



# AIWF NEWS

## Arab International Women's Forum

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

Issue No: 21  
July 2010  
London

### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

2010 has been a very active year for AIWF so far with the staging of very successful major initiatives which constantly give rise to the forging of new partnerships, thereby enabling the organisation to widen its sphere of influence in the Arab region, the European Union and the international community in the pursuit of its aims and objectives.

I am delighted that this issue of AIWF News follows on from the very successful AIWF Conference held in Damascus, Syria from 14 – 17 May this year, entitled ***Prosperity through Partnership: Women Leaders in Modern Syria, the Arab World and the International Community***. AIWF is proud to report that this significant Conference was held under **The Patronage of HE Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref, Minister of Social Affairs & Labour** and with the valued support of **Business Women Committee at Damascus Chamber of Commerce**, Syria. Her Excellency, Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref, was extremely generous with not only the time she spent at the Conference but also with her degree of participation, which was a very great privilege and pleasure for all concerned. Participants learned throughout the Conference of the commitment and valued initiatives inspired by Her Excellency to foster socio-cultural and economic development in particular for the women of her country.

It was indeed a great privilege and honour to have the valued interest of and provide a briefing for Her Excellency, Mrs Asma Al-Assad, The First Lady of the Syrian Arab Republic about the Conference, at a Special Reception which Her Excellency kindly hosted for the Board, Honoured Guest Speakers and Key Participants on Sunday 16 May 2010.

The aims and objectives of this conference were to encourage business growth, innovation and intercultural collaboration, to build and strengthen regional and international cooperation and stimulate public-private partnership to ensure that skills education and workforce development become a permanent priority on the Arab economic agenda.

Those attending welcomed the opportunity to meet outstanding and high profile Syrian leading women and a great number have expressed their great delight at the chance to network and learn from this interaction and declared it one of the most impressive AIWF conferences. A full report of this outstanding event is contained within this Newsletter.

The year started very well in AIWF having the privilege and pleasure of welcoming PepsiCo AMEA as our first and sole Benefactor. In January, we were also delighted to welcome Deutsche Bank as a new Global Annual Partner. In March 2010, AIWF was very proud to welcome Pfizer Inc: a worldwide company with a strong presence in the Middle East and Africa as a new and valued Global Annual Platinum Partner, joining our distinguished coalition of Partners, sharing and working towards the achievement of our mission of ***Building Bridges, Building Business***. We were very pleased to have their active participation in the AIWF 2010 Damascus Conference in May and look forward to the confidence of their valued support and participation in all AIWF activities in the year ahead.

The high level international corporate and institutional support that we receive is crucial to our activities and to our development and in terms of our capacity to host major events and to undertake projects. In addition to the presence in Damascus of our AIWF Global Corporate Benefactor PepsiCo, we were also delighted to have the valued support of Global Platinum Annual Partners, Shell and Manpower as leading Conference Partners. New AIWF Partners, Deutsche Bank and Pfizer Inc: together with our longer-standing partners, Merrill Lynch, PricewaterhouseCoopers and DLA Piper were very visible and totally supportive of our activities.

**The Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) and the Arab British Chamber of Commerce (ABCC)** were pleased to

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### SPECIAL AIWF GALA DINNER

Tuesday, 2 November 2010

*Further announcements to follow*

### AIWF 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

*to be held on Monday, 16 May 2011*

at

**THE MANSION HOUSE**

*at the kind invitation of*

**THE INCOMING LORD MAYOR  
OF THE CITY OF LONDON**

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

hold their first event in 2010 when they joined forces with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) for a Panel Discussion on the topic of The Importance of a Strong Accounting Profession in the Middle East at The Arab British Chamber of Commerce, Upper Grosvenor Street, London on Monday 22 February. We were very proud also to have the cooperation of AIWF Global Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers, on this occasion, which proved to be a very informative and stimulating evening concluding with a spirited interactive discussion.

I am also pleased to report that AIWF continues to work with its Institutional Partners, the Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance, the Mudara Institute of Directors and continues its involvement with the OECD MENA Investment Programme and Business Council.

As Chairman of AIWF, I was delighted to participate in the **UNCTAD/EMPRETEC Women in Business Award 2010 Award Panel**, in April 2010 as a member of the panel of experts in the field of women entrepreneurship to select the finalist. UNCTAD presented the 10 finalists for the second Empretec Women in Business Award 2010.

AIWF's activities continue to be covered by the major responsible media where we promote the achievements of women in the Arab world.

The second half of the year is an important period in our further development as we look forward to our future programme. We shall be preparing to organise key events aimed at marking the end of our first successful decade. A Special AIWF Gala Dinner shall be held in November at a very prestigious venue in London and, at the kind invitation of the **Incoming Lord Mayor of the City of London**, our 10th Anniversary Celebration Dinner will be hosted at **The Mansion House on 16 May 2011** where, as Chairman of AIWF, I will look forward to expressing my deep appreciation to all those who have supported the organisation and contributed towards its spectacular achievements.

*Haifa Al Kaylani*

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

## FIRST AIWF CONFERENCE IN SYRIA 13 - 17 MAY 2010, DAMASCUS



Official Photograph taken at the Special Reception which Her Excellency, Mrs Asma Al - Assad, First Lady of the Syrian Arab Republic kindly hosted for Honoured Guest Speakers and Key Participants of the Conference on Sunday 16 May 2010. Honoured Guests included Conference Patron, Her Excellency, Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, The Syrian Arab Republic, Dr Bouthaina Shaaban, Advisor at Syrian Presidency for Media & Political Affairs, Syria, Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum, Mrs Sonia Khandji Cachecho, President of the Damascus Chamber of Commerce Businesswomen Committee.

The 2010 Arab International Women's Forum Conference entitled ***Prosperity through Partnership: Women Leaders in Modern Syria, the Arab World and the International Community*** was held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Damascus, from May 14th - 17th, under The Patronage of **HE Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref, Minister of Social Affairs & Labour** and with the valued support of **The Business Women Committee at Damascus Chamber of Commerce, Syria**.

The invitation to hold the first AIWF Conference in Syria was warmly extended by Her Excellency, Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref, under whose inspired leadership, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism, the Syrian Arab Republic provided thoughtful arrangements and support that provided a special and generous welcome to Syria, identifying it as a country that cares for women's advancement and the aims to which we all subscribe.

To the great delight of all participants, Her Excellency, Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref, spent generous amounts of time at the Conference and participated fully in the proceedings. They were privileged to learn of the great commitment of Her Excellency to encouraging socio-cultural and economic development for the people of the Syrian Arab Republic through valued initiatives which impinged, in particular, on the women of her country.

It was a very great privilege and honour to have the valued interest of and provide a briefing for Her Excellency, Mrs Asma Al-Assad, The First Lady of the Syrian Arab Republic about the Conference, at a Special Reception which Her Excellency kindly hosted for Honoured

Guest Speakers and Key Participants on Sunday 16 May 2010.

The Conference Programme started with a Welcome Reception for AIWF hosted by Ambassador Simon Collis at the British Embassy Residence in Damascus on Friday 14 May, the eve of the opening of the Conference, thereby setting an appropriate tone for the proceedings the next day.

The Ambassadors and Heads of Mission of the thirty two countries from which the participants had come were present at the impressive Opening Session of the Conference. Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, commenced the proceedings by delivering her Welcome Address and Introduction, setting out the AIWF aims for the conference: the encouragement of business growth, innovation and intercultural collaboration, building and strengthening regional and international cooperation and stimulating public-private partnership to ensure that skills education and workforce development become a permanent priority on the Arab economic agenda. Speaking on the motivation for holding this first important AIWF Conference in Syria, Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani said *"Our conference in Syria comes at a time in which the rest of the world is taking notice of the remarkable progress that Syria is making, in all aspects of social and economic development. Syria has, in a very short period of time, come to represent one of the region's most attractive markets for foreign direct investment."*

The Keynote Address from the Conference Patron, Her Excellency, Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref, Minister of Social Affairs & Labour, The Syrian Arab Republic incorporated a special and generous welcome to Syria and set the very high tone of the conference. This outstanding Opening Session also incorporated Keynote Addresses from Her Excellency Ms Anne Marie Idrac, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, France, Her Excellency Mrs Hala Bsaiso Lattouf, Minister for Social Development, Jordan and Her Excellency Emma Bonino, Vice President of the Italian Senate. Speaking of the challenges which face women in the Italian political system, Emma Bonino concluded her address by saying, *"I think that there is one word to capture the essence of our time and bring some coherence to the complex interaction between gender, leadership and culture: it is the word **"change"**. The challenges of global competition, deregulation of many industries, and accelerating technological innovations dictate change. We need to restructure, re-engineer and reinvent ourselves. Women must be very much part of this widespread change process. And start being categorized not only as "women leaders" but simply as "leaders".*

The first Plenary Session covered the timely and very relevant theme of ***Empowering Women in Public Life: Effecting Change*** exploring major questions such as how the growing Syrian economy is contributing towards developing the capacity of Syrian women and



Mrs Al Kaylani, Chairman Arab International Women's Forum presents a commemorative salver to the Conference Patron, Her Excellency, Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, The Syrian Arab Republic.



# FIRST AIWF CONFERENCE IN SYRIA

## 13 - 17 MAY 2010, DAMASCUS

charting a comprehensive reform agenda, in Syria, across the Arab world and beyond; how has it, in fact, enhanced opportunities for women in Syria in terms of employment and entering public life and, generally, across the region, what is required of leading women in business and public life to ensure that opportunities for women are enhanced in these times of economic growth? Emma Bonino, Vice President, The Senate, Italy led a panel of Guest Speakers comprising Her Excellency Dr Bouthaina Shaaban, Advisor at the Syrian Presidency for Media & Political Affairs, Damascus, Syria, Her Excellency Mrs Hala Bsaïso Lattouf, Minister for Social Development, Jordan and Mrs Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Member of the European Parliament for Sweden to address this theme.

In Plenary Session II Guest Speakers Ms Abeer Shubassi, Senior Country Officer, Education for Employment Foundation, USA, Ms Hilary Rantisi, Director Middle East Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Ms Aysha Binbraik, HR Manager Middle East, Shell Upstream International, United Arab Emirates and Ms Dina Khairo, Scientific Regulatory Affairs and Nutrition Director, Middle East & Africa Region, PepsiCo, United Arab Emirates led by His Excellency Mr Ahmed Luqman, Head of the Arab Labour Organisation, Egypt addressed the topic ***Education, Training and Capacity Building: Preparing the Next Generation of the Arab Work Force*** focusing on the reported shortfalls between the number of women educated in Syria, and the region in general, and those obtaining work or starting their own businesses, specifically in the services, tourism, technology and agricultural sectors, looking at how the education system can assist in strengthening women's opportunities in employment and self-employment and in accessing public life.

***Supporting the Role of Women in Business and Women as Investors*** was the theme of Plenary Session III on day one of the Conference which established that throughout the Arab world women-owned businesses employ more women and yet the number of women in the Arab world who are currently being highly educated is not reflected in the statistics relating to business-ownership and private sector employment of women. It explored the factors contributing to these shortfalls and looked at how the private sector can help to achieve a much-needed critical mass of women entering the fields of self-employment, entrepreneurship and investment. Guest Speakers Ms Neveen El Tahri, Chairperson, Delta Holdings for Financial Investment, Egypt and Mr Luc Debieuvre, Managing Director and Administrator of Bank Audi Saradar, France, SA spoke to this topic, led by Mrs Sonia Khandji Cachecho, Board Member of Damascus Chamber of Commerce and President of the DCC Business Women Committee, Syria.

A much applauded feature of this conference was a set of two Business to Business Information Exchange Sessions looking firstly at ***The Role of Women in Rural Economies and Tourism***. This first session commenced with a veritable highlight of the second day of the conference which was the opportunity to learn about the excellent work that is being advanced for women and their communities in Syria, when Her Excellency, Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref brought to the attention of the conference, ***the Programme of Women's Economic Empowerment***



*Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref and Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani with delegates at a plenary session*

***and Poverty Alleviation***. This documentary and special presentation by Her Excellency of the projects being inspired through her leadership and with the cooperation of relevant agencies gave rise to a particularly spirited discussion on how this was providing women with the chance to overcome challenges, gain confidence and financial independence. Debate focused on the fact that Syrian women in rural economies play a significant role in agriculture, which is one of Syria's most prominent industries, yet, in a recent report, the IFAD found that rural women do the majority of farm work yet have the most difficulty in accessing productive resources, training, capital and credit.

Guest Speakers Mrs Nadereh Chamlou, Senior Advisor, Office of the Chief Economist MENA, The World Bank, USA, who moderated the session, and Engineer Samira Al Zoughbie, Researcher, General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research, Syria also addressed this session.

In the second of these most successful sessions, Mr John Edwin Mroz, President and Chief Executive Officer, EastWest Institute, USA led Guest Speakers Mrs Raja Easa Al Gurg, Managing Director, Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group, UAE, Mrs Chiara Corazza, Managing Director, Greater Paris Investment Agency, France and Ms Ellen McLaughlin, Senior Vice President & General Counsel, Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, USA in addressing ***The Importance of Partnership, Innovation and Creativity in Fostering International Investments & International Trade***; attention was focused on how we can best identify opportunities for partnership, for collaboration and cooperation and for exchange of best practices in order to achieve private sector growth and women's leadership in all spheres, for women in Syria, across the Arab region and in the international community.

Participants at the Conference welcomed the opportunity to meet outstanding and high profile Syrian women business leaders and many expressed their great delight at the chance to network and learn from this interaction and declared it one of best forums offered at any AIWF conference. Such opportunities for networking were provided on the first day of conference by a Networking Luncheon, generously hosted by the Business Women Committee and then on the second day a similar chance to interact was a luncheon very kindly hosted by the Damascus Chamber of Commerce at the Orient Club.

AIWF greatly appreciates the generous support of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the Ministry of Tourism, the Damascus Chamber of Commerce and its Business Women Committee, PepsiCo International, Shell International Upstream, Manpower, Joud, Byblos Bank, MTN, UG, Enana, Levant Motors, Jetee and Chaoui & Co. AIWF is also grateful for the support of Ambassador Simon Collis, in particular for his kind hosting of the Welcome Reception at the British Embassy Residence.

The attendance of high profile guests from thirty two countries worldwide, including many distinguished speakers, ministers and other government representatives, international business leaders, academics and esteemed AIWF members and Global Partners all contributed to an impressive conference. High profile contributions from all the speakers offering their expertise and sharing their experiences in public life, education, business, particularly in the financial sector ensured that this very significant first AIWF Conference in Syria was a resounding success. The importance of partnership in all aspects but significantly in fostering innovation and creativity was the base from which many new relationships were formed.



*Mrs Sonia Khandji Cachecho, President, DCC Business Women Committee, Damascus, Syria; Dr Diala Al Hajj Aref, Minister of Social Affairs & Labour, Syria; Madame Anne Marie Idrac, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, France; Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Chairman, AIWF*

## FIRST AIWF AND ABCC JOINT INITIATIVE UNDER MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: The Importance of a Strong Accounting Profession in the Middle East

**The Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) and the Arab British Chamber of Commerce (ABCC)** were pleased to hold their first event in 2010 when they joined forces with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) for a Panel Discussion on the topic of *The Importance of a Strong Accounting Profession in the Middle East* at The Arab British Chamber of Commerce, Upper Grosvenor Street, London on Monday 22 February.

Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, Secretary General and CEO of the Arab British Chamber of Commerce, in welcoming, on behalf of AIWF and ABCC, members of all three organisations and guests from professional and business circles to a programme of presentations on all aspects and benefits of a chartered accountancy qualification and how it is used to build a strong professional ethic and business growth in the Middle East said *"We are very proud to have the cooperation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales and PricewaterhouseCoopers and commend their work in promoting excellence in the accounting profession, particularly in the Middle East."*

In her concluding remarks, thanking the contributors, Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, stated, *"Along with our international partners, we remain committed to putting solid, world-class standards of finance and business squarely onto the Arab business agenda"*, explaining that, since its inception in 2001, the work of AIWF had been almost exclusively focused upon paving viable paths to success for Arab companies, especially women-owned businesses.

Mrs Al Kaylani went on to highlight some key points relating to the Arab world in particular, namely, that the Arab world had experienced unprecedented business and social progression in the previous decade and that, as a consequence, the transition to a new set of accounting standards would undoubtedly be a long and complex process. However, the key to the success of this transition was that Boards across the region remained committed to hiring the best-qualified finance and accounting teams, professionals knowledgeable in international accounting standards and best practices in financial reporting. This was where organisations such as the ICAEW and PricewaterhouseCoopers had the greatest influence to impact positive change, enhancing opportunities for accounting professionals in the region as they related to the wider business community.

The President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), Martin Hagen, set out the role that the Institute plays in the accountancy profession within the UK and the importance of strong accounting professions and professional bodies, and, Vernon Soare ICAEW Executive Director Professional Standards was able to share his experience of working with local organisations and governments globally in establishing credible and reliable professional bodies, increasing capacity and introducing local qualifications of the highest standard.

Amanda Line, ICAEW Regional Director in the Middle East, who, in recent months has been responsible for the Institute's first office being opened in Dubai, UAE, spoke of the business expansion in the Middle East and the work they are doing to encourage more young people to join the profession. She said *"For nationals in the Middle East to achieve their goals and fulfil their potential as future business leaders, it is important that they are equipped with the right skills. By training as Chartered Accountants they will acquire these skills as well as gaining a globally recognised qualification for business leadership."*

*"There is no doubt that having a strong accountancy profession is absolutely key for the future global success of the Middle Eastern economies. The ICAEW's ACA qualification provides individuals with the highest technical and ethical standards - it helps people do business with confidence. It also opens the doors to many different career paths. I would also encourage more young women to study for a professional qualification, as I believe they could play a bigger role in contributing to the growth and stability of the Middle Eastern economies."*

Advice and experience from the accountancy corporate, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), an AIWF global partner, came from David Blondel, Senior Manager in the PwC Learning & Development team, on the role of a training employer in recruitment and training contracts and post qualification opportunities. Aida Emadi Allahyari, a Senior Associate in the PwC Banking & Capital Markets Assurance practice and a newly - qualified ACA shared her experience and enthusiasm in undertaking the ACA programme and how it had benefited her.

After the panel presentations, there was a very spirited interactive session with questions from the assembled guests.

In commenting on behalf of AIWF and ABCC on the success of this first event in 2010 of the Programme of Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding that AIWF and ABCC signed in July 2009 to promote Arab-British trade and economic cooperation, Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum, paid tribute to the ICAEW, saying *"The ICAEW has played a key role in shaping standards of accounting and auditing and driving ethics within the profession by working closely with accountancy bodies and governments across the globe to enhance the accountancy profession by ensuring financial information is as technically rigorous and ethically robust as possible"*. She also commended PricewaterhouseCoopers when she said *"We are also honoured to have the participation of PricewaterhouseCoopers and acknowledge their many successes in the MENA region in developing women as well - qualified financial professionals. We look forward to working more closely with all our esteemed partners here today to ensure that strong accounting practices become an integral part of how the Arab world conducts and grows its businesses."*



*Left to Right, Top Row: Mr Vernon Soare, ICAEW Executive Director, Middle East; Mr David Blondel, Senior Manager, PwC Learning & Development Team; Mr Martin Hagen, ICAEW President Left to Right, Bottom Row: Ms Amanda Line, ICAEW Regional Director, Middle East; Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum; Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, Secretary General & CEO, Arab British Chamber of Commerce; Ms Aida Emadi Allahyari, Senior Associate, PwC, Banking & Capital Markets*

### EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION INITIATIVE: Online Dialogue With Women Working On Gender Issues In EU Partner Countries, Including The Middle East, Caucasus & Central Asia

Many of the blogosphere's most active women are based in the Middle East. AIWF was instrumental in helping me to identify a number of them. At the end of last year, I was tasked by the European Training Foundation (ETF), an agency of the European Union, to establish a dialogue online with women who work and write on gender issues in the EU Partner Countries, including the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia. ETF works with emerging economies to develop education and training systems. Improving and increasing women's opportunities in employment are high on its agenda. Every year on March 8, International Women's Day, ETF gathers international policy makers and opinion leaders to discuss issues like the gender pay gap and other structural inequalities affecting women.

Twenty-two women bloggers from 21 countries, including Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan, were invited to a face-to-face working session in Turin, Italy, on the eve of the Women and Work conference held on March 8th. Their task was to develop a set of recommendations in the field of education and employment and to present them to policy makers the following day. This project has helped to create an outlet for voices that are often overheard in the offline world. It has also contributed to highlight the role played by social media in empowering women.

*Silvia Cambie  
Director, Chanda Communications  
AIWF Member*



## NEWS FROM AIWF GLOBAL PARTNERS

### PFIZER INC: A NEW PLATINUM PARTNER FOR AIWF

**Haifa Al Kaylani**, Chairman AIWF welcomes Pfizer Inc: as a new and valued Platinum Global Annual Partner. *"We are delighted that Pfizer Inc has joined our distinguished group of partners"* says Mrs Al Kaylani. *"Pfizer Inc: has a strong social responsibility agenda with its focus on high standards and quality products that make a difference to people's lives worldwide. We are looking forward to Pfizer Inc's active participation in the AIWF activities in the year ahead and their cooperation and support in working with AIWF in our mission to Build Bridges, Build Business and enhance the social and economic position of women in the region."*

**Guy Lallemand**, Regional President Africa and Middle East, Pfizer welcomed the opportunity of this relationship with AIWF when he said *"Pfizer is glad to become a partner with AIWF starting 2010. We look forward to a very mutually beneficial relationship over the coming years in our joint efforts to work towards economic growth in the region. As a company that is committed to sustaining and expanding a culture of Diversity and Inclusion in everything we do, Pfizer is pleased to support AIWF in its advocacy and development to advance the prospects of women in small business and as entrepreneurs within the region"*.

### About Pfizer Inc: Working together for a healthier world™

At Pfizer, we apply science and our global resources to improve health and well-being at every stage of life. We strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value in the discovery, development and manufacturing of medicines for people and animals. Our diversified global health care portfolio includes human and animal biologic and small molecule medicines and vaccines, as well as nutritional products and many of the world's best-known consumer products.

Every day, Pfizer colleagues work across developed and emerging markets to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. Consistent with our responsibility as the world's leading biopharmaceutical company, we also collaborate with health care

providers, governments and local communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care around the world.

For more than 150 years, Pfizer has worked to make a difference for all who rely on us. To learn more about our commitments, please visit us at [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com).

### DLA PIPER DOCUMENTARY

DLA Piper partner Duncan Wiggetts has created a realistic movie drama called **Counting The Cost** to be used as a tool by the firm to raise awareness of risks being taken by companies, boards of directors and their key internal advisors in failing to identify and / or react properly to evidence suggesting fraudulent conduct by managers or employees and in failing to put in place key controls to prevent such activity. **Counting The Cost** is the third film created by Duncan Wiggetts following two successful films he created whilst a partner and Audit Legal Counsel at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Europe. The second of these films, **Risking It All**, won a prestigious Financial Times legal innovation prize in October 2008.

**Counting The Cost** was launched at a high profile event in London on the 3rd March 2010 to an audience of 110 directors of UK plc's and has since been screened at successful launch events in Dubai (in a co-promotion with Hawkamah), in Abu Dhabi (in a co-promotion with the Abu Dhabi Center for Corporate Governance) and in Hong Kong, Singapore, Beijing and Seoul with further events lined up over coming months in India, South Africa, US, Germany and other European cities. Aside from the launch event, where the dubbed/subtitled film is interpreted by local experts, DLA Piper is also offering to run interactive workshops around the film for boards of directors, legal and compliance groups etc. A trailer for the film and contact details of those heading this initiative can be found on the website [www.dlapiperrapidresponse.com](http://www.dlapiperrapidresponse.com) where, under News, you can also listen to podcasts containing interviews with directors attending the launch event with their views on the film.

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

### AIWF Global Corporate Benefactor



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# INSIGHTS - Empowering Women in the Middle East for Social and Economic Change

*MR JOHN MROZ, GUEST SPEAKER AT THE DAMASCUS CONFERENCE*

It started with a quotation from the World Bank—women in developing countries will be the single most powerful engine of growth for the world economy over the next five years—contributing more growth than China and India combined. That got my attention. As the two days progressed, one could not overestimate the potential power of these same women to bridge traditional societies and modernity while reducing poverty and taking on the root causes of radicalization.

It has been a long time since I have taken in so much important and new information over a weekend. Being one of two male speakers- the other being the Head of the Arab League's Labor Office in Cairo- in a conference of some 350 highly successful women was worrisome enough. Being asked to speak at the concluding plenary after having been taught so much made it even more foreboding. Thanks to our fellow EWI Director, Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, I was given this opportunity to learn and grow. From Jordan and Syria to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, there is a powerful quiet revolution going on throughout most Arab societies today. It bodes well for stability, economic growth and over time, as a powerful antidote in confronting radicalization.

My concluding observation was that this conference should have been staged by women for powerful men-- not for other women. I said that in my concluding remarks and was well received. Listening for two days to these power women was truly an eye opener to the fifteen or so men attending. Where to start? Ministers from Jordan and Syria and private sector CEO's led a cavalcade of impressive women who talked about the practical achievements- I call them successes - in addressing the social and economic problems of women in the region—especially the poorest. There were plenty of references to the continued struggle women are going through to obtain greater political power—my favorite being the rising percentage of women in national Parliaments—would you believe that today there is a higher percentage of women members of Parliament in Tunisia than Italy or the United States. What is remarkable is the short time-span during which this has taken place.

The most popular success story was a joint program run by the Syrian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour in partnership with the UNDP. We watched a film interviewing some of the very poorest rural women in the country. At the heart of the effort is the dream of Minister Diala Al Hajj Aref to create a more powerful model of microfinance-small loans to poor women that combines the loaned funds with a skillfully crafted program of socio-cultural and economic betterment. It starts with program reps visiting these rural women who are asked to identify what they would like to do for their personal/family economic betterment. The program then creates a process that helps deliver the training and wherewithal to start that particular business in exchange for social training—including the family and neighbors. It engages the women with others like themselves and goes to the heart of the subservient role these women have traditionally had to play.

The results are quite amazing—a terrific film interviewing some uneducated women held us spellbound. One elderly woman said her husband wanted her to make money but not to learn how to read. She said her children had no respect for her because she could never help them with their homework or answer their questions about the world. She had known this was the case, but when she was able to talk to her fellow women “in training”, she decided to do something about it. If her husband wanted her to make money, he would also have to tolerate her learning to read—so that one day, her grandchildren would respect her in a way her own children do not. It was powerful stuff that outdistanced our Dallas video for the Worldwide Cybersecurity Summit! No actress in the world could have been as convincing.

Other stories unfolded—women learning the value of their work and learning how to persuade their families and communities

of such. A woman visited by the Minister was surprised that she was being asked why she had not turned the lights on in her rural ‘shop’. Her reply was that if she kept her lights on all day then she would have to charge more for each product she sells-- and then added that her ‘competitors would take away her business’. Could it be instinctive entrepreneurial traits among the most conservative rural women in the region? Oh yes, the case was made. This is good, solid change material!

The impressive Jordanian Minister for Social Affairs Hala Lattouf reminded us that it was a woman entrepreneur who first backed the Prophet Mohammed when he was not believed by the men-- and a woman who was made Treasurer of his purse. After WW II, Europe and America grew because women joined men as wage earners. And despite continued but lessening discrimination on inheritance, divorce and legal rights (even to borrow); women have risen in the percentage of university students—to more than half in much of the Arab world. She quoted Queen Rania of Jordan who said the best way to empower women is by showing successful women to the society. The Forum was magnificent in doing that. The Managing Director of one of Dubai's biggest companies stole our hearts by her story of how she moved from being a school headmistress for twelve years back into her family's business at her father's urging. Her stories of balancing motherhood and career were impressive and we all identified with her. She was no different than the CEO of Pepsi or Dell.

If wealth is a barometer of human capital, women should be half of the value of a society. There is no prosperity unless women are empowered and take their place in the economic and political systems. Hearing these things from women who have made it was powerful. Then we started getting a perspective of the enormity of the problem in the region as regards unemployment especially in relation to youth and women. The Arab League predicts 3.6% annual growth of the workforce for the next three decades with 4% rate for women. Female youth unemployment is double that of male youth unemployment. Poverty among youth is discouragingly high.

The hope by everyone present was that the Kuwait Economic Summit of the Arab League's finally addressed the problem with a pledge to usher in a new social contract focused on providing economic opportunities for youth and women. The largest share of the 100 million new jobs that the World Bank says must be created by 2020 in the MENA region will go to youth and women. Participants noted that ‘new concepts’ for the region such as flexible hours have encouraged more private employers to hire women.

A fascinating discussion about the veil took place with a majority of participants and speakers with uncovered heads. The Syrian Minister said she would be more comfortable in the dress of her village but her position forced her to dress as a Westerner. Some of the most progressive women were covered. Several members of the European Parliament and the Italian Senate were clear that their counterparts may have gone too far in the veil rulings—but drew the line with complete face coverings saying that anonymity in society is unhealthy and against all basic human values. The passions on this issue were amazing. Vice President Bonino of the Italian Senate said that TV in her country had created three models for young girls—you can be a mother, a covered conservative woman or a bikini clad beach-goer. She reminded the audience that her own Mother would never think of leaving her home with her head uncovered.

There was consensus that education is the key and how women see themselves crucial. This led to talk of the need for healthy media coverage. There was talk of cybersecurity and protecting our youth—a Saudi woman, Syrian mother and I talked over lunch about these issues as parents. I was stunned that our experiences were nearly identical. Our desire to work together—East and West was instantaneous. It turns out that the Saudi was an

IT executive, although I didn't learn that until the end of our talk.

I spoke about the prerequisites of leadership and tried to reflect my principles with what I heard the past two days. I ended my talk by saying that my Institute was planning a trip through the region in October and that I was asked to plan a separate program for the women in our group to go out and meet women to assess the situation on the ground. I said that wherever cultural norms permitted, we would do that women's outreach—BUT only if the men of the group participated as well. It's time to take women's issues from the fora of women talking about women to a topic at the heart of discussions about economic growth, social stability and security. To have participated wholeheartedly in the Damascus AIWF conference made that conclusion an inevitable one. I'm grateful for that and happy to share what I learned.

*John Mroz*

*Founder, President and CEO of The EastWest Institute  
USA*

### **AIWF AT THE MENA-OECD CONFERENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS**

The MENA-OECD Conference on Gender Equality in Government and Business, held on 4 May 2010 at OECD Headquarters in Paris, brought together participants from 19 OECD countries, 14 MENA countries, and several regional and international organisations including the Arab Administrative Development Organisation, the World Bank, UNIFEM, UNDESA, and the Union of Arab Banks. The Arab International Women's forum was represented by Helena Samaha, General Counsel-Europe, Alix Partners, Paris, AIWF Member. Several NGOs and universities were also present.

#### **ATTRACTING TALENT TO THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS**

Because women represent half of the world's human capital, facilitating their participation in the labour force is a means of capitalising on the available talent pool, thereby increasing countries' competitiveness. Participants explored strategies for increasing gender diversity in the workplace - in both the public and private sectors - and discussed their impact on innovation, competitiveness, efficiency and quality of service delivery. They reported on enabling factors, challenges and possible impacts of their strategies.

#### **Participants:**

- Identified three main reasons for attracting and retaining talented women in decision-making positions: the rights argument, the resource argument and the performance argument;
- Highlighted studies which show evidence of barriers to women's economic involvement including social obstacles and religious interpretations, and stressed the importance of ensuring gender equality in the law;
- Stressed the importance of addressing gender imbalances in the public sector, in particular in MENA countries, where the public administration remains the main, and sometimes exclusive employer of women;
- Identified tools for attracting talent, such as: legal and regulatory review, blind tests in recruitment processes, gender labels and other incentives, monitoring and reporting on women's representation by public and private sector employers, and sanction mechanisms;
- Suggested putting in place means to allow for a better work/life balance;
- Underlined the value of building women's leadership capacities through training, mentoring, and networking;
- Stressed the importance of raising awareness and combating stereotypes through high-level political support and the promotion of positive role models by the media.

#### **Actions of the Initiative:**

- Link up with other initiatives involved in promoting women's empowerment, education, employment, and entrepreneurship in the MENA region to build on synergies, and to create a "network of networks";
- Engage in studies and peer reviews to identify good practices for both attracting and retaining women to top level positions in public administrations and business;
- Provide concrete means to support women's empowerment (e.g. coaching and training).

#### **Extracts of commentary by attendees:**

- It is not realistic to segregate the topics of women as drivers of the economy on one hand, with the need for a legal and regulatory framework – and business culture - that enables working mothers to meet their family obligations, on the other hand.
- In the Gulf region, women comprise the majority of university attendees yet they are only employed by the public sector, which is not tenable in the long term.
- An attendee queried whether reaching a certain percentage of women in the workplace or on the boards of companies was really the objective? What do the percentages really mean? To this the panel responded that the percentages are not the end, but a means to measure progress .
- Should we be tackling the problem of lack of women in senior positions by one industry at a time?

Pdf of the Outcomes can be found at <http://www.aiwfonline.com/gender.pdf>

*Helena Samaha*

*General Counsel-Europe, Alix Partners, Paris  
AIWF Member*

### **AIWF AT THE SPRINGBOARD VISIT ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL, TO VISITING ARAB DELEGATION, LONDON ON 22 MARCH 2010**

I had both the honour and pleasure of representing AIWF at the above mentioned event.

The Springboard project has been developed in partnership between the British Council and the Springboard Consultancy where it provides personal development opportunities for women in the Middle East by facilitating the development of sustainable organisational links between the UK and countries of the Middle East.

The British Council has inaugurated this programme in Arabic to help Arab women to realise their potential and achieve better positions in both their personal and professional lives. The event was very well attended by women representatives from both the Middle East and the UK. The objective of the roundtable discussions was to share and compare experiences between the Springboard guests from the Middle East and the UK around the issues that are facing women.

The discussions were very much enriched by sharing experiences among the attendees who represented various organisations from the UK and the Middle East, including The British Council, UK & Saudi Arabia with other groups ranging from women's organisations in the UK, Bahrain and Qatar and Social Foundations in Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

The group agreed that whilst the context and the environment in the Middle East and the UK are different, the issues for women all over the world continue to be their lack of visibility in political and policy making forums; inequality of pay, and violence against women.

*Hoda Mansour*

*Senior Director, Oracle Communications  
AIWF Member*



## NEWS FROM AIWF BOARD MEMBERS AND MEMBERS

### DR AFNAN AL SHUAIBY REAPPOINTED AS SECRETARY GENERAL & CEO OF THE ARAB-BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

AIWF is delighted that **Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, Secretary General & CEO of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce (ABCC)** and valued Trustee and Board Member of AIWF, has been reappointed for a second four-year term as Secretary General & Chief Executive of the organisation. Under **Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby's** leadership, AIWF and the ABCC signed a Landmark Agreement in the form of a **Memorandum of Understanding** on 1st July 2009. At the signing ceremony, **Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani**, Chairman of AIWF and **Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby** expressed their shared commitment to create a powerful coalition to jointly promote trade and enhance business ties between Arab women and their British and international counterparts and to foster economic growth within the United Kingdom, the Arab world's largest trading partner, and the 22 states of the Arab League. The ABCC has raised its profile within the business community enabling it to improve the services it provides to its members to the benefit of facilitating Arab-British trade and the continued leadership of **Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby** will serve to consolidate and reinforce the full spirit and intent of the **Memorandum of Understanding**.

### FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO BIRMINGHAM OF DR AFNAN AL SHUAIBY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ARAB BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND AIWF BOARD MEMBER IN MARCH 2010



*Left to Right: Cllr Alan Rudge, Cabinet Member for Equalities and HR, Birmingham City Council; Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, Secretary General and CEO, the Arab British Chamber of Commerce; Mr Abdeslam El Idrissi, Director of Trade Services, Arab British Chamber of Commerce*

Debra Davis, Director of Public Affairs and Communications at Birmingham City Council, and AIWF Founding Board Member, welcomed Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, Secretary General of the Arab British Chamber of Commerce and fellow AIWF Board Member, to Birmingham for her first official visit in March 2010.

Dr Afnan spoke at the International Women's Day dinner hosted by Cllr Alan Rudge, Cabinet Member for Equalities and HR, and sponsored by the Birmingham office of PriceWaterhouseCoopers, describing the many links and opportunities for businesses in the UK and the Middle East. This was followed by a day of briefings at the City Council, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and at Aston University about further joint programmes with Birmingham Science City.

AIWF would like to express its deep appreciation to Mr and Mrs Cain of Mount Street Printers who, in acknowledgement of their working relationship with the organisation spanning more than nine years, are making a very generous donation of this issue of AIWF News. We would like to thank them also for their valued contribution and support throughout this period.

### SAIDA AGREBI DECORATED AT UNESCO

On Friday 25 March 2010 at an international reception gathering together guests invited from France, from the ONU, the OMF and UNESCO, **Madame Anh Dao Traxel, President of L'Etoile Europeenne du Devouement Civil et Militaire (The European Star for Civil and Military Devotion to Duty)** and adopted daughter of former President of France **Jacques Chirac** awarded **Saida Agrebi** with the **Golden Honour Medal** for devotion to duty for services to her Country and to the Mother and the Family in Tunisia, nominating her "**Mother of Nations**" in the presence of **His Excellency Mr Raouf Najjar, Tunisian Ambassador to France** and **His Excellency Mr Mezri Haddad, Tunisian Ambassador to UNESCO**.

### MRS CHIARA CORAZZA AWARDED THE HONOUR KNIGHT OF THE LEGION D'HONNEUR



*Madame Christine Lagarde, Minister for Economy, Industry and Employment, Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman AIWF join Mrs and Mrs Corazza in congratulating their daughter Chiara Corazza on her prestigious award.*

**Mrs Chiara Corazza, Managing Director of the Greater Paris Investment Agency**, our Partner in hosting the AIWF Conference in Paris in March 2009 was bestowed with the honour of **Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur** by **Her Excellency Mrs Christine Lagarde, Minister for the Economy, Industry and Employment**, France in a ceremony held at the Ministry of Finance in Paris on 16 June 2010. **Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, Chairman of AIWF** was invited to attend the ceremony.

### ANISSA HASSOUNA'S APPOINTMENTS

**Anissa Hassouna** has just been appointed Executive Director of Sir Magdi Yacoub Foundation. Furthermore, following the elections held in December 2009, Anissa has been appointed as **Secretary General of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs**. She is currently the Chairman's Advisor on Political Issues at the Cabinet's **Information and Decision Support Center**, which is the Egyptian Cabinet Think Tank. Her work focuses on women and human security (economic and political), citizenship and youth culture in addition to political participation.

### HOW TO JOIN AIWF

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### DATE OF NEXT ISSUE:

AIWF News - Issue No.22 will be published in October 2010

Kindly send all articles by 20th September 2010