



# AIWF NEWS

Arab International Women's Forum

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

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## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It has been the utmost priority of AIWF in 2012 and 2013 to promote the empowerment of women and youth as catalysts of change for enduring sustainable development and prosperity in the Arab world and the series of *Young Arab Women Leaders: the Voice of the Future* conferences in partnership with PwC with the support and cooperation of all the AIWF global partners has gone a long way to achieving that objective. Four outstanding conferences have now been held in the Arab region, in Amman, Jordan; Beirut, Lebanon; Dubai, UAE all in 2012 and most recently in Palestine in May 2013.

The Board of the Arab International Women's Forum is very proud that the first conference which AIWF was able to take to Palestine was hosted at Birzeit University, an outstanding academic centre and the first institution of higher education to be established in Palestine. The conference was a resounding success thanks to the inspiring contributions of all the Guest Speakers, the invaluable support of Birzeit University, our global partner, PwC, and the Conference partners, the World Bank, the Arab British Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Aramex, together with all our valued participants.

The conference was an impressive gathering bringing together close to one hundred and fifty young Palestinian women aspiring to leadership in business, politics and their communities interacting with distinguished guest speakers, government representatives, international business leaders, academics and esteemed AIWF members and global partners.

In the Opening Session we were delighted to have as Guests of Honour and Keynote Guest Speakers, HE Rabiha Diab, Minister of Women's Affairs, State of Palestine and Dr Shantayanan Devarajan, newly appointed Chief Economist, Middle East and North Africa Region, The World Bank who outlined some of the key messages of this conference. The Minister pointed out that despite women outnumbering men within the Palestinian population, female participation in the workforce is the lowest in the world and expressed the view that sustainable development cannot be maintained in any society unless women have an active and effective role in its development.

Dr Devarajan pointed out that Palestinian well-educated human capital is not being used. Despite declining real wages and declining returns in employment, young Palestinians still insist on educating themselves and young women, in particular, have the skills and drive to succeed. He expressed the view that a campaign is needed to help Palestinians realise the extraordinary potential they have.

Above all, the joint mission of AIWF and PwC in organising this initiative was to identify and build an inspirational network of young Palestinian and Arab business and professional women who are all marked for future positions of increased responsibility within their companies, organisations and communities.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2013

hosted by

**Ghorfa-Arab German  
Chamber of Commerce & Industry**

*From Partnership to Inclusive Growth: Women in the  
Arab World, Germany and the International Community*

**Berlin**

23 - 25 October 2013

### AIWF GET TOGETHER RECEPTION

Wednesday 30 October 2013

kindly hosted at  
**Shell Centre London**

### ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM CONFERENCE

*'Young Arab Women Leaders:  
The Voice of the Future'*

**in partnership with PwC**

in cooperation with and hosted by

**the European Parliament  
Brussels**

on Wednesday, 4 December 2013

*For more information contact the AIWF office  
Email [info@aiwfonline.com](mailto:info@aiwfonline.com) [www.aiwfonline.com](http://www.aiwfonline.com)*

We are very proud to have provided a forum where experiences could be exchanged, best practices shared and opportunities created to ensure that our women leaders are inspired, encouraged and empowered to make their mark. We will build on the deliberations of this conference as they relate specifically to women in Palestine and with further Young Arab Women Leaders conferences scheduled for later this year.

The conference received excellent wide-ranging, positive media coverage.

A detailed report of the Palestine conference is, of course, included in this issue.

Continued

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to share that following on from the latest *Young Arab Women Leaders: the Voice of the Future* conference held in Palestine, AIWF now has the opportunity to take this important initiative to the European Parliament in Brussels on 4 December 2013, an opportunity kindly facilitated by Ms Niki Tzavela, MEP and AIWF Board Member. Building on the resounding success of the conferences held so far in London and the Arab region, this event will enable us to engage with the EU again to reiterate our message regarding the importance of identifying and assisting young Arab women to fulfill their potential to become the leaders of the future and to extend the network enabling young business and professional women in the Arab world to interact with their European colleagues from all professions and sectors of business, public life and civil society.

Leading on from AIWF's annual programmes and conferences held in Paris, London, Brussels, Madrid, Cairo, Amman, Washington DC, Damascus, Dubai and building on the success of the AIWF 2012 Conference in Sharjah, AIWF is proud and delighted to accept a formal invitation from His Excellency Mr Klaus Wowereit, Mayor of Berlin, to host the 2013 AIWF Annual Conference in Berlin in collaboration with the Ghorfa, The Arab German Chamber of Commerce & Industry, to be held from 23 October to 25 October, 2013 on the topic *From Partnership to Inclusive Growth: Women in the Arab World, Germany and the International Community*.

The Arab International Women's Forum is proud and delighted to partner with the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry to bring delegations of Arab and international business leaders to meet with their German counterparts in Berlin for this unique event.

Germany has the lowest jobless rate among young people of any industrialised nation in the world due in part to their Dual Vocational Training System (TVET), a time-tested economic model. This vocational training system is widely regarded as a model of business investment in social mobility and in the country's skilled workforce of the future. This conference will explore how this system can be applied to accelerate capacity-building and job security for Arab women in the workforce and the financial investment and policy developments needed to initiate and improve apprenticeship models in the Arab world, with specific reference to gender-based occupation segregation.

AIWF hopes to strengthen existing channels of partnership between the Arab world and Germany, to create new avenues for entrepreneurial activity and investment and to promote business growth, innovation and intercultural collaboration between accomplished women representing Europe and the Middle East, two of the world's most dynamic economies.

As Founder Chairman of AIWF, I am committed to a full agenda of high profile speaking engagements which enable me to reiterate our message on the importance of promoting empowerment for women and youth in the Arab region to act as future agents for lasting, sustainable development and prosperity in the whole Arab world.

On 5 June, as Founder Chairman of AIWF I had the pleasure of welcoming members and friends to the joint Get-together organised by the Arab International Women's Forum and the Arab British Chamber of Commerce, AIWF Institutional Partner and with whom AIWF entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2009. This reception

was kindly hosted by the ABCC at their London offices.

In the previous issue of AIWF News, I was pleased to introduce the new Board of Directors of the Arab International Women's Forum. It now gives me great pleasure to welcome a new Member for the AIWF Board, Mrs Ibtehaj Mohammed Ahmed Al Ahmadani, Chairperson and Founder of the Al Ahmadani Center (Health Services and Awareness), Board Member for the Al Ahmadani Group for General Trading & Construction and Board Member of the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Reema Al Juffali, a Saudi Arabian national and an undergraduate on a BA degree in International Affairs at Boston University, Massachusetts, USA who has been on secondment with AIWF as a volunteer gaining experience and knowledge of AIWF as a not for profit development organisation as outreach from her degree course has now left us. Reema's confidence and communication skills have grown significantly since she joined us and she said that a great benefit to her has been working among and learning from people who are working professionally and interacting with people at seminars and other events in which AIWF is involved.

I am delighted to thank Reema for her interest and involvement with AIWF and to wish her every success for her return to Saudi Arabia to work in the voluntary sector in youth education and helping to build civil society.

I am delighted to share with all our members, partners and friends that I was recognised in the *Arabian Business Power 500 List 2013* published by Arabian Business Magazine in April 2013 and I was honoured to receive an Award presented to me by Her Excellency Rabiha Diab, Minister for Women's Affairs, Palestine, in recognition of my *Outstanding Contribution as a Woman Leader of Palestinian Origin*.

The outcomes of the *Young Arab Women Leaders* conferences in particular, through which AIWF has achieved a great deal of recognition, have reinforced AIWF's long-held belief in the importance of coaching and mentoring and the presence and influence of strong, successful role models to empower Arab women and to unleash the potential of truly inspirational young women leaders. This, combined with the policies actively encouraging women to work and promoting entrepreneurship and advancing their participation in business, the professions and public life, would pave the way to closing not only the gender gap but also the leadership gap. It is only when women are empowered in sufficient numbers that we will create a society that truly works for all women and a society that works for everyone in both the Arab world and beyond.

Fulfilling its mission of **Building Bridges, Building Business**, the Arab International Women's Forum, supported by its network of valued global partners, has been an agent of change for women in the Arab region for over a decade expanding their potential to take greater leadership roles and reach higher levels of responsibility in all sectors of business, public life and in civil society in a manner which will enhance and enrich their enduring contributions to their economies and their communities.

*Haifa AlKaylani*

**Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani**  
Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum

## YOUNG ARAB WOMEN LEADERS: THE VOICE OF THE FUTURE CONFERENCE HELD AT BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY, BIRZEIT, PALESTINE, 22 MAY 2013



Left to right: Conference Opening Session: Prof Shantayanan Devarajan, Prof Khalil Hindi, Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, HE Rabiha Diab, Mr Michael Orfaly

The Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) held a conference on 22 May 2013 as part of its regional initiative in partnership with PwC entitled **Young Arab Women Leaders - The Voice of the Future** in Birzeit, West Bank, Palestine in cooperation with and hosted by Birzeit University.

This landmark event, the first of the young women leader's series in 2013 and the first to be held in Palestine, followed on from a successful programme of similar events in 2012. In the Opening Session **Founder Chairman, the Arab International Women's Forum Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani** was pleased to welcome as Guests of Honour and Keynote Guest Speakers, **HE Rabiha Diab**, Minister of Women's Affairs, State of Palestine and **Dr Shantayanan Devarajan**, the newly appointed Chief Economist, MENA Region, The World Bank.

Mrs Al Kaylani acknowledged and thanked all who had given their valuable support for this special occasion: Birzeit University, the host partner which was the first institution of higher education and centre of academic excellence established in Palestine, PwC, AIWF's global and the regional initiative partner, and valued Conference partners, the World Bank, the Arab British Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Aramex International. Mrs Al Kaylani said... *"It is a great pleasure to welcome eminent Guest Speakers, excellent role models and young vibrant Palestinian women representing so many sectors of the business and professional life of Palestine, all primed to be the leaders of the future."*

*The principal aim for the day must be to identify and build a network for young business and professional women in Palestine and the region to assist in optimising and strengthening their personal, networking and business skills, helping to empower them as they break new ground in business and in public life. Inspiring the next generation of young Palestinian women leaders is part of the AIWF key objective of fostering social and economic development in the region.*

*Not only Palestine, but all countries across the Arab world are faced with the imperative of fostering economic growth, empowering youth and creating jobs. We believe that this means incentivising young people to develop marketable skills and educators to emphasise skills development whilst encouraging private sector firms to recruit and develop Arab graduates so*

*we have a youth that is not only educated, but also employed."*

Mrs Al Kaylani further set the scene for the day by speaking about the importance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) being the backbone of any economy, the impact of entrepreneurship, honing skills to the needs of the private sector and recognising that deeply rooted gender-based inequalities need to be overcome.

In his welcome address, **Professor Khalil Hindi, President of Birzeit University**, expressed his happiness at hosting this conference at Birzeit University, which has more female than male students in a ratio of two to one with the females studying the full range of subjects that are taught at the University.

Professor Hindi said *"In our Arab societies, we do need to show by widespread deed, not just by token example, that women are capable of engaging in all types of economic activity and of reaching top leadership positions. We at Birzeit believe and educate that a woman ought to be able to be whatever she desires to be: a head of state, an engineer, a scientist, a business woman, an entrepreneur, or whatever. And not only should women have a place at every table, they by right ought to be at the head of the table as frequently as men."*

In a brilliant address, **HE Rabiha Diab, Minister of Women's Affairs, Palestine** stressed her belief in equality and said that to help achieve it, women should have a role in the labour market, making an impact on the economy and thus contributing to economic development. Despite there being more women than men within the Palestinian population, this same ratio was not reflected in the labour market. Sustainable development cannot be maintained in any society unless women have an active and effective role in its development.

She noted sadly the violence against women that was being faced within society and said that Palestinian women especially face the worst kinds of violence. However, Palestinian women are equipped with one key weapon to counter that, which is their education.

She mentioned the achievements of the Palestinian woman, regardless of all the constraints on her; since one third of the government in Palestine is made up of women, women do have a role in decision-making. The Palestinian woman is the one maintaining the Palestinian cultures and traditions and all in all, the Palestinian woman is a very essential and integral part of their society that cannot be marginalised.

**Dr Shantayanan Devarajan, Chief Economist, Middle East and North Africa Region, The World Bank** declared that in his opinion, Palestine has the best social indicators in the world. For example in health indicators and education, women count more than men. He observed that Palestinians are able to achieve human development through having qualified school teachers, clinics and health workers and said *"in the Palestinian territories, having educated women, the next generation will be as least as healthy and well-educated as their parents."*

However, according to World Bank studies *"the labour participation rates are extraordinarily low especially for women – at 15% one of the lowest in the developing world and for those who are working, real wages are falling."*

Therefore, the well-educated human capital is not being used with, sadly, the reason being the long-standing conflict in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestine is very dependent in terms of employment, trade, etc. But he views the so-called Palestine Paradox not as a paradox but an amazing opportunity. He said, *“with declining real wages and therefore declining returns in employment, still young Palestinians are insisting on educating themselves and young women, in particular, have the skills and drive to succeed. There is a need for a campaign to help the Palestinians realise the extraordinary potential they have.”*

**The PwC vision on the Young Women leaders programme was set out by Mr Michael Orfaly, Partner, Leader, Middle East International Development, PwC, Amman** when he said *“PwC is number one in Palestine and globally, and what makes PwC number one, among other factors, is its diversity. We at PwC view women as a critical talent group to enable the firm to continue its growth in the marketplace and to deliver the best client solutions. As a firm we provide a strong collaborative group for women at pivotal points in their careers, giving them the resources, role models, mentors and contacts which contribute to their career success and the on-going success of PwC.”*

**Mrs Al Kaylani** thanked the speakers and mentioned that AIWF is not a feminist organisation but a development organisation and said *“AIWF has both women and men on its Board and women are peace builders and bridge builders using their drive for development.”*



HE Rabiha Diab presenting to Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani

In the session that examined **Beyond the Glass Ceiling: Transforming Barriers into Opportunities**, **Ms Najah Osaily, Manager at Osaily Trading Contracting, Palestine** defined the glass ceiling as *“an invisible barrier that keeps women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder; regardless of their qualifications or achievements, hindering their advancement; women can see elite positions but cannot reach them.”*

Quoting statistics to illustrate that one third of the population is absent from the economy, Najah said that Palestinians under occupation are living a critical insecure life but are going beyond the barriers in their daily life. She urged delegates *“believe in yourself, invest in education as it is the key for the quality of life; work hard, recognise your strengths and transform barriers into opportunities. Palestine is a potential market – it is in need of everything and if there are no opportunities, then create them.”*

The theme was taken up by **Ms Amal Masri Moghrabi, Chairwoman of the Business Women’s Forum, Palestine** who noted the role women were taking in entrepreneurship and business and the ever present obstacles. Amal said *“some of the major obstacles are: graduate women are facing a high rate of unemployment, one job opening for each 35 graduates; there is always the lack of full knowledge for those who want to run a business. Many other obstacles stop females getting to critical positions.”*

**Ms Julia Hodali, Head, Businesswomen Centre, Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Palestine** set out **Opportunities & Challenges for Young Women Leaders** and illustrated how Palestinian women continue to seek new patterns and ways to improve their economic opportunities. However she said, *“the economic policies, the aid dependency and the absence of a self-reliant economy in the Palestinian territories mean that women entrepreneurs find greater difficulties financing their projects, particularly at start-up phase. The legal framework, laws and the region’s inheritance laws still hold back women’s access to and control of economic resources and ownership of assets and property. Despite the challenges, many Palestinian women have found creative ways to carve out a niche for themselves in the marketplace.”*

Julia quoted, as an example, Microwork, *“a series of small business tasks, broken down from larger projects, such as market research, data input, verification, translation, graphic design and even software development, can create a valuable market for the unemployed and underemployed skilled women with the opportunities to perform anywhere, anytime across geographical boundaries.”*

Julia defined the paths to the opportunities for young Palestinian women as being sufficient participation of women in business at the formal levels, adequate technologies, legislation in favour of women, good use of social networks.

In **Mentoring & Coaching: Be a Better Leader**, **Ms Manal Zraiqa, Manager at Massar International Company, Palestine** talked about effective leadership in society saying that *“effective leaders are individuals who take their employees from where they are to where they’ve never been before”*. She focused her speech on two attributes, coaching and mentoring and gave examples from her own experience of being both a coach and a mentor such as *“setting out a set of tasks that an effective mentor must also follow including building a strong connection to the person being mentored; challenge others with penetrating insights that allow them to grow and most importantly never compete with your mentee. On the other hand a coach tackles the process of teaching training or development, giving support and effective feedback to the individual in achieving a specific personal or professional goal.”*

*“Mentorship and learning are on-going processes, for every day I learn and every day I teach”* said **Ms Darin Zeidan, Program Manager at the Palestinian Education for Employment Foundation, Palestine**. She told the delegates that *“The Palestinian woman is unique, not only a mother and daughter but also the identity, the foundation and the history of the land, teachers and fighters for freedom and justice. A woman should be patient, courageous and hungry for*

*opportunities even though there is a huge lack of resources.” She continued “there is no doubt that mentorship is vital for my work as the program manager of Palestinian Education for Employment Foundation for which my previous career had provided experience with teachers, colleagues and directors to support and to advise me and help me take the right decisions.” She asked everyone to try to educate the people surrounding them from their own experiences because these people will be next in the leading positions.*

In the discussion that followed, reference was made to the technology aspects. Women in the IT field expressed their opinions regarding the barriers women face when they graduate in the IT field and expressed the view that women in the IT field face more difficulties than males. The lack of vacancies and a lack of courage prevent women from working in their fields of interest, where they have to be brave to go beyond the obstacles. This was especially so for women in rural areas, where they need financial and psychological support in order to participate in social and economic development, become more productive and accomplish their goals.

One of the participants also mentioned the importance of the role of women in the agricultural sector which in itself is obviously of high importance in the Arab world and women have a significant role.

In ***Reflections on Leadership: My Story***, Ms Ruba Masrouji, Chief Executive Officer at United Securities Company said she was the first Palestinian woman to run a brokerage firm in Palestine. She spoke about her experience and how she reached this elite position, facing many challenges, but now after 6 years she is so proud of what United Securities Company has accomplished. Ms Masrouji said *“Rising to success for women is a very big challenge in Arab society. In Palestine, to be a woman trying to compete and reach high positions in our male society is simply not an easy job. However, obstacles are usually self-made and self-enhanced. There needs to be good intention and a clear objective for a woman in order to be able to rise above all these obstacles.”* Ms Masrouji considered herself as very blessed to be a Palestinian woman, daughter, mother, and part of the conference.

Eng Asma Hassan Sbeith, President, Association of Engineers, Palestine spoke against the background of the brightly coloured powerpoint presentation when she gave a strong message on the status of the influence of technology on the Palestinian national in ***Reflections on Leadership: My Story***.

As an expert in many disciplines within IT, Eng Asma is currently working as an instructor at Palestine Al-Ahliya University and has recently been honoured by being the first Palestinian woman to receive the award from a global energy organisation in Austria in 2013.

From Eng Asma we have learnt about the global concerns about current and future roles of women in computing occupations, gained more importance with the emerging information age; the need to expand information technology innovations and to reduce the unintended consequences of perceived sexism.

Facts about the workshop in Palestine showed that of the total only 16% are women and within the ICT sector the

proportion that are female is 14%. The ICT is one of the most promising sectors in the Palestine economy with growth in ICT firms being 46% in the last three years and it is heartening to know that there is a very high percentage of female ICT graduates at several universities. Women’s roles within the workforce are in order ICT programmers, then designers and then system analysts.

For Palestine, a country lacking natural resources, the ICT sector is the best chance of expanding investment not only for the IT industry but business in Palestine.

As Eng Asma said *“All have to realise the great importance this sector has on developing the Palestine economy and the role women should undertake in information technology in our country.”*

Ms Lana Abu Hijleh, Country Director, Cooperative Housing Foundation International, Palestine was very pleased as a Palestinian woman raised in Nablus to make a contribution from her own success in undertaking vital roles in social, economic and political arenas at all levels in the examination of ***Young Women Leaders and Why They Matter***. This included starting as a site engineer, working with UNDP and CHF International as well as undertaking voluntary work. She said *“I believe that we women start facing different challenges as we start to mature at a very early age. Every ordinary decision we make somehow contributes to our lives and future.”* Various areas of work beyond her formal job helped tremendously to determine what she wanted to do not only as a person but as part of a whole desire to effect change.

She continued *“For example, my decision to study civil engineering, travel to the USA but return to my homeland was right for me. The decision to work on site and combining it with community service and not working in offices shaped my personality and kept me grounded, connected and able to develop the best ideas and strategies.”*

Lana concluded by saying *“all obstacles can be overcome through collective and cooperative efforts and only through the full and effective engagement of our young women can we create a brighter future for women without obstacles devised for them simply because they are women or young.”*



Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani addressing Conference Opening Session

Dr Grace Khoury, Director of MBA Program at Birzeit University, Palestine spoke about ***Young Women Leaders and Why They Matter*** and said *“certain cultural and social restrictions and taboos do not allow women to have the same freedom of opportunity that men have in the business world.”*

Dr Grace had found in her research for a recent book, that gender stereotyping is a challenge faced by women holding managerial positions and it takes a lot of effort for a woman to be seen as being forceful in making decisions without copying a male leadership style which can backfire and lead to rejection.

She said, *“Empowering women leaders really matters and adds value to the development of social, cultural, environmental, political and economic aspects of a nation. It matters for a boost to women’s self-confidence, better employment opportunities, society and community development and to bring innovation, renovation and change.”*

The guest speaker in ***Women & the Power of Social Media***, **Ms Amal Daraghmeah Masri, General Manager at Ougarit Marketing** talked about the role of social media in empowering women and said, *“Communication is one of the most important means to empower women. When mainstream media have been silent, the social media is a great opportunity to show the world what is happening. Palestinian women rely on social media to sell their products, to deliver a message. Social media is a way of empowering women. However, barriers that face women in the Arab world when it comes to using social media are so many such as the fear of society - Arab women have a fear of being exposed. Moreover not everywhere in Palestine is there internet connection, as it is not always available in rural areas. Furthermore, Know-how plays a big role in this matter.”*

**Ms Abeer Raji Musleh, Senior Program Manager at Welfare Association for Youth, Palestine** delivered a synopsis of her paper on ***Breaking the Gender Mould in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Why Change Starts with our Young Women Leaders.***

Abeer set out her views on how different structures, cultures of organisations and participatory leadership provide opportunities for more engagement and active roles for young women in their community which eventually will make a larger change in the attitude towards women in the workplace. However, her paper also defined the economic and gender factors that impact on the labour market causing a high unemployment rate for youth and women in spite of being highly educated.

The programmes in Palestine to encourage young people in general and young women in particular are diverse. They cover, for those looking to start up business, training on project development and management and in some cases, grants; belonging to youth and women’s organisations that lobby for change in regulations and policies; young women working together on joint projects to increase asset availability and utilising social media and fundraising through funding platforms.

***The Way Forward*** was an absorbing presentation by **Professor Jean-Pierre Lehmann, Emeritus Professor, IMD, Founder, Evian Group, Switzerland and AIWF Board Member**, on women, growth and development and how the contribution of women is needed as part of the global sustainable process. He commented on the energy in the room and how pleased he was to come to Palestine to share in this meeting.

In talking about how women could overcome the existing barriers in order to successfully do business in Palestine and participate in economic and social growth which is essential

for a better future for Palestine, he drew on comparisons and experience of his studies in East Asia and asked “Are there lessons from East Asia for the Arab World?” He took as examples the patterns of inclusive growth and diversity in those societies *“which have taken away all overtly humiliating discriminatory practices against women and which have a high level of incorporation of women in the workforce.”*

Jean-Pierre insisted that *“men would be better off in a society where women are leaders and are contributing to the development and growth of the society and the economy. Education of women is an absolute imperative and its importance is also very much in the transmission and legacies bequeathed to the next generations.”*

He concluded *“young Arab women are undoubtedly the voice of the future: what we must absolutely ensure is that the men listen!”*



*Prof Shantayanan Devarajan at Podium addressing Conference Opening Session*

Mrs Nadereh Chamlou, Senior Advisor, Office of the Chief Economist, The World Bank (USA) and Ms Naela Husni Ali Khalil, Journalist & Author were the moderators for the interactive conference sessions which brought forward excellent contributions from the combined experience and knowledge that the participants had to offer.

In her closing remarks, Mr. Al Kaylani summed up the aim of the day when she said *“The conference has highlighted the wealth of talent and expertise that is present in Palestine. It has also demonstrated the need to promote investment in youth through education, training and the development of leadership skills to help women reach new levels of competency and confidence equipping them to take roles as leaders and job creators working towards the social and economic recovery in their communities and the region.”*

Mrs Al Kaylani reiterated her deep appreciation to everyone who had contributed to the day to make a very successful event – the honoured guests, guest keynote speakers, participants and conference moderators and also was very pleased to record her special thanks to everyone who had supported it so well, PwC, Birzeit University, The World Bank, the Arab British Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Aramex International and the teams from the co-organisers, Birzeit University led by Lubna Abdul Hadi, PwC led by Dima Maruf and her own team in London, AIWF and overall coordinator, Sylvia Perry.

**Copies of the full papers delivered to conference can be seen on the AIWF website [www.aiwfonline.com](http://www.aiwfonline.com)**

## AIWF- ABCC JOINT GET-TOGETHER HOSTED BY THE ARAB-BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AT THEIR OFFICES IN LONDON



Left to right: Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Chairman Arab International Women's Forum, Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, Secretary-General & CEO, Arab-British Chamber of Commerce and industry

On the occasion of the joint Reception of their two organisations held on Wednesday 5 June 2013, Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Founder Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) and Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, Secretary General and CEO the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce (A-BCC) welcomed a gathering of ninety distinguished guests, members and partners of both the AIWF and the A-BCC, representatives from government, business, academia, international organisations and civil society to the Chamber's Headquarters in Central London.



AIWF and ABCC members

The event signified the growing strong programme of cooperation between AIWF and A-BCC which has been built following on from the July 2009 signing of a landmark agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding, between the two organisations to foster economic growth and help enhance the roles played by Arab women in business, finance and the economy.

The event was an opportunity for AIWF and A-BCC members and guests to network and make business links to help further a greater understanding of factors and enablers for job creation, sustainable growth and economic empowerment and the improvement of conditions and opportunities available. Their joint efforts have encouraged initiatives for women to start, grow and lead creative and successful companies and foster small business, jobs and entrepreneurship leading to successful

trading within and across the regions. Both organisations believe that innovation and public – private collaboration are central to this development.



Left to right: Mrs Al Kaylani, Ms Zainab Al Farhan Al Imam, Ms Meriem Mahi

In her remarks, Mrs Al Kaylani thanked Dr Afnan and A-BCC for their kind cooperation and support for the latest leadership conference held in May 2014 in the Birzeit Palestine as part of the AIWF-PwC regional initiative, ***Young Arab Women Leaders: the Voice of the Future***, which had been an amazing success and so welcomed for the confidence-building and coaching it gave to the young Palestinian women attending.

### AIWF SUPPORTS LAUNCH OF BOOK ***REVOLUTION BY LOVE: EMERGING ARAB YOUTH VOICES***

On 17 May 2013, the Arab International Women's Forum supported the Presentation and Book Signing of the launch of '*Revolution by Love: Emerging Arab Youth Voices*' by four of its authors: Dala Ghandour, Emna Ben Yedder, Muna AlBuloushi and Samah ElMeri in The Khalili Lecture Theatre at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

After nine months of writing, editing and proofing the book, which was written by thirteen young Arab men and women from the MENA region (Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Yemen, Palestine - West Bank & Gaza), was published in December 2012. Many of the stories included accounts from the writers about their ancestors and how these impacted their view of the Arab world. All of the writers deeply believed that one should not ask what their country will do for them, but rather what could they offer for their countries. The first author to speak, Dala Ghandour, who had been a keynote guest speaker at the Beirut Young Arab Leader conference and the organiser of this book launch said, *"the idea of this book was to bring different voices from the Middle East, who were talking about their engagement, why and how they engaged with their country and why they were doing it despite all the obstacles and all the difficulties in the country"*.

The title of the book was inspired by the quote of Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumir, a Persian poet, *"reason is powerful in the expression of love"*. The writers received much encouragement and support from a publisher even before they had written the book. One of the four writers who spoke at the launch, Emna Ben Yedder from Tunisia focuses on engagement as *"rebuilding a broken link, it is fighting the causes of exclusion - it is a quest of meaning."* Emna describes the different stages of engagement - first realisation then revolt. She believes that to

revolt you must feel excluded economically, socially, culturally and intellectually. Emna ended her remarks with this quote, “*reality is tough, but it is only when you can see it as it is that you can start improving.*”

Samah ElMeri talked about how her love for Libya comes from her parents’ experience, especially her father’s insight and portrayal of the revolution. Through the book she came to appreciate other peoples struggles, Samah says, “*the Libya I live in today, may seem chaotic, unstable and at times in despair, yet it is for sure no longer a place where dreams are crushed, a one man’s land, nor is it a voiceless nation*”. Contrasting with Samah, Muna AlBuloushi believes in revolution of mind, educating and empowering the youth. In Kuwait, Muna is witnessing a change in society, people forgetting morals and traditions and becoming materialistic. She talks about the marginalisation of youth and women, how they have the potential to develop towards helping the society and the economy in which they live. Her message was simple to change yourself before change happens.

Many interesting questions were asked by the attendees,

one of which questioned the title ‘Revolution by Love’ - “*love doesn’t conquer all, you need more than love to really fight the problems in the Arab world, corruption, illiteracy, poverty, social injustice. Love is not enough. Love might be the catalyst, the motivation. What is your motivation?*”

Emna provided this insightful response, “*revolution is made by a lot of emotions, it is not really rational... love is the biggest emotion and there are a lot of ways to express revolt... love of something, love of democracy, love of freedom of speech, love of dignity, love of pride, love for your country*”.

Dala Ghandour thanked AIWF for its support and, in particular, the participation and help of Alice Roner Piller and Reema.

In conclusion Dala shared these last words, “*take your part in your own personal revolution, choose indifference, engage - just believing in a cause shows how powerful one human being can be. Make your point with modesty, not that you are going to change the world, but at least you will change your own world*”.

## AIWF BENEFACITOR PEPSICO ELEVATES WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT DISCUSSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) experts from multinational and local organisations came together at the 10th CSR Summit in Dubai to celebrate ten years of promoting development and innovation of CSR in the Middle East and aiming to raise sustainability awareness among young people; the 10th CSR summit took place from May 20 to May 23 at the Address Hotel, Dubai Marina.

PepsiCo, the AIWF Benefactor, sponsored a roundtable discussion entitled “*Women as Agents of Social Change*” on 22 May. For this event, PepsiCo brought together notable female leaders who, by capturing stories of struggle and success and fostering dialogue about how women can drive sustainable social change in the Middle East, illustrated the humanity behind CSR initiatives.

PepsiCo hosted the following female change agents and speakers at the roundtable:

- Sahar Madani, Founder of Women Empowerment Group (WE Group), President of the Diplomatic Ladies Group in UAE and popular abaya fashion designer.
- Sara Dajani, Fulbright grant scholar working on building a socially-conscious business model in the agro-food sector.
- Rana Chmaitelly, Founder of the Little Engineer, an edutainment centre geared towards engaging youth in pre-engineering skills. The Little Engineer was recognized as one of the fastest growing companies to watch in the Arabia 500.
- Maya Karanouh, CEO of TAGbrands and co-founder of MENA Design Research Center, a non-profit organisation dedicated to design research and social change in Middle East & North Africa.

- Rawan Barakat, Founder of Raneen, a non-profit organisation aimed at creating audio drama stories for blind children between the ages of 5 and 16 years. Barakat dedicates her time to ensuring that special needs children are able to get the education they need to be included in cultural life.

- Sahar Nasr, lead economist in the World Bank’s Finance and Private Sector Development for Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Nasr is an advocate for social entrepreneurship and microfinance in Egypt.

PepsiCo is the proud Benefactor Partner of the Arab International Women’s Forum (AIWF), and Mrs Al Kaylani was delighted to nominate to speak on this special occasion three outstanding young Arab women leaders, Sara Dajani, Rana Chmaitelly and Maya Karanouh.

- “*People are at the core of any CSR initiative, and PepsiCo recognises that women play a critical role in driving and development,*” said PepsiCo’s Asia, Middle East and Africa CEO Saad Abdul-Latif. “*Our commitment to fostering positive social change is a top sustainability priority and is embedded in our culture. We hope that through our unique approach to the CSR Summit, we inspire others to join us in creating a better future for the Middle East region.*”

As part of the 10th CSR Summit, focused on the evolution of impactful and sustainable corporate social responsibility, PepsiCo initiated a unique and interactive session spanning Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE that illustrates the impact female influencers make to drive continuous change.

**AIWF WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH APPRECIATION  
THE VALUED SUPPORT OF AIWF GLOBAL ANNUAL PARTNERS**

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## AIWF CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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and phone/fax number:

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## PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2013 AIWF ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN BERLIN TO BE HOSTED BY GHORFA, THE ARAB-GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, TO BE HELD FROM 23 OCTOBER TO 25 OCTOBER, 2013

The Arab International Women's Forum will be holding its 2013 Conference, the first ever in Germany, in Berlin on 23 – 25 October 2013 entitled *From Partnership to Inclusive Growth: Women in the Arab World, Germany and the International Community* at the kind invitation of Ghorfa, the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Arab international Women's Forum is honoured to be able to confirm that the event has the valued Patronage of His Excellency, Mr Klaus Wowereit, Mayor of Berlin and will be addressed by Mrs Cornelia Barbara Yzer, Senator for Economic Technology and Research.

The intent and objective of this significant annual event is to strengthen existing channels of partnership between the Arab world and Germany to create new avenues for entrepreneurial activity and investment and to promote business growth, innovation and intercultural collaboration between prolific and accomplished women representing two of the world's most dynamic economies- Europe and the Middle East.

The conference will identify and throw a spotlight on the topics of the role of women business leaders in a more inclusive society and focus on building business between the Arab and German women participating. They will be exchanging valuable knowledge and experience for countering high youth unemployment in the Arab region through the German example of vocational training. Also on the agenda will be business investment in people resources, closing the gender gap in entrepreneurship and business start up and the role of Arab women in job creation towards sustainable development for economic empowerment in the region. Fast changing demographics, the benefits of high quality education and innovation, best practices, finance and asset management and the impetus to create change will all feature in this opportunity for motivation to encourage success in the German and Arab business communities.

## NEWS FROM MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome **Nada Ghalayini, President & CEO, MIXOCRO Trade & Industry Sal OffShore**, as a new corporate member of AIWF. Nada started her career working in a family business which had been supplying varieties of mixers and sanitary materials for over twenty years and established her own company Mixocro Trade and Industry Sal OffShore in 2000.

Mixocro is located in Milan, Italy and is registered with the Chamber Of Commerce & Industry & Agriculture of Milan as a well-known supplier of sanitary ware and plumbing products. Mexico products are also registered and certificated for sale in the Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia.

Nada has elevated Mixocro products to a high level of quality and competitiveness and this, combined with her ability to motivate others, has increased her company's productivity and profitability, in particular with respect to the sale of mixers which are supplied for public and private sector construction projects and for the local markets of KSA and GCC countries.

nada.mixocro@gmail.com  
www.rubinodorato.com

## INTRODUCING A NEW AIWF BOARD MEMBER

AIWF Chairman is pleased to welcome Mrs Ibtehaj Mohammed Ahmed Al Ahmadani who is joining the Board of the Arab International Women's Forum.

Mrs Ahmadani is a Board member of the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry and of the AI Ahmadani Group for General Trading & Construction. She is also Chairperson and Founder of the AI Ahamadani Center (Health Services and Awareness).

Ms Al Ahmadani was ranked number 12 of the 50 Strongest Women in the Arab World by Forbes Magazine (2006). Again ranked as one of the 50 Strongest Women in the Arab World in 2008, and currently listed as the most influential woman in family businesses by Forbes Middle (2013).

Ms Al Ahmadani holds an MBA from the University of Qatar (2006) and a Bachelor's degree in Business Studies from the New Hampshire College of Manchester, US (1998). She is fluent in English and Arabic.

## HOW TO JOIN AIWF

For further information on AIWF kindly contact:

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