represented in registration). The recordings from both events are available on AIWF's YouTube channel, and we shall be announcing the future webinar programme in the near future, working closely with our Global Partners as well as our Institutional and international development partners, to spotlight issues of shared concern as we all shape and navigate the uncertain 'post-COVID' years ahead.

During the last few months with the cancellation of many of the conferences that were initially planned, I have been participating at key webinars including the FAO weekly series on sustainable agriculture, together with many other insightful webinars by other organisations and international institutions with whom AIWF is engaged. I had the pleasure of participating at the Harvard Women's Leadership Board Meeting held virtually in May 2020, where I introduced a keynote session honouring two distinguished Arab Nobel Laureates, **Ouided Bouchamaoui**, Nobel Peace Laureate 2015, and **Tawakkol Karman**, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. It was indeed an honour to introduce two outstanding women leaders who are an inspiration to all women across the globe who aspire to leading change in their communities, their companies, and their societies and economies at large, and we are pleased to profile both women in this newsletter.

AIWF Newsletters detail the achievements, awards and accomplishments of our Board Members, our Global Partners and members and friends of the Arab International Women's Forum. In this edition we are proud to feature a landmark report produced by our UAE-based Institutional Partners NAMA and the Pearl Initiative and supported by AIWF Global Partner PwC Middle East. The Report, *Women in the Economy: The Gulf Region Outlook*, demonstrates that boosting the number of women in the workplace is not just a moral imperative but also has a measurable impact on the bottom line. Further, the report calls for businesses to adopt a positive and more inclusive culture within the workplace to support women and transform business

environments into greater efficiency and productivity. The research undertaken by the Pearl Initiative and NAMA also identifies key steps that companies can take to improve women's career and leadership prospects, and pinpoints concrete solutions to advance gender diversity in the workplace. The AIWF Board assures our full support to our valued Partners in realising the aims of this valuable research initiative.

This edition also pays tribute to an exemplary Emirati woman leader, **HE Dr Shaikha Al Maskari**, who has recently announced her retirement as Chairperson of the Abu Dhabi-based Al Maskari Holding and as a member of the Board of the Arab International Women's Forum. Dr Al Maskari has been a tireless and devoted supporter of the AIWF mission to give Arab women leaders a voice and a platform to prosper, and her expertise, wisdom, experience and insight has contributed greatly to the success of our organisation over the years. Dr Al Maskari has inspired both me personally and all of us on the Board, and we will always consider Dr Al Maskari part of the AIWF legacy and a valued friend, supporter and advocate for AIWF.

The newsletter also congratulates **Dr Zeina Obeid**, a Lebanese lawyer, who was the successful AIWF nominee for this year's prestigious Annual Bucerius Summer School on Global Governance held each summer in Hamburg, Germany for which AIWF has nominated a number of successful candidates from the Arab world for eight years. Due to the pandemic the Summer School has been postponed and Dr Obeid will instead be travelling to India early next year to participate in the Asian Forum on Global Governance 2021 in New Delhi.

We acknowledge the invaluable and trailblazing achievements of all the distinguished women leaders featured in this edition of AIWF's Newsletter and those of all those around the world who day in and day out live their commitment to realising the vision we all share, for inclusive, sustainable, equitable empowerment for women and young people, and a peaceful, prosperous future for all citizens in the region and globally. On behalf of the Board and Partners of the Arab International Women's Forum I hope that you and your loved ones remain safe and well.



Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani
Founder & Chairman
Arab International Women's Forum

AIWF launches high-impact 2020 Programme with inaugural webinar featuring the World Bank's Regional Director for the Middle East

AIWF launched a high-impact Webinar Series in July 2020 advancing AIWF's momentum and international advocacy by delivering virtual opportunities for our partners, members and stakeholders in the international governmental, business, and development communities to convene on topics of critical concern in the MENA Region and globally. The series will feature Keynote Speakers and valued participants who are visionaries and experts representing diverse sectors, drawn from the Arab world and the international community.

The Role of the World Bank in Coordinating Responses to the Economic Challenges Further Aggravated by COVID-19 in the Mashreq Region

The AIWF Webinar Series launched on 01 July with an inaugural session on '**The Role of the World Bank in Coordinating Responses to the Economic Challenges Further Aggravated by COVID-19 in the Mashreq Region**'. The session was moderated by AIWF Co-Chair **Rania Rizk**, and welcomed **Saroj Kumar Jha**, Regional Director of the Middle East at the World Bank in Beirut, Lebanon. AIWF has been proud to partner with the World Bank and to have their valued support for nearly two decades towards our mutual mission to empower, nurture and support the next generation of young leaders in business, innovation, and sustainability.

Mr Jha addressed key issues impacting social and economic opportunities and challenges in the MENA Region even prior to and now aggravated by COVID 19; shared his key insights on the current situation for the Mashreq countries and initiatives of the World Bank to address critical empowerment challenges in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq; and elaborated on the World Bank's approach to economic recovery post-COVID 19 for the Mashreq, with a focus on women's empowerment, youth inclusion, and digitisation of the MENA public, private and agricultural sectors. All partners and participants greatly enjoyed Mr Jha's insightful and deeply engaging intervention on the World Bank's strategy to address the challenges of the pandemic as they relate to the social and economic situation for women and young people in the Mashreq and the wider MENA Region.

The webinar attracted over 250 participants from across the Arab world (specifically, from Egypt, Saudi

Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Palestine, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon) and internationally (with participants logging in and dialling in from Switzerland, Belgium, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and France, among other countries). The event delivered engaging, insightful discussion on development challenges which are disproportionately impacting women and young people such as economic instability, public health infrastructure, food poverty, and fiscal constraints compounding the long-term concerns of job creation and mass unemployment in the region.

The webinar introduction was delivered by Ms Rizk on behalf of AIWF Founder & Chairman **Haifa Al Kaylani**, who said: "The Mashreq region, like many other regions in the world faced significant economic and social concerns even prior to COVID-19 - from the refugee crisis which has impacted Jordan and Lebanon more than any other refugee-receiving country, to climate change, to stagnant private sector growth, widespread youth unemployment and persistent gender-based inequality."

"Today," Mrs Al Kaylani said, "these challenges have been exacerbated by the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic, which has left no aspect of our lives, our livelihoods and our wellbeing untouched. In 2020, across the region, women and young people are being disproportionately impacted by the economic and social effects of the coronavirus. The support provided to date has been to create relief, but we all acknowledge that if there is not a transition to productivity and growth, there will be even more serious problems in the future."

The challenges in the region, Mr Jha said, are indeed enormous and generally of a structural nature which require longer term commitment to change. Development priorities have been greatly aggravated by the current crisis, marked by instability, food poverty, and fiscal constraints compounding the long-term challenge of job creation and mass unemployment in the region. Women have also had to deal with additional barriers to economic participation, including social norms, legal constraints, childcare and transportation, all major barriers to economic participation even before COVID-19.

The webinar was held shortly after the World Bank's launch of *The State of Mashreq Women Report* in June 2020, which promotes the digital economy as an opportunity for women to work flexible hours and from home, eliminating at least a few of these barriers to economic participation. According to the World Bank Report, challenges women face in the Mashreq can be addressed by the following four pillars of engagement in the region: 1) Enabling a non-discriminatory legal framework; 2) Accessible and affordable childcare; 3) Safe transportation; and 4) Empowering women in the digital economy.



Saroj Kumar Jha, Regional Director for the Middle East, The World Bank, was the Keynote Guest Speaker for the inaugural AIWF Webinar on 01 July 2020

Overall, Mr Jha said, the World Bank is calling for a more egalitarian society in the MENA Region, and recognition that women's experiences are very different for women in different socioeconomic backgrounds and across different states. The World Bank, he said, considers gender equality as not just good for women but good for whole economies, as well as being key to inclusive growth and the development of a vibrant middle class - especially important in the MENA Region which has the lowest female economic participation rates in the world, Iraq and Jordan having the lowest women's economic engagement globally only after Syria and Yemen. The Keynote Address of Mr Jha is available on AIWF's YouTube channel.

AIWF was proud to have had this important opportunity to enhance co-operation between AIWF and the World Bank through this valuable virtual event as the first in the AIWF Webinar Series 2020, and looks forward to working ever more closely with the World Bank team to act on the many key priorities that emerged from the session.

Women at the front line in the fight against COVID-19 and Beyond

The second virtual event in the series took place on 08 July 2020, this session in co-operation with AIWF Global Partner Pfizer. Titled '**Women at the front line in the fight against COVID-19 and Beyond**', the webinar was introduced by AIWF Founder & Chairman **Haifa Al Kaylani** and moderated by AIWF Board Member **Dr Oualae Al Alami**, Vice President Cluster Lead at Pfizer Biopharmaceutical Group & Chair of the Regional Diversity & Inclusion Council for Pfizer Africa and Middle East.

Keynote Guest Speakers addressing this session include **HE Dr Maryam Al Matar**, Founder & Chairperson of the UAE Genetic Diseases Association; **Dr Graciela Morales**, Vice President and Pfizer Vaccines Lead for Emerging Markets, Pfizer; and **Dr Fadi El Jardali**, Professor of Health Policy and Systems and the Chairperson of the Health Policy and Management Department (HMPD) at the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut.

In this session, Dr El Jardali addressed the macro-implications of COVID-19 on the MENA and global economy; Dr Maryam Matar was invited to share her insight on the vital role of women leaders in the UAE and across the region, in healthcare practice, volunteerism, disaster management, research and innovation and all at the frontline of the fight against the pandemic; and Dr Morales delivered an excellent account of new opportunities for collaboration and the challenges of public-private partnership in finding a vaccine towards an end to the pandemic.

In her introduction, Mrs Al Kaylani paid tribute to “the women at the frontline of the coronavirus crisis - women in science, research, policy development, healthcare, the media, and women who are caregivers, mothers and community leaders. At this time of crisis,” she said, “women’s roles are more important than ever. We express our sincere gratitude and admiration to our healthcare professionals, teachers, parliamentarians and all those keeping our essential services running all over the world.”

The session presentations and discussions that followed were inspiring and most informative. Speakers focused on the roles of the private sector, governments and academia in COVID response and future preparedness, calling for greater cohesion between the three and a bridging of the gap between academia, clinical practice and industry in order to advance innovation around COVID and future public health challenges. Significantly, the recommendation that academia and the private sector need to be more closely interlinked to produce the best research, the best policy outcomes, and the most inclusive opportunities for women and young leaders, has recurred in several AIWF conferences on women in STEM leadership in recent years.

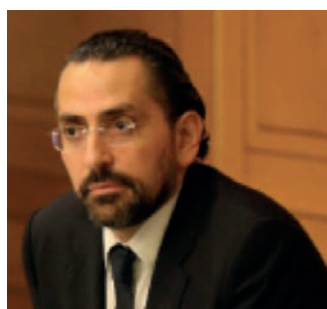
Additionally, with women at the forefront of the pandemic, speakers agreed that women needed to be in the middle of emergency response and at the center of future preparedness plans.

The webinar was attended by over 240 participants from 31 countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Palestine, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, France, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, India, Ghana, Kenya, and Pakistan, among other countries. The full recording of the webinar session is available on AIWF’s YouTube channel.

AIWF reiterates its thanks and appreciation to all distinguished Guest Speakers who have participated in the AIWF Webinar Series 2020 to date. Details for webinars to be held in August, September and the remainder of 2020 will be announced on the AIWF website in the coming weeks.



*The second session of the AIWF Webinar Series 2020 was addressed by **HE Dr Maryam Matar**, Founder & Chairperson, UAE Genetic Diseases Association, UAE (above left) and **Dr Graciela Morales**, Vaccine Medical Lead Emerging Market for Pfizer (above right). AIWF was also proud to welcome **Dr Fadi El Jardali** (below left), Professor of Health Policy and Systems, American University of Beirut, to the high-level panel, which was moderated by AIWF Board Member **Dr Oualae Al Alami** (below right)*



AIWF partners, members and friends who wish to register interest in attending a future AIWF webinar session should kindly contact the AIWF Office at info@aiwfonline.com.

Addressing the Barriers that Hold Back Women’s Economic Activity in the Mashreq Countries Would Boost Growth and Prosperity: AIWF congratulates the World Bank on the launch of *The State of Mashreq Women Report*

AIWF congratulates the World Bank on the highly successful launch of *The State of the Mashreq Women Report*, which took place virtually and was livestreamed on YouTube on 23 June 2020. The event, *Women’s Economic Participation in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon*, was opened by the Chair / Moderator **Caren Grown**, Senior Director of Gender, The World Bank Group, and addressed by **Saroj Kumar Jha**, Regional Director of the Middle East, The World Bank and **Beatrice Maser**, Regional Director for the IFC.

The State of the Mashreq Women Report provides an overall, data-driven picture of women’s access to economic opportunities in the region. It examines the reasons behind low women labour force participation and calls for action in the following areas: stronger

economic growth, effective policy action to close legal gaps, promotion of more egalitarian attitudes, access to quality childcare, and the provision of safe transportation. The report also notes significant opportunities in the digital economy; however, without action to close the digital gender gap, these opportunities could become another barrier.

Women's labour force participation in the Mashreq countries remains among the lowest in the world, likely to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing prevailing social norms, legal constraints and market failures can boost women's share of the labor market participation in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon and help their economies grow according to a new World Bank report released today. In fact, if the three countries' targeted increases in participation of five percentage points over five years are not only met but also continued for a further decade, annual economic growth would be increased by 1.6 percentage points in Iraq, 2.5 points in Jordan, and 1.1 points in Lebanon by 2035.

Less than 15 percent of women work in Iraq and Jordan, placing these countries among those with the lowest female participation rates in the world, only after war-torn Syria and Yemen. In Lebanon, only 26 percent of women work. Participation is particularly low for the less educated. While two-thirds of women with tertiary education are either employed or seeking a job, this amounts to only a small proportion of the total female population in these countries (around 12 percent in Iraq, 27 percent in Jordan and 31 percent in Lebanon).

"Securing and expanding economic opportunities for women is at the heart of the World Bank's agenda," said **Saroj Kumar Jha**, World Bank Regional Director for the Middle East. "Women should have equal chances to engage in economic life, make their voices heard and fulfill their aspirations. This can promote growth, prosperity, peace and stability in the Mashreq countries."

Going forward, the report offers policy recommendations to enhance female labour force participation in Mashreq countries. Beyond the creation of additional jobs, governments can boost women access to the labour market by making public transportation safer, reviewing certain laws and regulations and closing certain gaps between the law on paper and the law in practice, increasing the supply of childcare services of good quality and addressing social norms that prevent women from earning their own income.

This first *State of the Mashreq Women* report was produced as part of the Mashreq Gender Facility, a 5-year facility (2019-2024) that provides technical assistance to Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon to enhance



women's economic empowerment and opportunities as a catalyst towards more inclusive, sustainable and peaceful societies, where economic growth benefits all. Working with the private sector, civil society organisations and development partners, the MGF – a World Bank-IFC initiative in collaboration with the governments of Canada and Norway – supports government-led efforts, country level priorities and strategic regional activities that (i) strengthen the enabling environment for women's economic participation and (ii) improve women's access to economic opportunities.

At the invitation of the World Bank, AIWF Founder & Chairman **Haifa Al Kaylani** and AIWF Board Member **Hanan Saab** were present at the official launch in January 2019 of the MGF in Beirut, which attracted high-level representation from the Governments of Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon. AIWF was proud to participate at the launch of this valuable initiative of the World Bank that promotes enhanced economic participation of women in the Mashreq region and champions the importance of bringing stakeholders together – the private sector, civil society and international development partners.

The generous and ongoing partnership of the World Bank on AIWF initiatives to empower women and young people in the MENA region and internationally has always been deeply appreciated. AIWF looks forward to continuing with all valuable co-operation with the World Bank teams in Lebanon and across the MENA to foster growth and prosperity in the region.

AIWF Benefactor Partner PepsiCo supports the MENA region with \$5 million relief funds in response to the COVID-19 crisis

The Arab International Women's Forum commends its Global Benefactor Partner for taking a proactive philanthropic lead at the outset of the pandemic. As regional efforts were kicking into high gear to provide relief from the devastating impact of COVID-19, AIWF Global Benefactor Partner PepsiCo and its philanthropic arm, the PepsiCo Foundation committed \$5 million in relief efforts across the region. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, PepsiCo, The PepsiCo Foundation and its bottling network partners were immediately focused on providing financial assistance, medical equipment, supporting local health authorities' efforts and providing meals to vulnerable communities across the region.

PepsiCo and its partners are supporting foodbanks in Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the UAE to distribute 10 Million nutritious meals and food supply boxes to labour camps, quarantined communities, vulnerable families and at-risk groups over the next few weeks. This effort is part of the PepsiCo goal to #GiveMealsGiveHope by delivering more than 50 million meals globally as well as provide other essential resources needed to combat COVID-19. Additionally, personal protection equipment and other vital health equipment to frontline responders, has been supplied to healthcare workers in Lebanon, expanding the capacity of health and relief systems, via donations to the Lebanese Red Cross and the Rafik Hariri Hospital.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, PepsiCo's contribution is focused on providing emergency meals to families, supporting small business affected by COVID-19 through government initiatives and distributing essential products to frontline workers including sterilization materials, surgical masks, and food packs. Funds were also allocated to supporting an online education program with the authorities in Iraq and contributing to a food drive initiative that will provide meals for over 10,000 families. Additionally, in April, The PepsiCo Foundation offered a two-to-one matching program for all employee charitable contributions to select non-profits providing COVID-19 relief globally, contributing up to \$2 million in support to non-profits chosen by employees.

"During these times we are dedicated to ensuring the safety of our people, customers and consumers as well as remaining committed to providing food supplies across the region. The importance of supporting relief efforts is paramount to us, as the Middle East is not just somewhere we operate, it is our home. We've been present here for over 60 years through our communities, employees, bottlers and

WE'VE COMMITTED USD 5 MILLION TO SUPPORT THE MENA REGION

PepsiCo and The PepsiCo Foundation jointly with its local bottling network and partners have committed **USD 5 million** dollars to help provide vital humanitarian support to those affected by COVID-19 throughout the MENA Region.

- Distributing Meals**
Distributing up to **10 million nutritious meals & food supply boxes** to those in need in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq and Morocco.
- Supporting Local Health Efforts**
Provide funding for **protective gear for health care workers & vital medical supplies** in the Lebanon and Iraq.
- Providing Financial Support**
Support small businesses impacted by COVID-19 and distance online learning in Saudi Arabia & Iraq.

PEPSICO COVID-19 HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT

What we do in moments like these is what makes all the difference.
EVEN IN TOUGH TIMES OUR MOMENTS ARE OURS.

local government partners. Leading with purpose is part of our DNA and we will continue to make a positive impact where we operate. We are grateful for the role we can play in supporting those who need it most in these extraordinary circumstances," said **Aamer Sheikh**, President and General Manager at PepsiCo Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan. "The generosity of our bottling partners and cooperation of local governments has meant that our collective contributions can make a meaningful impact in the lives of many people, including the courageous healthcare professionals that are inspiring us all."

PepsiCo has been present in the Middle East, North, Africa region for over six decades and through its philanthropic The PepsiCo Foundation, it has regularly contributed to social impact and development in the communities where the company operates. Globally, PepsiCo has committed more than \$45 million to combat the impact of COVID-19, by providing vital local humanitarian support and is working with partners to distribute more than 50 million nutritious meals worldwide. In addition to its support for the Middle East, PepsiCo has rolled out programs in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australasia to provide food, water, healthcare supplies and other critical support to communities affected by COVID-19.

AIWF ACKNOWLEDGES WITH APPRECIATION THE VALUED SUPPORT OF ALL AIWF GLOBAL & INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

AIWF Global Corporate Benefactor Partner



AIWF Global Platinum Partners



AIWF Global Diamond Partners



AIWF Institutional Partners



AIWF Global Communications Partner



AIWF Partners PwC, NAMA and the Pearl Initiative launch landmark report on diversity and inclusion in the workplace, *Women in the Economy: The Gulf Region Outlook*

AIWF Institutional Partners the Pearl Initiative and NAMA Women Advancement Establishment (NAMA) have announced the launch of their latest Thought Leadership Report, titled *Women in the Economy: The Gulf Region Outlook*. AIWF Global Partner PwC, a champion of diversity and inclusion, supported in the data parsing for the report, which provides a thorough synopsis of the latest insights on women's experiences in the workplace, as well as how both genders differently interpret workplace support mechanisms and what women are looking for in a supportive and encouraging work environment.

The report sheds light on the impact of adopting a positive tone from the top to promote women in the workforce as a common denominator for the active support and development of women's careers. One of the important findings from the report reveals that 79% of the participants say their organisational leadership is actively trying to empower and promote women, while 77% of the participants believe women and men are afforded the same benefits and facilities. The report also discloses key factors identified by participants that can support women in the workforce:

60% of respondents want an improved organizational culture supporting women

57% want increased leadership commitment to women's workforce engagement

46% want better recruitment opportunities for women

Organisations can build stronger and more supportive policies to create diverse and inclusive workplaces, as well as to create mechanisms in offices which support women's inclusion, career progression, training, mentorship, and success.

Reem BinKaram, Director, NAMA Women's Advancement Establishment, said, "Women's meaningful inclusion in the workplace requires an evidence-based approach in order to achieve concrete results. The creation of equitable societies and workplaces for women is at the core of NAMA's efforts, and we are proud to have launched this pioneering regionwide study and achieved this milestone together with our valuable partner, The Pearl Initiative, in fulfilling our shared goal of achieving diversity and inclusion in the workplace."



Zina Janabi, Director Middle East Consulting, Middle East Women in Business Leader, PwC Middle East, presents the findings of the landmark NAMA and Pearl Initiative Report, supported by PwC, at its launch in June 2020

Norma Taki, Diversity and Inclusion Leader at PwC Middle East, says, "Diversity and inclusion is one of our strategic priorities at PwC Middle East, we are committed to the advancement of this agenda in the communities we operate in. According to our 'Women in Work - Insights from MENA', diversity has been found to improve financial performance, breed creativity and innovation, and is an integral factor in navigating the digital revolution. Collaborating with the Pearl Initiative on this report has supported our perspective of the ongoing dialogue on diversity and our partnership is a testament to that. We are confident that more work in this space will drive action for the change we aspire to achieve across the region."

Yasmine Omari, Executive Director of the Pearl Initiative, said, "When we look at the future, we see diversity and inclusion for women across the board. Our expertise lies in our ability to produce novel and contemporary research based on the region's business trends and needs. The aim of this first-of-a-kind report in the region is to boost the community by providing a valuable source of insightful data to emphasize the business case for a diverse and inclusive work environment. We strongly believe that diversity is a pillar of good corporate governance and this is the reason we launched the DIBL programme back in 2014."

"The report wouldn't have been possible without the support of our long-term partner and supporter of the DIBL programme, NAMA Women Advancement Establishment. We would also like to thank our partners PwC as a supporter of the DIBL research as well as advising on the business case for diversity."

PwC Middle East has been a longstanding AIWF Global Partner as well as a key programme partner for AIWF's highly successful *Young Arab Women Leaders* conference series which championed diversity and inclusion for women business leaders and highlighted their critical role in regional economic and social

development. AIWF commends the PwC Middle East leadership team for its dedication to empowering women executives, supporting diversity, and driving inclusion in the workplace in the region and beyond.

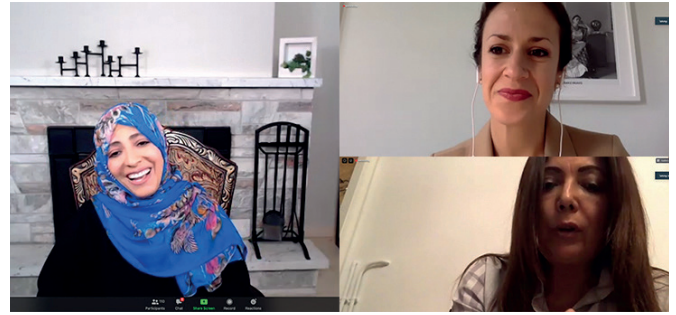
AIWF Institutional Partner NAMA designs and implements initiatives that support women across the economic, professional and social sectors, engaging with grassroots and international organisations as part of its comprehensive approach towards developing an ecosystem in which women's full potential is realized. AIWF Institutional Partner the Pearl Initiative is a business-led non-profit organisation promoting a corporate culture of accountability and transparency as key drivers of competitiveness and sustainable economic growth across the Gulf Region.

AIWF congratulates all partners on the launch of this outstanding report and pledges its full support in the implementation of its findings contributing to greater gender equality and inclusion in the MENA workplace, which is a core area of focus for AIWF and all our Partners.

AIWF Chairman invited by the Harvard Women's Leadership Board to present key session with two Arab Nobel Laureates

Haifa Al Kaylani, Founder & Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum and a longstanding Member of the Women's Leadership Board (WLB) at Harvard, was invited by **Victoria Budson**, Founder and Executive Director of the Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP) at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, to present a key session at the May 2020 WLB Board Meeting honouring two distinguished Arab Nobel Laureates, **Ouided Bouchamaoui**, Nobel Peace Laureate 2015; and **Tawakkol Karman**, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011.

Ouided Bouchamaoui is the co-laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize 2015. Ouided was elected President of the Tunisian Confederacy of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA) in May 2011, the first woman elected to this position in the Arab World. Ouided played a historic and legendary role in helping her country navigate through a great time of crisis during the Arab Spring, moving Tunisia to a more transparent and collaborative society with democratic processes, a landmark constitutional framework and transparent elections. In 2013, under her presidency, UTICA along with the Tunisian General Union of Labour launched the initiative of the National Dialogue. They were joined by the League of Human Rights and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers, forming 'The Quartet'. The Quartet



*The Harvard Women's Leadership Board held a virtual panel as part of its May 2020 WLB Board Meeting honouring two distinguished Arab Nobel Laureates, **Ouided Bouchamaoui**, Nobel Peace Laureate 2015; and **Tawakkol Karman**, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. The session was moderated by **Zoe Marks**, Lecturer in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, and introduced by **Haifa Al Kaylani**, Founder & Chairman of AIWF*

initiated negotiations with all parties involved in deep political crisis in Tunisia, resulting in a peaceable solution. For this successful endeavour, they were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015. In January 2015, the Tunisian President made her Grand Officer of the Order of the Republic, and **His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden**, decorated her with the Royal Order of the Polar Star in November 2015. She also received in December 2015, the "Legion d'Honneur" from the French President.

Tawakkol Karman, known as 'The Mother of the Revolution', was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 in recognition of her work in nonviolent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peacebuilding work in Yemen. Upon being awarded the prize, Tawakkol became the first Yemeni, the first Arab woman, and the second Muslim woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize, as well as the youngest Nobel Peace Laureate at the time, at the age of 32. Tawakkol worked as a journalist after earning a degree in political science from Sana'a University and has promoted the struggle for democracy and human rights in Yemen at the international level, including at the UN. In 2005, Tawakkol Karman co-founded the group Women Journalists Without Chains, in order to promote freedom of expression and democratic rights. From 2007 to 2010, she regularly led demonstrations in Tahrir Square, Sana'a and she actively participated in the 2011 protests that took place in a number of Arab countries. Karman is a mother of three as well as a human rights activist, journalist, and politician.

AIWF advocates for women's full participation in democratic processes as critical to ensuring lasting peace, especially in countries where social, economic and democratic rights are restricted and women's inclusion limited. The distinguished Nobel Laureates Mrs Al Kaylani was proud to introduce to the Harvard Women's Leadership Board are truly an inspiration to all women across the globe who aspire to leading change in their communities, their companies, and their societies and economies at large.

The Chairman and Board of AIWF congratulate Dr Shaikha Al Maskari, eminent business leader, philanthropist and AIWF Board Member, on her retirement

The AIWF Board wish to extend their warmest wishes and appreciation to longstanding AIWF Board Member **Dr Shaikha Al Maskari** who has announced her retirement as Chairperson of Al Maskari Holding and from the Board of the Arab International Women's Forum. In a letter to the AIWF Board, Dr Al Maskari wrote: "It has been a great privilege and a pleasure to serve alongside you all in support of the aspirations of AIWF. I am proud of our achievements and am confident that in your good hands, AIWF will continue to have an important impact around the world." In her letter Dr Al Maskari congratulated AIWF on its upcoming 20th Anniversary next year and paid tribute to the "inspiration, leadership and dedication" of **Haifa Al Kaylani** as Founder & Chairman of AIWF, commending her as "instrumental to AIWF's success and an inspiration to countless women, myself included".

Dr Al Maskari started her career with ADNOC Group in Abu Dhabi and in 1989 joined her family petroleum company, Tricon Energy Operations. Under her leadership, Tricon evolved into a conglomerate comprised of multinational firms and government-linked companies. In 2008, she established Al Maskari Holding, the privately-owned holding company of the Al Maskari portfolio that controls the family's operating subsidiaries, joint venture companies, strategic partnerships, and private equity. Dr Al Maskari also founded the Global Institute of Justice & Technology and the Global Paramedic & Rescue Academy and in 1993, she set up her family charity, United Mercy Foundation, which sponsors orphans and orphanages and provides food, medical, and emergency relief in crisis zones in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

In 2016, **His Majesty the King of Sweden Carl the XVI Gustaf** bestowed upon Dr Al Maskari the Order of the Polar Star, Member 1st Class, awarded for her service to Sweden. Also in 2016, Dr Al Maskari was awarded the Emirati Honorary Shield for her pioneering humanitarian contributions to the development of the State. Dr Al Maskari earned her BA at the University of London, MA and PhD (Geology) at Indiana University, and trained in geophysics with the US Geological Survey. She has served on the Boards of several non-profit organisations, including the Arab International Women's Forum, Women For Sustainable Growth, and the International High Advisory Board of International Cooperation Platform.



Dr Shaikha Al Maskari, former AIWF Board Member & Chair of Al Maskari Holding in the UAE, who has announced her retirement after an illustrious and inspirational career as one of the region's most eminent business leaders dedicated to public service and philanthropy

The AIWF Board extend their sincere congratulations to Dr Al Maskari on her richly deserved retirement after an illustrious and truly inspirational career as one of the region's most eminent business leaders and a true role model for Emirati women both in business, public service and philanthropy. Dr Al Maskari's lifelong advocacy for women's empowerment as well as her many distinguished contributions to humanitarian efforts in the UAE and the broader Arab region have directly benefited women, families and communities. AIWF has been privileged to have had her wisdom, guidance and support over the years and extends all warm wishes to Dr Al Maskari for a happy retirement.

AIWF congratulates the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment on its Urban Farming Champ competition initiative

During her visit to the UAE last October, the AIWF Chairman met with **Dr Meshgan Al Awar**, Secretary General of Zayed International Foundation for the Environment. Founded in 1999 by United Arab Emirates (UAE) Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai His Highness **Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment is meant to recognise and encourage environmental achievements supporting and promoting the implementation of Agenda 21, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for Sustainable Development, Outcomes of Rio+20 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with the vision and philosophy of the late **Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan**, Founding Father of the UAE.

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world's attention to all aspects of wellbeing. Official guidelines and healthcare experts have also advised strictly maintaining social distancing measures to prevent further spread of the coronavirus. All of this has

disrupted the everyday routines and habits of people everywhere. The UAE leadership has recognised food security as a national priority, thereby enabling all citizens and residents to have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for an active and healthy life at all times, including emergencies and crises. In an effort to contribute towards this national goal, the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment is pleased to launch a digitally integrated, multimedia project to promote the concept of Urban farming among the public and establish a stepping-stone towards enhancing sustainable agriculture and food security, which AIWF is proud to support.

The 'Urban Farming Champs' initiative seeks to educate people, through social media and the Zayed Green Challenge app, on the benefits of Urban Farming and to provide easy guidelines to help implement this simple habit into their lifestyle. The highlight of this initiative is a monthly contest that invites people to share their progress through home farming videos for the chance to win a cash prize based on certain criteria. The 1st phase of the contest will be UAE focused and the cash prize will be awarded to 1 winner every month from July 2020 onwards. For further details, please visit <https://www.zayedprize.org.ae/urban-farming-champ>

AIWF congratulates Dr Raja Al Gurg on her appointment as Deputy Chairperson of the National Bank of Fujairah



Dr Raja Al Gurg, Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of the Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group (ESAG), was appointed the new Deputy Chairperson of the National Bank of Fujairah in March 2020

The Board of AIWF congratulates former AIWF Board Member **Dr Raja Al Gurg**, Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of the Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group (ESAG), who in March 2020 was appointed the new Deputy Chairperson of the Board of the National Bank of Fujairah. Dr Al Gurg will be working closely with the bank's Board of Directors in providing effective governance over the bank's affairs and overseeing the organisational strategy, principal policies, risk

appetites, senior appointments and the supervision and remuneration of the senior executives.

Dr Al Gurg is the President of Dubai Business Women Council, a valued AIWF Institutional Partner, and Board Member of the Dubai Chamber Of Commerce & Industry (DCCI). Dr Al Gurg was ranked first in the 2020 listing of Forbes Middle East's '100 Power Businesswomen in the Middle East' and was listed 84th among 'The World's 100 Most Powerful Women' by Forbes for 2019. The Board and Partners of the Arab International Women's Forum sincerely thank Dr Al Gurg for all her support of the AIWF mission over the years.

AIWF congratulates the OECD MENA Division on the successful launch of two key policy briefs on gender and crisis response in the region

AIWF Founder & Chairman **Haifa Al Kaylani** congratulates **Carlos Conde**, Head of MENA Division, OECD, and the OECD team in Paris, on the successful launch of two key COVID-19 policy briefs, 'COVID-19 impact on gender equality and policy responses' and 'COVID-19 crisis response in the Middle East and North Africa', both released in June 2020.

The 'COVID-19 impact on gender equality and policy responses' policy brief recognises that like women all around the globe, MENA women are at the frontline of the COVID-19 response and also suffer from expanding unpaid care burdens and gender-based violence. The brief takes stock of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality in the region and highlights gender-sensitive measures and initiatives taken by governments, the private sector and civil society to mitigate the impact of the crisis on women. It asserts that the COVID-19 crisis is a watershed moment for gender equality in the MENA region and an opportunity to rethink women's role in the economy and society. The region's long-term recovery will depend on its ability to fully leverage the potential of both its men and women.

The OECD's policy brief on the gender dimension of the COVID-19 crisis was discussed in detail at the OECD's webinar on 08 July, 'Covid-19 in the Middle East and North Africa: Impact on Women's Economic Empowerment and Policy Responses', moderated by **Dr Mary Kavar**, former Minister for Planning and International Cooperation of Jordan. The discussions focused on the multiple intersecting challenges faced by women and girls in the region due to restrictive social norms and discriminatory legal frameworks. The webinar also highlighted the opportunities that

the pandemic had presented to rethink women's roles in society and the economy, noting: "The extent to which this is possible will depend on governments' ability to leverage current efforts to integrate gender considerations in the crisis response in order to empower women as key actors for the recovery and beyond."

The event was organised by the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme in collaboration with UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States and UN Women Regional Office for Arab States. AIWF looks forward to working with the OECD in the near future to build further on the findings of the OECD's gender policy brief and to support in the implementation of its key action points.

Dr Zeina Obeid, AIWF nominee for the Annual Bucerius Summer School on Global Governance, selected for prestigious annual programme

In early 2020 AIWF was invited, for the eighth consecutive year, to nominate a talented candidate to participate in the 20th Annual Bucerius Summer School on Global Governance, which was due to be held this year in Hamburg and Berlin from 16 to 28 August 2020.

AIWF Chairman **Haifa Al Kaylani** nominated Lebanese lawyer **Dr Zeina Obeid**, Senior Associate at Obeid Law Firm's litigation and international arbitration practice who is concurrently pursuing her PhD at University Panthéon-Assas Paris II. Dr Obeid has worked as part of teams acting as lead counsel in major international arbitration cases across the MENA region. She is also actively engaged in the firm's pro bono work by providing legal advice to several international NGOs and co-coaching the Lebanese team of the Université Saint-Joseph participating in the Vienna Moot competition.

Prior to joining the firm, Dr Obeid has taken up internships at various law firms in Paris including Dechert LLP, White & Case LLP, Castaldi Mourre & Associés as well as at the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Paris. Dr Obeid, who is fluent in English, French and Arabic, graduated from the University Panthéon-Assas Paris II, holds a Masters Degree in Litigation, Arbitration and ADR, an LLM in Business Law in the Arab World from the same university and a Masters in Lebanese Civil Law from the Lebanese University.

Dr Obeid was selected to attend the 20th Annual Bucerius Summer School on Global Governance from



Dr Zeina Obeid, Senior Associate, Obeid Law Firm, Lebanon

240 outstanding candidates from 62 countries, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Summer School was cancelled and Dr Obeid has instead been accepted from the international range of highly qualified applicants to participate in the Asian Forum on Global Governance 2021 in New Delhi.

AIWF is proud to have nominated Dr Obeid who is a valued supporter of AIWF's mission in the region and globally for women's professional empowerment and an advocate for women in law. The AIWF Board wishes her every success in her participation at the Asian Forum in India next year as the AIWF nominee, which we will be pleased to report on in a future newsletter.



ARAB INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S FORUM
المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

The Arab International Women's Forum, established in 2001 as an independent not for profit organisation, uniquely links Arab women with their international counterparts, showcasing their development, ability and competence in business, professional and public life, and creating greater global awareness of women's success and prospects in the Arab world. To join AIWF as an individual, corporate or student / new graduate member, please visit www.aiwfonline.com.

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Date of next issue

The next edition of the AIWF Newsletter will be published in November 2020. AIWF Global Partners, members, friends and supporters are kindly requested to contact the Editor at info@aiwfonline.com on or before 15 October 2020 to contribute articles, photos and news.