



AIWF NEWS

Arab International Women's Forum

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

SPECIAL REPORT ISSUE 26 JULY 2012

EMERGING ECONOMIES, EMERGING LEADERSHIPS: ARAB WOMEN AND YOUTH AS DRIVERS OF CHANGES - A Timely Theme For 2012

The Arab International Women's Forum is proud and truly honoured that the AIWF Conference *Emerging Economies, Emerging Leaderships: Arab Women and Youth as Drivers of Change* had the esteemed patronage of His Highness, Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah and Founder and President of the American University of Sharjah.

Job creation, education and capacity-building, sustainable growth and gender equality were the central focus of this conference programme, because they are among the most critical challenges the region is facing at this moment in time. We heard from a number of eminent Guest Speakers of the urgent imperative to create jobs to absorb the number of young graduates entering the Arab workforce each year. This

provide a better future for women and youth.

AIWF was able at this important conference to reinforce its long-held belief that in order for the Arab world to enter into a new era of equality, it must mobilise all its resources – women and youth included – to achieve its full potential. We firmly believe that gender equality and balanced economic growth go hand in hand in the Arab world and that the empowerment of women and youth must be placed at the heart of the sustainable development process for the region.

Our 2012 Programme *Emerging Economies, Emerging Leaderships: Arab Women and Youth as Drivers of Change* and the outcomes of this ground-breaking conference in May on that theme underline the need there is for enhancing the AIWF mission. We will build on our success and raise our aim to achieve more demanding objectives with a forward looking agenda to promote investment in youth through education, training and the development of leadership skills, reaching new levels of competency and confidence in young Arab leaders and job creators towards social and economic recovery in their communities and the region.



AIWF was proud to co-host this ground-breaking event, which brought together eminent Arab and global leaders, with one of the leading universities and centres of excellence in the Arab world, The American University of Sharjah, and to be hosted by the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Trade for the Conference Dinner. On behalf of the Arab International Women's Forum, I wish to acknowledge and offer appreciation for the support of the Conference Partners: Institutional - The World Bank and MENA OECD Investment Programme and Corporate Global - PepsiCo, ManpowerGroup, Petrofac Ltd, Pfizer Inc, PwC and DLA Piper. Our appreciation goes to Memac Ogilvy and the FT for their cooperation and professional services. AIWF was delighted to welcome and thank our honoured guest speakers, our distinguished AIWF Global Annual Partners, members and participants for their valued contribution to the great success of this important two-day conference.

conference explored current initiatives addressing these themes in the region and in other emerging economies around the world. It did much to remove barriers to female entrepreneurship in the region by encouraging women-led small and medium enterprises, based on the notion that was strongly reinforced by our Guest Speakers that female entrepreneurship is capable of driving growth by helping to diversify the economy and create more and better jobs. It examined the education system in the MENA region with educators and policy-makers in terms of how it relates to job creation as a central tenet of the sustainable development process and highlighted concerns regarding the quality and targeting of education within some Arab universities, given the tremendous numbers of students now accessing tertiary education.

Our conference identified and promoted factors which will create real opportunities and economic growth and

Haifa AlKoylani

Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani
Founder Chairman

Arab International Women's Forum

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

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

Thursday 20 September 2012
The Lebanese American University
Beirut

in partnership with PwC and IWSAW

For more information contact the AIWF office
Email info@aiwfonline.com www.aiwfonline.com

DAY ONE OF THE CONFERENCE - OPENING SESSION



His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah, Founder and President of the American University of Sharjah inaugurates the conference with Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Founder Chairman, Arab International Women's Forum and Dr Peter Heath, American University of Sharjah (AUS) Chancellor, along with other Sharjah officials



Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani presenting the commemorative salver to His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi

In the presence of **His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi**, Supreme Council Member, United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah and Founder and President of the American University of Sharjah, **Dr Nada Mourtada Sabbah**, Vice Chancellor for Development & Alumni Affairs, welcomed the Arab International Women's Forum 2012 Conference entitled **Emerging Economies: Emerging Leaderships: Arab Women and Youth as Drivers of Change** to the American University of Sharjah.

The Chancellor of the American University of Sharjah, Dr Peter Heath, in welcoming the Arab International Women's Forum and its guests to the University, thanked AIWF for the opportunity to work together to find ways to include women and young workers in the private sector as the way forward. He paid tribute to the women entrepreneurs in the conference room as proof that women are doers and achievers, thinkers and innovators, leaders and problem-solvers.

Dr Heath reported that the Gulf countries had created impressive programmes to create skills and place young workers in the private sector.

"Talent is universal, but opportunity is not. Women are still saddled with unfair and untrue assumptions that they are less capable of starting and running businesses... Making women a focus of national policy is not only the right thing to do – it is also the smart thing to do."

"Talent is universal, but opportunity is not"



Dr Heath delivering his address at the Opening Session

He emphasised the transformative leadership role that women would play over the next few decades – as entrepreneurs, innovators, and leaders in politics, culture and academia. Acknowledging AIWF's recognition of the need to cultivate more female business leaders and at all managerial levels, Dr Heath announced that the American University of Sharjah was especially equipped to achieve this goal as a global institution that was founded as the first co-educational and co-residential university in the Gulf and was committed to developing the careers of women at all levels. He pointed out that there was a growing number of women in all tiers of the AUS administration and on the Board of Trustees. He felt that the UAE and the region, by doing everything to create a climate to promote women's success, demonstrated great business acumen.

Dr Heath said, *"The AIWF Conference will explore how women can turn their entrepreneurial dreams and innovations into successful businesses that generate income for themselves and their families, create jobs, expand markets, and fuel progress in their communities."*

"Public-private partnerships can make use of a reservoir of untapped potential. By creating networks of support, we can build locally driven and locally supported organisations that do bring about lasting change."

Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Founder Chairman,

Arab International Women's Forum delivered her keynote address in Arabic and English, acknowledging the progress made in the Arab world over the last decade and a half towards removing cultural constraints on gender equality through education, entrepreneurship and political empowerment. However, women are still underrepresented in key sectors and gender barriers restrict women's impact on the region's key institutions.

Women in business in all Arab countries still struggle with access to finance and networking opportunities, skills building and specialised training and conservative traditions still exert pressure on them, limiting opportunities for education, employment or participation in public life.



Mrs Al Kaylani delivering her address at the Opening Session

Investment in Education

Mrs Al Kaylani commended Arab governments for their investment in education and for the progress made toward the UN Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education and gender equality in schools. However, more could be done in the region to enhance women's access to quality education.

Arab Women in the Workforce

All GCC countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Saudi Arabia and the UAE have ratified the ILO Convention on equal pay for men and women;

five GCC countries have ratified the ILO Convention on gender bias and discrimination in the workplace. The gender gap continues to narrow but women are still vastly under-represented in the boardroom.

More formalised partnerships are required between the academic and economic sectors in order to synchronise curriculums with national economic objectives.

Enabling Entrepreneurship

Mrs Al Kaylani referred to the Arab world's greatest challenge for the critical decade ahead which is to create jobs for the next generation, saying "We are calling on GCC governments, regional development groups and the Arab private sector to work together to establish and support investment funds that will benefit women in business; to support cross-border networking initiatives; and to form a regional network of angel investors."

Job Creation & Youth Unemployment in the Region

The MENA region has one of the highest unemployment rates of all regions globally, with a youth unemployment rate of 25%, making job creation a critical priority.

Arab corporations, governments and development organisations must commit to promoting public-private partnerships and funding initiatives for diversification beyond oil; to develop entrepreneurship and innovation and to encourage private sector development and foreign investment to steer young graduates away from a preference for jobs in the public sector.

HE Noura Al Noman, Chairperson, Sharjah Supreme Council on Family Affairs referred to the fact that, under the His Highness' patronage of the University, it has three prominent women on its leadership team. Indeed, His Highness, Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi and Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Bint Mohammad Al Qassimi have always espoused the empowerment of women and youth as a natural process.

Ms Al Noman paid tribute to the social development strategic planning of Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Bint Mohammad Al Qassimi for her initiatives to empower and develop youth and young women, such as The Sharjah Ladies Club, opened in 1982 as the first ladies only club of its kind in the UAE to nurture women's talents and provide

them with a safe haven for leisure, cultural and sporting activities.

"Getting more women elected to parliament is an uphill struggle!" according to **Ms Emma Bonino**, Vice President of the Italian Senate in the first Plenary Session entitled ***Women's Contribution to Public Life*** - a statement which met with widespread agreement from the auditorium. Ms Bonino congratulated Algerian women on their recent success in Algeria where women had won 145 seats in the future National People Assembly (APN), i.e. 31.38% out of 462 seats, according to the preliminary results announced and, furthermore, there were no quotas used, to which she was heartily opposed. A lively debate ensued over the use of quotas, with members from Jordan being very much in favour as "door-openers", claiming that Jordan found that quotas entirely changed the dynamic. Views were expressed from the floor both for and against.



Anna Corazza Bildt, Member of the European Parliament, Ambassador Holst Alani, Director of the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, Egypt, Emma Bonino, Vice President, the Italian Senate.

Ms Nasra Al Adawi, CEO of Tawasul, an organisation which she had established four years previously as the first national independent and professional private think tank aimed at empowering civil society in the Sultanate of Oman, affirmed that women's empowerment was an issue over the entire Arab region and outlined a project conducted in the Sultanate of Oman to assist women candidates to run for parliament with the result that, as at 2012, more Omani women have reached decision-making positions: 1 elected member of the Majlis a' Shura, 14 women appointed to the State Council, 2 women Ministers and two Ministerial Under-secretaries. Apart from the parliamentary gains made, the project gave rise to a wider national media coverage and a wider public debate, in particular regarding the reasons for the absence of women from politics and the possible benefits of more equal representation in both chambers.

Ambassador Birgitta Holst Alani, Director of The Swedish Institute in

Alexandria explained the role of the Swedish Institute which has a mandate to work towards enhanced understanding between the peoples of Europe and the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa through dialogue, focusing on issues related to democracy and human rights.

"Emancipation is not for free, it is costly"

With regime changes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, new perspectives had been created and the dichotomy between Islam and the West would probably change character with the younger generations, in particular, staying much more connected to each other in the West and the Arab world.

The democratisation and emancipation of MENA societies would mostly depend on the mobilisation of civil society. The active participation of citizens – men and women, of NGOs, of intellectuals and of the media - is the precondition for ensuring that the dynamic of democratisation retains its independence. Commitment should now be sought to reform women's place in public life, their rights and their autonomy.

Supporting respect for women's rights and their participation in politics is a priority for Swedish development cooperation in the MENA region as an end in itself and a prerequisite for democratic development. New concepts now need to be brought forward to form a basis of debate on how to create new Arab, majority Muslim societies which are aligned with democratic ideals but which are palatable to the people.

Based on the chants by demonstrators in the streets of the Arab capitals which called for "Justice, Freedom and Dignity" Ambassador Holst Alani stated that dignity is the primary, fundamental principle of social justice that rests on two prerequisites: equality of rights and opportunity.

"Emancipation is not for free, it is costly" said Her Excellency. In emphasising the amount of work, wisdom and planning facing women in the Middle East and North Africa, she confirmed that Sweden stands ready to contribute to a better future for Arab women.

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, MEP and member of the Delegation for the Countries of the Arab Peninsula (DARP) made an intervention on the European Union's view of the recent uprisings in the Arab world and the quest for democracy.

She stressed that the EU cannot teach democracy and the Arab world should not import democracy but create its own.

“Economically empowered women develop future human capital”

On Empowering SMEs: Economic Development and the New Arab World, Dr Nasser Saidi, Chief Economist of the DIFC & Executive Director of the Hawkamah Institute for Corporate Governance stated that in order to empower women, there should be a focus on getting them into the labour force. Economically empowered women develop future human capital, as they usually re-invest their money in their children’s health and education.



left to right Mrs Nicola Ehlermann-Cache, Mrs Nadereh Chamlou, Dr Nasser Saidi, Dr Shaikha Al Maskari

Market Significance & Economic Impact of SMEs

SMEs are critical for job creation in MENA and contribute to economic diversification by fostering entrepreneurship, supporting dynamic business environments and creating better jobs.

MENA region SME landscape is characterised by low access to finance.

In emerging economies and young societies, entrepreneurship is important for job creation, private sector development, wealth creation and sustainable growth.

Women SMEs

31% to 38% (8 to 10 million) of total formal SMEs in emerging markets are women owned SMEs (with a minimum of 1 woman owner)

MENA has one of lowest female representations among formal SMEs because of low female Labour Force Participation.

The cost of failing to achieve the Millennium Development Goal which

focuses on gender equality and women’s empowerment is estimated to reduce per capita income growth rates by 0.1 – 0.3 percentage points.

Challenges Facing Women SMEs

In MENA, access to finance is difficult.

Household and child care responsibilities affect women’s market time allocation.

Customs and social norms impose restrictions on the activities women can engage in.

Poor infrastructure impacts on women entrepreneurs’ ability to grow their businesses.

In order to empower Women SMEs

Creating opportunities for women to further increase their work experience would positively impact on entrepreneurship and access to start-up finance through higher overall savings. To do this requires supporting an enabling environment including infrastructure for women entrepreneurs’ activities, including providing access to finance and training and mentoring.

Killing Two Birds... was the title of the presentation prepared by **Ms Caroline Freund**, Chief Economist MENA, The World Bank, AIWF’s Institutional Partner and delivered by **Mrs Nadereh Chamlou**, Senior Advisor, Office of Chief Economist MENA on the twin challenge facing SMEs in the region:

The region suffers from a weak private sector which must be addressed in order to achieve economic growth, but:

- Most firms are SMEs which do not achieve the status of bigger firms with more jobs, better jobs and higher salaries
- Many SMEs do not grow and many fail
- The region suffers from low employment with more female unemployment, amongst the well educated, than male
- Low rates of female ownership, especially in the SME sector

To confront this twin challenge, it is necessary to:

- Improve incentives for hiring women and for women to look for work
- Promote female entrepreneurship

Worldwide, female-owned firms hire more women than male owned firms, but the bulk of jobs go to men.

In MENA, female-owned firms hire far fewer women than in other regions

But, firms **managed** by women in MENA hire considerably more women in professional and supervisory positions

Promoting women-owned firms in MENA achieves three goals:

- Creates a more dynamic private sector
- Creates more jobs for women
- Creates better jobs for women

“Entrepreneurship is a potential means to address the region’s urgent need for more and better jobs.”

Mrs Nicola Ehlermann-Cache, Senior Policy Adviser, MENA OECD Investment Programme, Private Sector Development Division, OECD, AIWF Institutional Partner, presented findings from the MENA-OECD Draft Issues Paper entitled ***Empowering Women-led SMEs: Economic Development and the New Arab World*** prepared for the Conference. Among the findings, it was established that entrepreneurship is a potential means to address the region’s urgent need for more and better jobs. Entrepreneurial activity in the MENA region is far from reaching its potential and according to a forthcoming OECD-IDRC study, a key reason for the region’s limited entrepreneurial activity is the low participation of women in the economy.

Dr Shaikha Al Maskari, Chairperson, Al Maskari Holding, Chairperson, Tricon Group said that through public-private partnerships it is possible to implement sustainable job creation initiatives that align the interests of national

programmes with corporate incentives. She recommended capacity building programmes that reward multinational companies for hiring, training, and retaining nationals in strategic industries, thereby reducing the burden on governments by encouraging youth to favour private sector careers.

“The Arab Spring is by its very nature going to put politics in focus rather than the needs of economic and social development.”

Linking Education & Stable, Sustainable Socio-Economic Development

Acknowledging the impressive progress made over the last 50 years, **AUS Chancellor, Dr Peter Heath** then outlined some of the challenges now faced by higher education centres in the Arab region:

- Currently, education is changing just like every other aspect of our society. Global competition is creating huge anxiety about the future among young people worldwide
- Education is now a global endeavour; skills needed from graduates must meet global standards. The skill set of our university graduates must comply with what private sector companies and the Arab region require in order to succeed
- How to find the resources necessary to train students up to levels of global standards of best practice, especially the large national universities, which are grossly underfunded.
- The major national universities in high population centres such as Egypt, Syria, Morocco and Iraq face severe resource challenges. AUS has about 5,000 students with 1,000 quality students graduating each year, compared with Al Shams University in Egypt which has 100,000 students in the Business School alone. How to provide high quality education to high numbers of students?
- How does a nation or region create systems of interlocking educational

programmes at different levels of quality that will support the needs of industry and also provide opportunities for the students who graduate each year?

- There is a lack of partnerships bringing together, in a coherent way, Ministries of Labour and Ministries of Education and also companies who want to recruit qualified workers.

Dr Heath concluded by saying *“The Arab Spring is by its very nature going to put politics in focus rather than the needs of economic and social development. It will put education on the back burner which is exactly the wrong priority. Economics should be put first and then think actively about immediate job creation. Next would come substantial investment in education so that the education system can meet the long-term needs of the country and improve the lives of the younger generation.”*

“History has shown that high employment and productivity levels protect against the conditions that create instability and inhibit economic development.”

Mr Ron Bruder, Founder Chairman, Education for Employment Foundation (EFE) pointed out that education will only lead to sustainable socio-economic development if it pays dividends – producing young women and men with the skills to become employed, drive the economy and spur development.

87% of CEOs in the Middle East believe that the limited supply of candidates with the right skills will present their biggest business challenge over the next three years. The Arab world also has one of the lowest labour productivity growth rates, a serious concern as MENA moves towards greater participation in the global economy.

History has shown that high employment and productivity levels protect against the conditions that create instability and inhibit economic development. During the unrest and violence in Ireland, total male unemployment rose from under 10% to over 20% between 1978 –1987. For stable, sustainable socio-economic development, there is a need to increase productivity by closing the skills gap.

At EFE, this is achieved through a *demand-driven model*. EFE trains young women and men for the needs of the private sector. Since inception, 68% of graduates have been placed in jobs within six months of completing their training. Trainees retain jobs, giving their companies the human capital necessary for expansion.

MENA has immense potential for socio-economic development, but is held back by one of the highest levels of female unemployment. More than 90% of Arab CEOs believe that increasing female education will have a positive effect on the human capital value of women in the region.

Therefore, EFE aims for a 50% female participation rate in its training programmes. Young women are key employees and *key employers*. In 2011, in an EFE entrepreneurship training pilot in Jordan with Intel, of the 150 youth trained, 20% were males and 80% were female. More young women participated because they were prepared to take more risk than their male counterparts.

“Women are ready to take risks, and they are intent on succeeding. The role of EFE is to provide them with the skills they need to enter the workforce, then watch them change the world.”

HOW TO JOIN AIWF

For further information on AIWF kindly contact:

Arab International Women's Forum
6th Floor, 7 Old Park Lane,
London W1K 1QR, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 20 7409 7788

Fax: +44 20 7409 7575

info@aiwfonline.com

www.aiwfonline.com

Date of next issue:

AIWF News - Issue No. 27
will be published in October 2012

Kindly send all articles by
21 September 2012

THE SHARJAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY HOSTS THE CONFERENCE EVENING RECEPTION AND GALA DINNER



Chairman Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Midfah welcoming Mrs Al Kaylani, Chairman Arab International Women's Forum



Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani and Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Midfah with the guests at the top table

Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Founder Chairman Arab International Women's Forum, Chancellor Peter Heath, American University of Sharjah, AIWF Members, AIWF Global Partners and Guests were warmly welcomed to the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry by the Chairman, Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Midfah and Mr Hussain Al Mahmoudi, Executive Director for the Evening Reception and Conference Gala Dinner which they were graciously hosting.

This occasion, held on Wednesday 16 May 2012 on the first day of Conference, provided an excellent social and business networking opportunity for the conference participants to meet members of the Chamber and the wider business community in Sharjah.

In his welcome speech, the Chairman of the Chamber, Mr Al-Midfah applauded AIWF for bringing to Sharjah an eminent gathering of people from diverse sectors of the global economy

to connect with the Chamber and the opportunities there were for international business. He spoke about what the Chamber had to offer and the Sharjah Business Women Council who carry out excellent projects and training.

In her words of appreciation for hosting the AIWF Conference Dinner Mrs Al Kaylani said that the occasion was pertinent for the theme of the conference and congratulated Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Midfah, Chairman, the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the extraordinary leadership shown, for widening its activities and making Sharjah a real hub for business and trade in the Emirates, the region and globally, and wished him, his Board and members continued success.



Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani speaking after Dinner



Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani being presented with symbolic gift by Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Midfah

Mrs Al Kaylani said "The Arab Spring has no doubt created many new opportunities but also many challenges. These challenges spur us all to double our

efforts to keep the channels of trade and investment open between the Arab region and the international community. We must ensure that Arab businesswomen are fully engaged in this process, and are encouraged to set up successful SMEs that will create jobs. I believe we all agree that a thriving and dynamic Arab private sector of men and women as we see here in Sharjah, open for business and engaged in trade, will generate the growth and prosperity that the region needs and that the region truly deserves to have."

At the conclusion of the evening, Mr Al-Midfah and Mr Al Mahmoudi conducted a tour of the magnificent Chamber building which had been newly developed in the last couple of years giving Mrs Al Kaylani and the guests a greater appreciation of the range of business and trading activities over which the Chamber presides.



Mrs Al Kaylani, Mr Al-Midfah and Mr Hussain Al Mahmoudi, Executive Director, the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry with guests who accompanied them on the conducted tour of the building



Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani and AIWF guests take leave of Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Midfah at the end of the evening

The Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry was formed in 1970 with the aim of organising economic life and to support trade, industrial and professional sectors and includes the Sharjah Business Women Council. The services of the Chamber have been expanded to all the cities within the Emirate with branch offices. It cooperates with government agencies and other chambers at Arab and international levels, making introductions to and receiving delegations from economic players with the aim of boosting cooperation, opening trade centres and developing trading relationships within the UAE and globally.

DAY TWO OF THE CONFERENCE

Dr Afnan Al-Shuaiby, Secretary General & CEO, The Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, UK and AIWF Board Member addressed the topic of *Innovators & Entrepreneurs in Emerging Economies: Reaching a New Level of Entrepreneurial Excellence* stating that there is an increasing recognition across the Arab World that innovation is absolutely vital for economic development, growth and prosperity. Any country, just like any corporation, must innovate in order to thrive in an increasingly globalised economy. Innovation is a crucial factor in the creation of new knowledge and the encouragement of new ideas without which there is little hope of staying ahead of the game and competing on the world stage.

There is a growing recognition that innovation is a prerequisite to building a knowledge-based society and a sustainable economy.

Dr Al-Shuaiby quoted from an *Innovation Strategy* published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which stated that:

“Innovation is essential if countries and firms are to recover from the global economic downturn and thrive in today’s highly competitive and connected global economy. It is a powerful engine for development and for addressing social and economic challenges. And it holds the key, both in advanced and emerging economies, to employment generation and enhanced productivity growth through knowledge creation and its subsequent application and diffusion.”



Mrs Al Kaylani and Delegates in this plenary session

Diverse Examples of Successful Innovation...

HE Khuloud Al Nuwais, Chief Sustainability Officer, Emirates Foundation presented *Unlocking Youth Potential* explaining how the Emirates Foundation engages, inspires, empowers and guides the youth of the UAE to secure the nation’s sustainable future.

Venture philanthropy is applied in partnership with the private and public sector to impact the lives of UAE youth permanently and positively through:

- Identifying, educating and informing on challenges facing UAE youth
- Developing sustainable enterprise based solutions to social issues
- Motivating UAE youth to volunteer, participate and give back to society

HE Ameera Bin Karam, Chairperson, Executive Committee, Sharjah Business Women Council demonstrated the ethos of the Women Business Council which aimed, by carrying out various initiatives, to contribute to the UAE’S overall economic and social development by supporting women’s full integration in the economy. Her Excellency introduced the EASE initiative which aims to empower potential and accomplished professional and business women to determine and realise their ambitions in both traditional and non-traditional sectors in the UAE.



left to Right Dr Afnan Al-Shuaiby, Ms Chiara Corazza, HE Ameera Bin Karam

Ms Chiara Corazza, Managing Director, The Greater Paris Investment Agency gave her assessment of key factors for success in entrepreneurship, making the point that very few innovators actually have even a basic training in business skills when they start their company. It is also the case of most successful innovators.

“Two years ago, I invited a selected group of top international experts, to identify the key factors of success that would-be entrepreneurs with little business education should be aware of...And this factor is simply: “being connected.”

Being connected to other people. Being able to reach out and meet the people with experience and knowledge. Even the most brilliant inventor has to create a team with someone skilled

in management to make a sustainable business plan and to help him to transform the idea into product...”

Ms Corazza highlighted the best environment for innovators which is a cluster based in a Global City: a cluster where universities connect with laboratories, industries connect with researchers, companies connect with start up, and young talents connect with business angels...and create value.

She explained that she adopted the creation of clusters in the Greater Paris Region and now is proud, seven years after launching them, of their huge success.

“...girls perform better than their male peers in all subjects including sciences”

Mrs Nadereh Chamlou, Senior Advisor, Office of the Chief Economist MENA, The World Bank moderated the session entitled *Developing Youth: The Role of Governments & the Private Sector* and opened her remarks with an assessment of *Women’s Educational Gains* by presenting some facts in the form of figures and statistics.

Emerging economies, Mrs Chamlou pointed out, produce a much higher percentage of graduates per annum if compared to advanced economies.

The MENA region in particular has established itself as a pool for talent and graduates. When compared to the much bigger India, the MENA region shows an almost equivalent number of graduates per annum, this is particularly clear when looking at the number of female graduates.

The quality of graduates in the MENA region is also of interest, as girls perform better than their male peers in all subjects including sciences. This remains true even at university level where female students tend to choose scientific subjects, business and law.

Even in the ‘soft skills’ women tend to do better than men: women are generally considered by employers as more reliable, more productive, more trustworthy.

From these surveys it appears quite clearly how the difficulties faced by women in the workplace are not dependent on women themselves, but on society itself.

Mr David Arkless, President, Corporate & Government Affairs, ManpowerGroup began his presentation by confirming Nadereh Chamlou's findings that the MENA region had established itself as an important international pool for talent.

He went on to say that no country in the world has developed a national labour market, and the Arab countries have the most dysfunctional labour market in the world for two main reasons:

- Lack of planning
- Over-dependency on poor, enforced, underpaid foreign labour

However, the advantages of the Arab labour market are:

- High fertility rates (risk of increased dependency on single income)
- High levels of literacy
- Increased need for skilled labour in the EU owing to the projected loss of 50 million workers in Europe

The issue of dependency on foreign labour is solvable with adequate planning and structuring. Long term plans can be made that take into account the demand (skills needed) and help developing skills that make people work-ready.

It is fundamental to assess abilities from an early age in order to pre-determine a person's potential.

There is also the need to encourage young people to train for the skills needed in the fields required in the job market rather than for what they feel is more suitable for them.



Left to right HE Tahani Abu Daqqa, Mr David Arkless, Mrs Nadereh Chamlou, Professor Yomn El Hamaky



Ms Charlotte Morris

“Jobs aren’t just about income, but also status, opportunity, aspirations and even marriage prospects.”

Ms Charlotte Morris, Social Development Adviser, Middle East Team, Department for International Development, UK Foreign Office, in outlining some roles which Governments can play in addressing youth employment, began with favourite stories about children who, despite the odds, overcome huge challenges and end up by realising their dreams: slum dog millionaire, Cinderella, Aladdin. *“But Aladdin and Cinderella never had to go through the process of finding a job. Hours filling in forms, endless interviews or knocking on doors only to be turned away. Helping young people get jobs is a priority we all share. Jobs aren’t just about income, but also status, opportunity, aspirations and even marriage prospects,”* said Ms Morris.

The economic downturn has hit young people particularly hard.

- Over half of Spain's and Greece's under 25's are now unemployed, and youth unemployment has risen starkly in the UK
- In MENA the demographic challenges of generating jobs for young people are particularly immense. Most of Egypt's unemployed are under the age of 30. Among university graduates nearly half those unemployed are women
- A study by the Dubai Governance Centre estimated the economic cost of youth exclusion in Egypt to be around \$53 billion to the economy
- Around the globe young people are working twice as hard to get a fraction of the opportunities their older siblings and parents had.

In terms of tackling the problem, the role of the private sector in creating jobs is well recognised, but the role of governments in supporting youth employment is less well understood.

Government has many roles but there are five to focus on for the purposes of this conference:

- education
- entry level opportunities
- the business environment

- a safe workplace for all and youth participation
- each government will make different choices about the balance between these roles.

Professor Yomn El Hamaky, Head of the Economics Department in the Faculty of Commerce at Ain Shams University, Cairo put forward strategies for upgrading women's employment in the region.

According to the World Bank (2012), the interaction of employment segregation with gender differences in time use and access to inputs and with market and institutional failures traps women in low-paying jobs and low-productivity businesses. In order to empower women to avoid these traps, it is necessary to eliminate illiteracy and provide universal access to education and then encourage initiatives by governments and civil society for women's economic independence and political engagement.

HE Tahani Abu Daqqa, Former Minister of Culture & Former Minister of Youth & Sport, Palestine highlighted the youth dynamic in Arab countries by explaining that in developing countries, including Arab countries, the age group 15 – 24 years constitutes a large percentage of their own populations and of the world population.

Following the failure of initiatives by the Palestinian Government and private sector to create work for young people, HE Mrs Abu Daqqa highlighted how efforts of individuals, organisations, the private and public sectors should unite in formulating a strategy to work for youth, should implement legislation, in particular employment initiatives, ensuring at the same time that adequate funding is made available from the state budget.

Hidden Potential: New Perspectives on the Role of Women & Youth

was a highly interactive session presented by Moderator and Guest Speaker **Ms Conny Czymoch**, International Journalist and German TV Anchor.

Ms Darein Hassan, Africa Middle East Diversity Lead & Senior Regulatory Leader, Pfizer Inc., AIWF Global Partner, UAE spoke about the Pfizer Regional Women's Council, Africa Middle East which was initiated by

Regional Leadership to shape a strong global workplace culture that embraces inclusion and creates an environment in which every colleague has the opportunity to realise his/her potential, regardless of age, education, sexual orientation, marital/family status, disability, religion, race, geographical location, perspective and culture.

Ms Hassan outlined “The Business Case” for gender diversity:

- The more a company mirrors its market demographically, the better positioned it is to send and respond to evolving market needs resulting in improved customer understanding
- In order to be competitive, it is essential that companies recruit the right people from the start and devise a plan to keep them, resulting in attracting a potential talent pool
- To maximise innovation, companies should actively construct teams with equal proportions of men and women, resulting in better performance.

Moving from commitment to action:

Women:

- Constitute a growing proportion of the shrinking talent pool
- Form a growing number of decision makers in healthcare
- Make 80% of all healthcare decisions
- Make three-quarters of all financial decisions at home
- Form a growing majority of advance degree recipients
- Form 70% of biological science degree holders
- Are Pfizer customers, the end-users of Pfizer products and Pfizer colleagues

How are Students and Young Entrepreneurs leveraging Technology and Social Media to promote a Sustainable Future?... was responded to by **Mr Abdullatif Al Sayegh**, Chief Executive Officer, Al Sayegh Media, by detailing the progress made in the integration of women and youth into the workforce and entrepreneurship in the UAE assisted by technology and social media:

Women in the UAE

- 66% of the federal government workforce are women
- 33% of women in the public sector are in senior management
- The Women’s Business Council has over 12,000 members
- Female entrepreneurs run 11,000 businesses
- Their total investment is close to AED 12 billion
- Women make up 37% of the banking and finance sector
- Over 70% of students at government colleges and universities are female
- The National Council is comprised of over 20% females
- There are four female Ministers

Success is simpler than most women fear!

Starting a Business in the UAE:

- There is a straightforward business start-up formula consisting of:
- Trade License and Registration Fee
- Corporate Branding
- Website
- Internet Connection
- Initial Funds: (Starting Capital)

If the business plan is good and unique, many government organisations will support it. (Khalifa Fund, Sheikh Mohammed Establishment, Ruwaad and others.)

- Government Support: 5% of total government projects are dedicated to SMEs
- Marketing Campaign: today’s digital and social platforms are free and reach the entire world:

There are 43 million Facebook users in the Middle East which constitutes 12% of Facebook users worldwide. The highest number of female usage of Facebook is

in the Middle East and the UAE leads Facebook adoption.

- There are 30 million Twitter users, 2 million of whom are in the UAE.
- Social Media are growing faster than any other media
- If you own a Smartphone, you can talk to the world.

Mr Al Sayegh concluded with the message:

If you can’t do it now, then it will never happen!



Left to right Mr Nayaz Qazi, Mr Abdullatif Al Sayegh, Ms Noha Hefny



Ms Tala Al-Hejailan, Legal Consultant, DLA Piper Middle East LLP

“Young people are using social networking to alter social dynamics.”

Ms Noha Hefny, External Communication & CSR Manager for Asia, Middle East & Africa Sector, PepsiCo, UAE highlighted the fact that youth and technology are an extremely powerful force and combination that can change the world. Young people are extremely powerful agents of change as the future of our planet rests with them but beyond the fact that they are the leaders of tomorrow, we have to ask ourselves why they are so powerful.

“If we look beyond demographics,” she said, “we will realise that often youth are the first to stand up for principles and against injustice.

They are idealistic and a powerful force for transformation.

They are driven by innovation, passion and disruptive ideas.

But more than any other generation they are the best at using social media. It is an integral part of their daily lives."

But it even goes beyond this. *"Young people are using social networking to alter social dynamics."*

Some leaders are more afraid of Twitter and Facebook than physical encounters because youth will simply go ahead and change the world around them, something that we've seen all too well in the region over the past year-and-a-half.

"Youth know how to organise themselves online and are using these tools to create deep social changes."

Modern smartphones, tablets and laptops allow them to be connected to the internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with non-stop access to information on any topic.

The empowerment of women through these new technologies has been one of the most positive results of the digital revolution.

The digital space is mostly open and democratic - women and men participate in debate and important initiatives side-by-side.

Women have more power and ability to influence and change the world than ever before, and more and more women are embracing the opportunities available through technology, such as online training and educational courses from the confines of their homes.

Ms Hefny finished by saying, *"I've always believed that together, even with only a few other dedicated people, we CAN make a difference... Let us seize the opportunity to network, share ideas and launch initiatives that promote peace, dialogue, tolerance, mutual understanding and development for all"*.

Ms Tala Al-Hejailan, Legal Consultant, DLA Piper Middle East LLP, Saudi Arabia addressed the subject of how social media are being used by students and young entrepreneurs to promote a sustainable future, by explaining the advantages of social networking:

How we use technology and social media for a better life

- Access to education (virtual learning)
- Easier access to job opportunities

- Networking and making contracts
- Sharing information to raise awareness
- Publicising opportunities

She then went on to look at a case study of how Saudi Women are using technology & social media:

- *Women are exposed to job opportunities and able to work from home*
- *Saudi women are earning degrees online*

Ms Al-Hejailan gave examples of how social media can be used to fulfil the requirements of **Corporate Social Responsibility**

HelpingHands KSA via Facebook

- Women and men can interact through social media to help make a change!
- Post pictures to show the reality
- Sponsor family updates
- Big Sis Big Bro Program: local orphanage
- Vintage Sale For HelpingHands KSA
- Arabnews online express opinions and thoughts on women's issues and social issues to help raise awareness.
- Social Media help to connect me with other women: looking for lawyers, looking for advice, looking to express ideas.

Mr Nayaz Qazi, Co-Founder and Chairman of The National Academy of Indian Payroll (NAIP) focused on more traditional issues pertaining to graduates progressing into the world of work.

Mr Qazi outlined a programme, with which he is involved, to develop leadership and multiculturalism. It originates from the UAE and is delivered in Scotland at Al Maktoum College of Higher Education in Dundee which was established in 2001 by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. His Highness is the Patron of the College and His Excellency Mirza Al Sayegh is the Chairman of the Board. The

Leadership Programme is The Academic Training Programme, (ATP) which is unique in content, inspiring leadership and multi-culturalism.

It is a female only course with most of the UAE universities participating and also some from Qatar, with 480 female students having participated so far.

Aimed at expanding student participants' intellectual skills and approaches to prepare them with the knowledge and skills required for active leadership whether social or academic for the 21st Century, formal assessment takes place and credits are provided to the students at their respective universities so that the outcomes and experiences do practically add value to their progress and development towards future leadership in UAE and Qatar.

CONCLUSION

Haifa Al Kaylani points to the future - the AIWF 2012 Programme: Developing the Next Generation of Arab Women Leaders...

"Now more than ever," said Mrs Al Kaylani, "we can see that gender equality and equality of economic opportunity for all citizens are key to successful, inclusive and sustainable development for the MENA region, and that Arab women are key engines of social progress and economic growth."

AIWF looks forward to working with its global partners to nurture the next generation of women leaders, examining enablers for entrepreneurial success for young business innovators in emerging economies, drawing on the international experiences of AIWF partners, sharing best practices and models for mentorship and development programmes that will truly effect change and ensure that the voices of women and youth are not marginalised.

In concluding her address, Mrs Al Kaylani said, *"We are meeting at a very critical time for the Arab region and also a time of great economic and financial concern for the world's economy at large... We have the wealth, talent and funds in the region to shift our priorities towards creating our own sustainable development by focusing on women and youth and enhancing collaboration."*

OUTCOME RECOMMENDATIONS

Following examination of the foregoing report of the AIWF Sharjah Conference, we have drawn up the following summary of recommendations to provide the motivation and emphasis for enhancing the AIWF advocacy for 2012 and ongoing into 2013:

Educational Opportunities And Training Programmes

- Promote educational and financial literacy courses & programmes to increase market skills to enable better access to employment.
- Update books and educational material at primary school level to counter gender stereotyping at early age.
- Elimination of illiteracy and provision of universal access to education to remain a top priority.
- Look at funding of large national universities (such as in Iraq and in Egypt) to produce quality education for large numbers of students.
- Encourage young people to train for skills needed in job market not their personal preferences.
- Assess abilities from early age to pre-determine and provide suitable curriculum for a person's potential.
- Substantial investment in education and link between education and business to create youth development meeting long term needs of the country.
- Innovative training programmes to add to achievement of graduate, master or business degrees.
- Special leadership training programmes to develop potential to be provided for young people.

Public Life And Public Policy

- Potential female candidates for election / appointment to positions in public and political life to be provided with targeted capacity – building and training initiatives.
- Raise media awareness of women's candidates' campaigns and initiatives and any success stories, whether national or international.
- Raise public & media awareness of the important role women play in society and economy.
- The Arab world should not import democracy but create its own through new concepts providing Arab, majority Muslim societies that are aligned with democratic ideals and palatable to the people.
- Pursue institutional and political reform that will confirm women's place in public life, their rights and their autonomy.
- Governments to reform legislation and governance that facilitates the access for women to positions of responsibility and power sharing.
- Give young people a say in their communities and policy decisions that affect their lives through youth parliaments and forums.
- Enactment of new laws to prevent gender discrimination and enforce existing legal frameworks.

Entrepreneurship And SMEs

- Create opportunities for women to further increase their work experience to positively impact on entrepreneurship and access to start-up finance through higher overall savings.
- Improve incentives for hiring women and for women to look for work.
- Support enabling environment through technological training, mentoring and infrastructure to promote female entrepreneurs' activities.

- Develop financial institutions to arrange easier access to business finance for women business owners (SMEs) and entrepreneurs.
- Women's forums and initiatives to provide business support, networking and promotion.
- Remove impediments to women's equal access to employment and trade.
- Seek to overcome the barriers imposed by traditional family and cultural responsibilities by supporting diversity and fair conditions in the workplace and care sharing schemes.
- Examine and expand the impact of social entrepreneurship.

Financial Resources, Economic And Institutional Reform

- Develop national and regional strategies and policies through use of better statistical information including aggregated data.
- Maintain emphasis on gender - responsive budgeting for accountable and transparent gender - oriented economic policy.
- Create legal framework for SMEs, specialised arbitration centres and issue an innovation law.
- Lessen restrictions on business to enhance the opportunities for youth's potential for development in the formal economy.
- Recognise the power of the social media and technology and resolve societal problems.

Partnership

- Create partnerships between labour and education government ministries to work with companies towards the recruitment of qualified workers.
- Develop a strong partnership for innovation between the public and private sectors to enable the Arab world to address future challenges.
- Activate roles of the private sector and civil society so that together they play a vital and pivotal role in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment to increase their inclusion levels in the labour and financial markets.
- Cooperation needed in planning, structuring and making nationals skilled and work-ready to address dependency on foreign labour in Arab market.
- Governments to bring education providers and businesses together to address mismatch in skills and meet the demands of the economy.
- Incentives to be provided through government and business cooperation to encourage youth to favour private sector roles in strategic industries thus reducing the preference for and burden on public sector employment.
- Help youth make the transition from education to work through partnership schemes between educational institutions, NGOs and business providing work experience and volunteer roles.
- Governments to create a coalition of companies, research centres, universities, think tanks, consultancies and institutions to develop and adopt a national or even a regional innovation system that will engender a mutually beneficial, technology-aware, innovative and knowledge – based economy.
- The public and private sector to work together to enhance youth employment through generation of internships, apprenticeships and trainee positions
- Governments to work with the private sector to promote the UN's Global Compact for businesses and the ILO principles on rights at work.

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

AIWF Global Corporate Benefactor Partner



AIWF Global Platinum Partners



Deutsche Bank



AIWF Global Diamond Partners



AIWF Institutional Partners



Institute of Directors

AIWF Global Communications Partner

