



AIWF NEWS

Arab International Women's Forum

المنتدى العربي الدولي للمرأة

Issue No: 34 March 2015 London

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Following on from the outstanding AIWF autumn programme of events held in the City of London, the Board of Directors of the Arab International Women's Forum have prepared a programme for 2015 which reaffirms AIWF's commitment to **Building Bridges, Building Business**, supported by its network of valued global partners whose indispensable contribution we greatly appreciate, to continue to act as an agent of change for women in the Arab region, encouraging them to greater leadership roles and to higher levels of responsibility in all sectors of business and the professions and public life.

This year AIWF is proud to partner with the International Bar Association, Legal Practice Division (IBA LPD) Initiative for Women Business Lawyers and the Arab Women's Legal Network as they embark on a new key initiative to host a Conference at the Kempinski Hotel, in Amman, Jordan on 7 September 2015 entitled **Jordanian Women in Legal Professions: Challenges and Opportunities**, aimed at assisting women commercial lawyers to increase their knowledge of international commercial law.

This collaboration involving AIWF, the IBA LPD and the Arab Women's Legal Network is the first of its kind and is designed to take forward the empowerment of women in commercial law throughout the Arab region.

The IBA LPD Initiative for Women Business Lawyers was developed at the request of women commercial lawyers based in Dubai with aspirations to increase their knowledge base of international commercial law and to enhance their awareness of global standards and trends in commercial practice. This initiative is planning events in 2015 in Africa and the Middle East to increase international commercial law knowledge for women business lawyers.

We are also planning a Get-Together in London for AIWF Partners, Members and Friends on 4 June this year to present our programme for 2015 and I look forward to welcoming many of you on this occasion. The venue in London is to be confirmed.

Meanwhile, I am pleased to share with you details of recent and forthcoming activities in our efforts to promote the work of AIWF:

I was privileged and delighted to attend an informal luncheon on 21 January this year, kindly given in my honour by Mrs Chiara Corazza, Managing Director, Greater Paris Investment Agency and distinguished AIWF Board Member, at the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry at its prestigious offices in Avenue Friedland in the heart of Paris to recognise my work towards the empowerment of women in the MENA region.

Distinguished guests invited by Mrs Corazza to this special occasion represented a cross-section of high profile women in French diplomatic, business and civil society.

On 5 March, I was accorded the privilege and pleasure of attending a lunch given in my honour by Mrs Guilda Navidi-Walker, a member of the Council of Ambassadors for The World Wildlife Fund – UK at the

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AIWF Get-Together Reception London

to be held 4 June 2015

6.30 - 8.30 pm

Venue to be confirmed

AIWF Conference in Partnership

With IBA/LPD & Arab Women's Legal Network

Jordanian Women in Legal Professions: Challenges and Opportunities

7 September 2015

in the Al-Reem Ballroom, Kempinski Hotel
Amman, Jordan

RAC in London with Arab Diplomats and women leaders in philanthropy and in civil society in the UK.

On 25 - 26 February this year, I was pleased to be able to accept an invitation to attend the Middle East Congress held in London by The Telegraph where influential speakers outlined their vision for investment into the Middle East and North Africa and demonstrated how a cohesive strategy across the Arab world would establish stability and drive economic growth. Of particular interest was a panel discussion entitled Developing and Training Business Skills for Women in the Arab World.

I am delighted, as AIWF Chairman, to accept an invitation to attend the Art for Tomorrow Conference, organised by the International New York Times taking place from 14 - 16 March in Doha, Qatar. 200 Invited guests representing the arts, public and private sectors, tourism experts, city planners and business developers will discuss the changing dynamics of art and architecture and their potential to transform people and places.

I look forward to attending the inaugural **Pearl Initiative and United Nations Global Compact Forum** for the Gulf Region which is to be held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai on 16 April 2015 at the Dubai World Trade Centre. AIWF signed an MOU in 2014 with its Institutional Partner, the Pearl Initiative, the GCC-based, private sector-led, not-for-profit organisation developed to promote best business practices in the Gulf Region for the purpose of supporting its research programme entitled **Women's Careers in the GCC: The CEO Agenda** to analyse company best practices and encourage the progression of women into Executive and Board roles. More findings in respect of this research programme appear later in this Newsletter.

The theme for this important one day Forum is **CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY MATTERS: Business Integrity and Value Creation Beyond 2015.**

Continued

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

The Forum will provide a platform for businesses, public sector institutions, UN organisations, civil society and other stakeholders to share experiences and explore effective ways of achieving greater levels of collaboration. A number of globally and regionally renowned thought leaders will be entering into open discussion on how embracing corporate accountability and integrity can drive sustainable economic growth and spur job creation across the region.

At the end of 2014, following on from the participation by a delegation of members of Sharjah Business Women Council, AIWF Global Platinum Partner, led by Chairperson HE Ameerah Binkaram, in the AIWF London Conference Programme which was held in October 2014, I am proud to report that there was substantial press coverage of these events in the Arab press: Al Khaleej, Al Itihad, Al Bayan and Gulf Today under the general heading of ***SBWC Promotes Women's Empowerment in the UK***.

I was pleased and proud to be featured in **Leaders Middle East** on 16 January this year as AIWF Chairman, under the headline, ***'A Strong Voice in Women's Arab Leadership'***. In the interview, I was given the opportunity of voicing AIWF's concerns regarding women's empowerment and entrepreneurship.

In the report of an interview with **Gulf Times** on 20 January 2015, entitled ***'Arab International Women's Founder calls for gender-neutral business and property laws'***, as AIWF Chairman I outlined the key issues which need to be addressed to enable women to participate to their full potential in the workforce across the MENA region. Details of these articles appear later in this Newsletter.

As AIWF Founder Chairman, I have accepted invitations to join the Advisory Board of **Global Thinkers Forum**, a think tank consisting of a global network of leaders that brings together pioneering minds to promote excellence in leadership, collaboration and understanding of a world in constant change; and also to become a Commissioner with the recently founded **Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance** flagship project undertaken jointly by The Hague Institute for Global Justice and The Stimson Center, which was officially launched on 21 November 2014 in Washington, DC. Co-chaired by former US Secretary of State and Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright and former Nigerian Foreign Minister and UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari, the Commission will release, in June 2015, a focused set of global policy and institutional reform recommendations in advance of the United Nations' 70th Anniversary Summit planned for September 2015 in New York.

2015 is a particularly significant year for governments to report to the United Nations on progress made towards the achievement of gender equality goals: implementation of the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** and the **Millennium Development Goals**.

AIWF has constantly, from its inception, advocated that equality for women and their full economic and political empowerment brings great benefit to their national economies, their communities and their families. The AIWF Board and our Global Partners have reaffirmed their commitment in 2015 and in the post-2015 agenda to promoting women's full empowerment in all sectors of business and the professions, public life and civil society for, without more women in politics, business, finance and civil society, playing significant roles in shaping the new Arab future, there will never be real, lasting and sustainable empowerment for women and youth in the MENA region.



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

AIWF EMBARKS ON A NEW KEY INITIATIVE TO HOST CONFERENCE IN JORDAN:

WOMEN IN LEGAL PROFESSIONS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In Partnership with the International Bar Association Legal Practice Division (IBA LPD) Women Business Lawyers Initiative and the Arab Women's Legal Network

AIWF is proud to partner with the International Bar Association, Legal Practice Division (IBA LPD) Initiative for Women Business Lawyers and the Arab Women's Legal Network as they embark on a new key initiative to host a Conference at the Kempinski Hotel, in Amman, Jordan on 7 September 2015 entitled ***Jordanian Women in Legal Professions: Challenges and Opportunities***, aimed at assisting women commercial lawyers to increase their knowledge of international commercial law.

This collaboration involving AIWF, the IBA LPD and the Arab Women's Legal Network is the first of its kind and is designed to take forward the empowerment of women in commercial law throughout the Arab region.

The International Bar Association (IBA), established in 1947, is the world's leading organisation of international legal practitioners, bar associations and law societies. The IBA influences the development of international law reform and shapes the future of the legal profession throughout the world.

The Association has a membership of 55,000 individual lawyers and 195 bar associations and law societies spanning all continents, and has considerable experience in providing assistance to the global legal community.

The IBA LPD Initiative for Women Business Lawyers was developed at the request of women commercial lawyers based in Dubai with aspirations to increase their knowledge base of international commercial law and to enhance their awareness of global standards and trends in commercial practice.

IBA LPD Council Member, Sylvia Khatcherian, took the opportunity at the 2011 IBA Annual Conference held in Dubai to meet with these lawyers and explore how the IBA could assist.

Since those early conversations, the IBA has visited Kuwait City and Amman, and re-visited Dubai to gain greater understanding of what would be valuable. Based on these focus groups, the IBA was able to develop the inaugural programme, which took place in Dubai, UAE on 4-5 March 2014.

The event was co-chaired by Hoda Barakat (Hoda Barakat Legal Consultancy); Richard Briggs (Hadeef & Partners; Advisory Board Member, IBA Arab Regional Forum) and Sadiq Jafar (Hadeef & Partners; Chair, IBA Arab Regional Forum). High level speakers discussed a series of relevant and timely topics, including specialisations, networking, law firm management and many more. The programme was very well received with over a 100 delegates attending.

Following on from the inaugural programme, the IBA has made the decision to offer this Initiative to jurisdictions both in the Middle East and Africa and looks forward to the inaugural African programme taking place in Zambia later this year.

Established in 2005, the objectives of the **Arab Women's Legal Network** are to:

- Improve the capacity of Arab women working in the legal profession and enhance their legal knowledge
- Develop cooperation among women working in the legal profession
- Support future generations of women working in the legal profession
- Increase awareness regarding women's rights at all levels
- Strengthen the status of women working in the legal profession through networking, exchanging experience and advocacy
- Supporting efforts to guarantee women's rights through international agreements and national laws
- Participate in law reform at the regional and national level

The aim of this Conference is to bring together eminent guest speakers and Arab and international women business lawyers to help inform and advise Arab women business lawyers in such fields as:

- Practice areas and specialisations
- How to access and be engaged in the high level decision-making process
- Effective networking and making connections
- Marketing and business development
- Law firm management
- Global standards in compliance and risk management

AIWF, the IBA LPD and the Arab Women's Legal Network very much look forward to welcoming participants to this ground-breaking event in Amman, Jordan.

AIWF CHAIRMAN HAIFA AL KAYLANI HONoured AT PARIS LUNCHEON



Mrs Chiara Corazza, MD Greater Paris Investment Agency & AIWF Board Member addressing invited guests at the luncheon held in Paris in honour of Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, AIWF Chairman

On 21 January this year, an informal luncheon was given by Mrs Chiara Corazza, Managing Director, Greater Paris Investment Agency and distinguished AIWF Board Member at the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry at its prestigious offices in Avenue Friedland in the heart of Paris to honour Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani, AIWF's Founder Chairman and to recognise her work towards the empowerment of women in the MENA region.

This event, designed also for mutual exchange and bridge building, followed on from AIWF's resoundingly successful 2009 Annual Conference, entitled **From Partnership to Prosperity: Women in the Arab World**,

France and the International Community held in partnership with the Greater Paris Investment Agency, in association with Mrs Chiara Corazza as its Managing Director; this Conference took place as a result of an official invitation by Her Excellency Christine Lagarde, then Minister for the Economy, Industry and Employment, France before her appointment as Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund.

Distinguished guests invited by Mrs Corazza to this special occasion represented a cross-section of French diplomatic, business and civil society, including Ambassadors for Georgia, Poland, Slovenia, Denmark, Montenegro, and Sweden, Partners in Consultancies, Chairmen and Directors working in the French Atomic Energy Authority, the French Data Protection Authority, the French Finance Ministry and senior representatives of private banking, NGOs and the private sector.

Mrs Chiara Corazza welcomed guests and introduced Haifa Al Kaylani as Founder Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, an organisation which has received major recognition in the Arab world and internationally as a powerful advocate of women in business for the advancement of women, and for its growing role to promote and advance legislative rights for the participation of Arab women. AIWF places great strategic importance on the development of its global networks and the establishment of key alliances with multinational corporations across all sectors who share the AIWF mission, are deeply engaged in the Arab region and uphold strong diversity policies that enhance the recruitment, training and development of women as key contributors to the Arab human capital pool.



Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani addressing invited guests at the luncheon held in Paris in her honour.

Mrs Al Kaylani addressed guests, speaking of her work in AIWF which was in its second decade of fulfilling its mission of **Building Bridges, Building Business** and had been an agent of change for women in the Arab region, encouraging their potential to take greater leadership roles and reach higher levels of responsibility in all sectors of business, public life and in civil society while at the same time contributing to the progress and prosperity of their families and communities.

With regard to the future, AIWF and its Partners recognise that its role is more important than ever and has widened its remit to connect women in the Arab world with women in the other emerging economies ; the future direction of AIWF will be on strengthening its focus on the importance of education, leadership training, capacity building and self-development for women and youth and urging governments and the private sector to work together to achieve much needed job creation initiatives.

Participants at the luncheon then introduced themselves and a mutual exchange of ideas took place around the table on the barriers and obstacles encountered and the role of women in business and public life.

Chiara Corazza
Managing Director
Greater Paris Investment Agency
AIWF Board Member

AIWF CHAIRMAN JOINS COMMISSION ON GLOBAL SECURITY, JUSTICE AND GOVERNANCE

Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani has become a Commissioner with the recently founded Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance.

The Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, a flagship project undertaken jointly by The Hague Institute for Global Justice and The Stimson Center, was officially launched on 21 November 2014 in Washington, DC. Co-chaired by former US Secretary of State and Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright and former Nigerian Foreign Minister and UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, the Commission will release, in June 2015, a focused set of global policy and institutional reform recommendations, in advance of the United Nations' 70th Anniversary Summit planned for September 2015 in New York.



Commissioners of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance from L to R: Dr Lloyd Axworthy, Chancellor of St. Paul's University, Waterloo, Ontario; Professor Yoriko Kawaguchi, Former Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Japan on Foreign Affairs; Haifa Al Kaylani, Founder Chairman AIWF; Ellen Laipson, President & CEO, Stimson, Co-Chair Madeleine Albright, 64th Secretary of State of the USA; Co-Chair Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Dr Abiodun Williams, 1st President of the Hague Institute for Global Justice, Ambassador Shyam Saran, Former Foreign Secretary of India and Professor Jose Antonio Ocampo, Director Economic & Political Development Concentration in the School of International & Public Affairs at Columbia University.

Among the fifteen geographically diverse Commissioners are included former Japanese Foreign and Environment Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, former Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, the founder of the Indonesian Environmental Forum Erna Witoelar, and AIWF's own Haifa Al Kaylani.

The project is designed to start a conversation in the tradition of the 1995 Commission on Global Governance and 2004 High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and will consider new frameworks for collective action on critical issues such as stage fragility, the global e-economy, and the anticipated effects of climate change on peoples' lives and livelihoods. Two key messages from the Commission's inaugural meeting in Washington were: *first*, global institutions are in urgent need of reform, particularly if they are to harness the resources and political support not just of states but of a diverse range of non-state actors, from business to civil society; *second*, it is critical for the Commission to mobilise and sustain support for its recommendations and the principles underpinning them over several years.

In addition to commissioning more than twenty background papers, the team behind the project held recent consultations in The Hague (business and human security), New Delhi (cyber-governance and security), Lima (climate governance), New York (UN Member States and Expert Consultations), and at the Munich Security Conference (fragile and conflict-affected states) and an International Studies Association Annual Meeting (global security, justice, and UN reform). These are summarised on the website and several on-line expert consultations are also underway.

Prior to the global launch of the report in mid-June in The Hague, the "City of Peace and Justice", the Commission

will deliberate again, on 1 April 2015, in New York. It is hoped that the Commission's diagnosis of global problems and ideas on a way forward will help to initiate and sustain a policy dialogue on innovations towards a global governance architecture commensurate with today's transnational challenges. The work of the Commission can be followed online on its website and on Twitter using the handle @BetterGlobalGov and the hashtag #SecJustGov.

Dr Richard Ponzio
Head of Global Governance
The Hague Institute

THE ARAB INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM PARTNERS WITH THE GLOBAL FUND TO JOIN CAMPAIGN AGAINST AIDS, TB AND MALARIA

AIDS, TB and malaria are the world's three greatest preventable killers. The most recent annual statistics show that AIDS and tuberculosis each claimed 1.5 million lives, while close to 600,000 died from malaria.

The statistics are horrendous, and behind them are stories of lives disrupted and traumatised; of mothers stricken with grief as they watch their toddler succumb to violent seizure, after something as apparently innocuous as a mosquito bite; or of boys growing up without fathers. Fathers whose lives were cut short, ending in suffering because they couldn't access basic treatment for tuberculosis.

The world can do better. And the good news is that we are making significant progress.

Since the turn of the century, the annual number of malaria deaths has halved. And since a peak in 2005, AIDS-related deaths have dropped by more than one-third. Since 1990, there has been a 45% decline in the tuberculosis mortality rate.

The challenge now is maintaining the momentum. This generation could have the privilege of ending three epidemics. We have an historic opportunity. Tuberculosis and malaria are diseases that have plagued the world for thousands of years.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria began work in 2002. Since then it has mobilised money to chase down disease and defeat it in some of the world's most difficult corners. The Global Fund has worked in more than 140 countries supporting programmes to put 7.3 million people on anti-retroviral HIV therapy, distribute 450 million insecticide treated mosquito nets and test and treat 12.3 million people for tuberculosis.

AIWF will partner with the Global Fund in a new push to mobilise the Arab world's energy and attention to help end the three epidemics. Under a new three-year partnership, the two organisations will aim to save more lives affected by the three diseases in Arab countries.

We will build greater awareness of the diseases through communication campaigns and will engage influential Arab leaders through forums, roundtables and panel discussions. The agreement also aims to build a strong relationship with the private sector. This will be achieved by finding investment opportunities for Arab philanthropists and just as importantly, seeking insight and advice from key private sector leaders who can help stretch Global Fund resources further.

The initial focus of the partnership will be stepping up the fight against disease in Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen.

We expect to stage our first event in the next three months.

Patrick Silborn
Head of Private Sector Engagement

Antonello Barbaro
Portfolio Manager
External Relations, Private Sector
The Global Fund

AIWF MEMBERS HONOURED BY THE LEBANESE COUNCIL OF WOMEN



Mrs Jamal Hermes-Ghibril, President of The Lebanese Council for Women with Mrs Lama Salam, wife of Lebanese Prime Minister, Mrs Randa Berri, wife of the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and three recipients of the Awards present, Mrs Mona Bou Azza Bawarchi, Mrs Hanan Akram Saab and Mrs Caroline Fattal, and LCW Members

On 16 January, 2015, against the magnificent backdrop of the prestigious Phoenicia Hotel in Beirut, the Lebanese Council for Women organised its annual lunch, gathering in the presence of numerous political and civil personalities including Mrs Lama Salam, wife of the Lebanese Prime Minister and also an educational counsellor and activist for a number of NGOs in Lebanon; Mrs Randa Berri, wife of the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and Chairperson of the Berri Foundation together with Women MPs and many dignitaries.

Members were delighted that Mrs Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum, was able to be among the very special guests on that day.

The Lebanese Council for Women (LCW) is a non-governmental organisation composed of 160 women's and mixed associations from all regions of Lebanon. These associations are licensed by the Lebanese government and are active in the healthcare, rehabilitation, educational, environmental and family organisation sectors.

The objectives of the LCW are:

- To work on consolidating national reconciliation, coexistence, unity, sovereignty, an independent and democratic Lebanon
- To struggle for the establishment of a Lebanese society where all citizens are equal (women and men) in rights and obligations, and have equal opportunities
- To broaden the scope of participation in women's committees and civil organisations to serve women's issues
- To seek to free Lebanese legislation of unfair provisions regarding women and to combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women
- To follow up the implementation of laws and conventions enabling women to exercise their human rights at the local, regional and international levels
- To network and interact with local, Arab, regional and international organisations concerned with women's issues
- To work on building the capacity of women and involving them in decision-making on the economic, political, social and educational fronts
- To support women's campaigns towards achieving national and international peace

- To encourage cooperation with the younger generations to support the demands of the women's movement

The causes that the LCW supports are critical and key to a positive evolution of Lebanese society.

On this occasion, four members were honoured by the Council and trophies were presented: Mrs Mona Bou Azza Bawarchi, Dr Rana El Hejje Kebbe (via Skype from the United States), Mrs Hanan Akram Saab, Founder, Co-Owner and Managing Director, Pharmamed and Board Member of the Arab International Women's Forum and Mrs Caroline Fakhoury Fattal, Board Member & Senior Vice President of Fattal Group, Managing Partner of Praesta Middle East, an executive coaching firm and Member of the Arab International Women's Forum.

Upon receipt of her award Mrs Caroline Fattal Fakhoury said:

"I would like to thank the Lebanese Council of women and Mrs Jamal Hermes-Ghibril in particular for handing over this recognition to me and for organising such a great event.

It is an honour to be here and to receive this trophy in front of an audience of such esteemed and successful ladies, all operating for the higher good of Lebanon and its community.

I dedicate this award to my family and friends and to my team members who help me on a daily basis to achieve my business objectives at Fattal Group.

Also, I would like to extend my deepest congratulations to all other ladies honoured today who are great achievers in their own right.

Women are the pillars of our society and I am a true believer that without their precious contribution, nothing can be achieved."

Caroline Fattal Fakhoury

Board Member & Senior Vice President of Fattal Group

Managing Partner of Praesta Middle East

AIWF Member

CONGRATULATIONS TO AIWF MEMBER HE MAHA ALI

**The Chairman,
Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani,
Members of the Board & Members of AIWF**

congratulate AIWF Member

**HE Maha Ali
on her appointment as
Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply
in the Government of
the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.**

**The government reshuffle which gave rise to
HE Maha Ali's appointment raised the number
of women in the Jordanian Cabinet to five.**

AIWF MARKS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH A MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER CHAIRMAN, HAIFA FAHOUM AL KAYLANI

Make it Happen is the theme of this year's International Women's Day which has been celebrated globally on 8 March every year since 1975 when it was first officially marked by the United Nations (UN).

International Women's Day first came into being at the turn of the twentieth century in North America and across Europe from the activities of labour movements. The international women's movement has adopted the occasion in developed and developing countries alike to build support for women's rights and participation in the political and economic life of their nations.

Today, only one in five parliamentarians is a woman. Approximately 50 per cent of women worldwide are in paid employment, an increase from 40 per cent more than 20 years ago, with wage inequality persistent. At the present rate of progress, it will take 81 years for women to achieve parity in employment. The pandemic of violence against women and girls affects one in three women worldwide, despite being recognised as a gross human rights violation and a barrier to global development.

2015 is a particularly important year in terms of human development, ie poverty eradication, health, education, gender equality, environmental sustainability and the formation of a global partnership for development:

- 2015 is the year by which all 189 (now 193) United Nations member states, and at least 23 international organisations, committed to help achieve the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**: eight international development goals, one of which is to *promote gender equality and empower women*. These MDGs were identified as a result of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.
- 2015 also marks the 20th anniversary of the **UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, which is the negotiated outcome of the UN Fourth World Conference held in China in 1995 and an historic roadmap that sets the agenda for the realisation of women's rights. Governments and activists are meeting this month at the UN Headquarters in New York to review the progress of national governments in implementing the Platform for Action.

The UN theme for International Women's Day 2015 is:

"Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture it!"

AIWF has constantly, from its inception, advocated that equality for women and their full economic and political empowerment brings great benefit to society as a whole and is in full agreement with UN **Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon** when he says:

'Countries with more gender equality have better economic growth. Companies with more women leaders perform better. Peace agreements that include women are more durable. Parliaments with more women enact more legislation on key social issues such as health, education, anti-discrimination and child support. The evidence is clear: equality for women means progress for all.'

The Arab world marks and celebrates **International Women's Day** on 8 March but now also has its own **Arab**

Women's Day on 1 February each year which is designed to celebrate the achievements of Arab women and to advocate for their rights and enhance their ability to participate in the economy.

The Gulf Daily News newspaper this year marked **Arab Women's Day** with its coverage of Bahrain's official celebration of this annual occasion, reporting on the Shura Council congratulating Bahraini and Arab women on their vital contribution to their countries' development efforts and featuring the Beijing Platform for Action in the same article, thereby linking it to the aims and objectives of **International Women's Day**.

AIWF has received international recognition in the Arab world and internationally as a powerful advocate of women in business for the advancement of women, and its growing role to promote and advance legislative rights for the participation of Arab women has been distinguished by collaboration with, among others, the League of Arab States, the European Commission and European Parliament, United Nations organisations and agencies, the World Bank, the MENA-OECD Investment Programme, women's business councils in the Arab States, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, International Chambers of Commerce and many globally recognised institutes of higher and further education.

Achieving the advancement of women's participation in the political, economic and social spheres in the Arab world requires interventions at all levels, from reform of traditional legal and justice systems to the creation of a conducive policy environment based on international women's rights, norms and instruments, such as the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

In the coming year, AIWF will have a new focus on key health issues which affect all in the Arab region. Law will also feature prominently with AIWF collaborating with the International Bar Association on a conference in Jordan on *Arab Women in the Law*. Our core work remains constant with initiatives to facilitate job creation, education, leadership training, capacity building and development for women throughout the Arab region through an Arab/International framework.

On International Women's Day this year, I would like, on behalf of the Board, Members and Global Partners of the Arab International Women's Forum, to recognise and celebrate the enormous contribution of women all over the world to advancing the debate on women's empowerment in the economic, social and political spheres.

Without more women in politics, business, finance and civil society, playing significant roles in shaping the new Arab future, there will never be real, lasting and sustainable empowerment for women and youth in the MENA region. AIWF is honoured and proud to be part of the process of shaping the future of the Arab world and pays tribute to those women at grass roots level, making unprecedented contributions to national and regional economic, political and social decisions in the quest for better opportunities for all Arab women to empower themselves, their families and their communities.

Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani
Chairman



CSW59/BEIJING+20 (2015)

This year, the UN Commission on the Status of Women is marking the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women. AIWF Board Member Sylvia Perry reports on CSW 59.

The **Commission on the Status of Women** (CSW or UNCSCW), founded in 1947 is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the main UN organs within the United Nations. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

The fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women is taking place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9 to 20 March this year. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from all regions of the world are attending the session.

Mrs Sylvia Perry, AIWF Founder Board Member and Former President of Business and Professional Women International (BPW International) is attending the Commission in this important year which marks the 20th anniversary of the **UN Fourth World Conference on Women** held in Beijing, China in September 1995 at which she was also present as Regional Coordinator for Europe, representing BPW International.

Themes

The main focus of the CSW59 is on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The session will also address opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.

In the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, twelve Critical Areas of Concern were identified: Women and Poverty, Education and Training of Women, Women and Health, Violence against Women and Girls, Women and Armed Conflict, Women and the Economy, Women in Power and Decision making, Institutional Mechanisms for Women, Human Rights of Women, Women and the Media, Women and the Environment and The Girl Child and governments are systematically asked to report their progress in implementing the Platform for Action against those critical areas.

ENSURING EDUCATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN AND THE POST-2015 AGENDA - AIWF BOARD MEMBER SPEAKS IN NEW YORK

Education in all its forms is integral to the post-2015 agenda. All girls and women should be able to access quality secondary and tertiary education. Professional, vocational, entrepreneurship and other non-traditional types of learning that extend beyond formal institutions and sectors must be provided – lifelong – to girls and women, to ensure that they can take their rightful place in economies and thus improve the lives of families, communities and countries.

Meeting in New York for CSW 59, five international women's organisations which are affiliated under the aegis of Project Five - 0 (International Council of Women, BPW International, International Federation of University Women, Soroptimist International and Zonta International) discussed the inclusion of education and economic empowerment for girls and women in the post-2015 agenda. Representing the voice of tens of thousands of women worldwide, a member of each organisation gave their perspective for audience discussion.

Sylvia Perry, AIWF Board Member and author of 'Empowering Women Worldwide' (*The History of Project Five – 0*) presented her perspective "Speaking in favour of girls and women with one voice". She identified the significant contribution made in providing education and vocational training programmes in rural and urban areas of the developing world, a unique feat of collaborative effort by a group of like-minded women's organisations.

Throughout 35 years of collaboration, the five international presidents have used their business and professional expertise to help women in the developing world become achievers in employment and their national economies.

NEWS FROM AIWF MEMBER DALA GHANDOUR ON HER WORK IN MEDIATION

The EUROMEDIATION operation underlined the importance of commercial mediation, the urgency of having a law regarding mediation in Lebanon and to lobby towards it, and also more coordination and network within the mediation centers, especially in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The operation EUROMEDIATION consisted of a three-day intensive awareness campaign on 24, 25 and 26 February 2015 about commercial mediation in Lebanon.

Mediation is an Alternative Dispute Resolution process that helps the business community settle commercial disputes without resorting to long and expensive judicial process.

Mediation is a flexible process conducted confidentially in which a neutral person - the mediator - actively assists parties in working towards a negotiated agreement of a dispute, with the parties in ultimate control of

*"For women's leadership to thrive, and for change to happen, all of us need greater courage and decisiveness"
- UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Ngcuka*

the decision to settle and be bound by the terms of resolution written and signed.

The evolution of commercial mediation was presented with a comparative approach between Lebanon, France and Europe. The international standard that must be shared with mediators was discussed: ethics and training. Ethics would ensure the confidentiality, independence and neutrality of the mediation process and the proper training would empower the mediator with the skills needed to go through the relationships, process and content of mediation.

The first day conference was targeted at the legal world at the Beirut Bar Association where the President of the Bar Mr Georges Jreige was represented and Former President of the Bar Mrs Amal Haddad was attending with Lebanese lawyers.

The second day was a full-day dedicated workshop for the mediators of the Lebanese Mediation Center (LMC) at the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount-Lebanon (CCIA-BML); where they explored deadlock situations that occur in the mediation process.

The third day at the CCIA-BML was targeted at the business community in Lebanon, where mainly banking, insurance and construction sectors were represented in the presence of the Director General of the Ministry of Justice Judge Mayssam Noueiri.

DALA GHANDOUR

Lawyer-Mediator

*Consultant for the Lebanese Mediation Center
at the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
of Beirut and Mount-Lebanon, AIWF Member*

UK GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CSW59

The UK's objectives for a good outcome for CSW include:

- Achieve a strong **Political Declaration** that publicly reaffirms commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and calls for a strong and explicit commitment to gender equality and the human rights of women and girls in the post-2015 framework. Ensure the document does not include regressive language to roll back on progress;
- Ensure that the **Working Method Resolution** reaffirms CSW as the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the empowerment and the human rights of women and girls and that it is fit for purpose post 2015.

Ensuring that women and girls were at the heart of the post-2015 development goals was also a main topic of discussion at an EU High Level Gender Meeting held in Riga, Latvia. The UK reiterated its commitment to a stand-alone goal on gender equality and the mainstreaming of gender across the goals; and its willingness to continue working with other EU states to achieve this.

Sylvia G Perry

AIWF Founder Board Member

*Former President of Business and Professional Women
International (BPW International)*

TOWARDS JUSTICE AND EQUALITY FOR WOMEN IN THE ARAB REGION

*Report on United Nations Economic and Social Commission
for Western Asia Arab High Level Conference on Beijing +
20 attended by AIWF Board Member Mrs Hanan Saab of
Lebanon.*

*"Towards Justice and Equality for Women in the Arab
Region" was the title of the Arab High Level Conference on
Beijing+20, which I was delegated by AIWF to participate*

in on 2 - 3 February 2015 in Cairo, Egypt.

This conference was attended by some ministers from the Arab World as well as representatives of Arab Member States and other stakeholders: policy-makers, experts, national women's machineries, members of civil society, international and regional organisations, and United Nations agencies.

The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) based in New York will hold its 59th dedicated Session, which is held every five years, in March 2015 on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Furthermore, the UN regional commissions, including the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), will be preparing reports based on the national reviews completed in their respective regions over the course of 2014. These national as well as the regional reports will contribute to the Secretary General's Global Review Report on Beijing+20 to be submitted to the upcoming session of the UN General Assembly.

The meeting was opened with remarks by Mr Nabil Al-Arabi, Secretary-General of LAS, Ms Rima Khalaf, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA and Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women.

An outstanding keynote speech was presented by the distinguished Arab actress Nidal Al Ahskar, which was an outcry to the Arab states protesting discrimination, terrorism, and outrage over the religious conflict, calling for an immediate action and pledging collective action to counteract the atrocities and acts against all human rights.

Each representative shared a report of progress over the past twenty years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration highlighting the achievements of the country. It is worthwhile mentioning that all attendees committed to pursue the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action regarding the 12 areas of concern listed earlier in this article.

The conference hosted interactive discussions between the member states, experts and NGOs that provided their vision on moving forward. A good part of the interaction focused on the imminent problem of refugees and it was evident that violence against women in all its forms was a main concern for all participants with the means to combat such acts in particular within the areas of prevailing turmoil mainly Syria, Iraq, Libya and to a lesser extent the other countries neighboring the areas of conflict. Some discussions also focused on the current struggle of women pursuant to the Arab Spring.

A privately held session was conducted by the representatives of NGOs, who drafted a letter to the conference which included their outlook and recommendations for going forward. While it was understood that the tragic situation of women in areas of turmoil merits focus, immediate attention and an action plan, AIWF intervention focused on women's empowerment in the economy, and the need to build on the gains that women achieved in education across the MENA. These are the low hanging fruits that should be channelled to participate in the workforce. This along with job creation for the young will achieve economic growth and prosperity, which are the means to counteract poverty, this being one of the main drivers for extremism, violence and armed conflict. An action plan is highly recommended at this stage to accommodate such objectives.

The final discussion points that were agreed upon were collated in a final report of 77 pages by the ESCWA on their web page; this will be forwarded to the UN conference.

Hanan Akram Saab

*Founder, Co-Owner & Managing Director, Pharmamed
AIWF Board Member*

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

AIWF Global Corporate Benefactor Partner



AIWF Global Platinum Partners



AIWF Global Diamond Partners



AIWF Institutional Partners



AIWF Global Communications Partner



AIWF CHAIRMAN APPOINTED TO ADVISORY BOARD OF GLOBAL THINKERS FORUM

Having been nominated for the GTF 2014 Award for Excellence in Life in recognition of her 'exceptional work for Arab women and her commitment to opening new pathways for Arab women worldwide', Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Chairman of AIWF, has been appointed to the Advisory Board of the Global Thinkers Forum.

Global Thinkers Forum (GTF) is a think tank consisting of a global network of leaders that brings together pioneering minds to promote excellence in leadership, collaboration and understanding of a world in constant change. The GTF community is committed to creating a new generation of exceptional leaders and providing space for high-level networking, knowledge exchange, positive change and business.

The strategic GTF mission is to help breed a new generation of leaders by effectively harnessing the power of social and human networks through listening, filtering and processing information and creating innovative approaches for forward thinking in the realms of Governance, Community Development, Entrepreneurship, Business, Social Transformation and Ethics.

In its Five-Year Action Agenda 2012 - 2016, Global Thinkers Forum has prioritised the topics and issues that form its five-year action agenda:

Leadership; Women; Youth; Entrepreneurship; Media; Cross-cultural Understanding; Focus on Regional Agenda: Arab World, Africa & Asia; Excellence and Humanitarian Work.

Global Thinkers Forum launched under the patronage of Queen Rania Al Abdullah of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

AN INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN IN PARLIAMENTS GLOBAL FORUM

Mrs Ida Beerhalter, Co-Head of IOME, a Multi Single Family Office & Private Investment Partnership in Saudi Arabia is also Senior Advisor to Women in Parliaments, an organisation committed to forging links between women parliamentarians.

I am delighted to have this chance to introduce **Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP)** to members of the AIWF. Like the AIWF, we are an independent, international and not-for-profit organisation, specifically committed to forging links between women parliamentarians, no matter what their political affiliation, from national parliaments across the world, including the European Parliament.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, there are now around 9000 women parliamentarians worldwide. WIP is the only existing global network, with the aim of highlighting and connecting the untapped resource of women politicians. WIP fosters the crucial open-minded and personal exchange amongst their members to inspire them and through them their parliaments and societies to find new pathways and innovative solutions to address the pressing national and global challenges that they face. There is, I think, a very real imperative in all this. To achieve and sustain a broad societal backing, be an accepted authority and, thereby, have a true and solid legitimacy, political decision-making bodies - irrespective of their underlying selection processes

- must be able to establish and sustain an ongoing, dynamic interaction inside and between societies. They must have a unique perspective on and must truly care about the issues that are relevant to people on a day-to-day basis to develop and implement solutions which balance legitimate interests and protect and nurture individual and general advancement.

Endorsing WIP's mission is an Advisory Board of outstanding breadth of experience, from civil society to the private sector and academia. Among its number are such eminent figures as Kathy Calvin, H. E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, Mo Ibrahim, Muhammad Yunus and José Manuel Barroso. They oversee all our initiatives, including the strategy for connecting women parliamentarians through the hosting of numerous international events.

These events provide the platform not only of promoting the face-to-face interaction and communication for women in politics and beyond throughout the world, but also of creating a vibrant forum in which key issues can be discussed and inter-cultural understanding is fostered. For example, on April 12-13 this year, the WIP will be taking part in a session on Gender Equality at the World Bank/IMF Global Parliamentary Conference in Washington.

Our flagship Annual Summit, to be held in Addis Ababa from March 23-25 and co-hosted with the African Union, is on the theme of "New Leaderships for Global Challenges." Women parliamentarians from around the globe will meet to discuss the most pressing issues faced by societies and women decision-makers today.

WIP's prominent role in the ongoing debate over genuine gender inclusiveness in global parliamentary politics is recognised by our being partnered by such leading international institutions as the European Union, the OECD, United Nations and the World Bank, all of whom will provide Working Sessions for participants at the summit. It is with great pleasure that WIP is also able to announce its new partnership with Microsoft.

If you would like to find out more about WIP's mission, its activities and how you can challenge, inspire and support us, I would be very happy to hear from you via ida@womeninparliaments.org.

Ida Beerhalter,
Senior Advisor WIP

BUILDING BRIDGES CATALYSING CHANGE Nina Magazine a community for Iraqi women everywhere

An article by Madeleine White, capacity building specialist and co-founder of Nina Magazine

Last week's Middle East Congress held in London, cited the region's richest oil resources as belonging to Iraq. I would argue strongly that in order to tap these amazing reserves another form of resource needs to be tapped also - that of its people. At the moment 50% of these reserves are not engaging within the country's economic activity. Less than 1% of managers in Iraq are women, just 17% of women are engaged as entrepreneurs or employees.

The AIWF has been a trailblazing organisation, recognised globally for creating an entirely new approach to nation building. As stated so powerfully by Chairman Haifa Al Kaylani:

"The Arab world needs to optimise its richest asset

– its human capital – and count women and youth among its vital resources if it is to achieve sustainable growth and more stable and prosperous communities”.

With this clarion call to action I am delighted to be presenting a project to you that is continually inspired by the reach and activities of the AIWF. Launched last June in Iraq as well as England and Sweden, Nina is a bilingual women's economic empowerment magazine that has been created to catalyse economic growth by allowing Iraqi women everywhere to be agents of change. Nina is published by the Private Sector Development Centre (PSDC) an Iraqi NGO. The World Bank funded the first issue and SIDA (via Chamber Trade Sweden) has contributed towards funding for 2015. Our users number many thousands, with 68% on our English website, and 82% on our Arabic site, coming from inside Iraq. We also have nearly 15,000 likes on FaceBook and are now regularly communicating with nearly 1000 registered users.

Nina is focused on building a positive environment women are able to participate in, whilst inspiring men to be part of the dialogue and follow-through also. In short, Nina is an exciting community which is connecting women and men who want to help entrepreneurial women in Iraq and beyond to unleash their potential and flourish in the marketplace and society. An increasing number of corporate volunteers are supporting as contributors; writing articles focused on empowerment journeys and recommendations such as Accenture's Judith Jackson piece Gender as Strength.

Says Nina board member and CEO of Chamber Trade Sweden Charlotte Kalin:

“As Nina has developed over the last few months it has become clear that it offers a forum for women globally to share experience, strength and hope with each other as well as direct business opportunity. Chamber Trade Sweden and many of our international partners as well as Nina partners such as Microsoft's Aspire Women use Nina as a place to connect and do business.”

A recent feature we published around how to publish a children's book, led to the author being approached by an Iraqi publishing house.

In hard business terms, there is an important case to be made also. Nina aligns export opportunities and trade links. Positive reach and corporate brand image is also strongly supported as shown by this first person account story for Nina from GE's Noor, the female manager of GE's healthcare service centre in Iraq. As well as providing a unique opportunity to link corporate social responsibility (CSR) and marketing budget, Nina is able to communicate best practice for equal opportunities within the workplace and indeed within the supply chain.

By creating a positive economic environment women can contribute to, the wider social and physical infrastructure of a country is impacted also (in terms of security and an effective civil society for example). There is a precedent for this. In Northern Ireland the role of the women's coalition in bringing the Good Friday agreement to the table is, for example, globally cited as an example of women as peacemaker and nation builders. Fifteen years on, political and social stability has been the result.

Because we believe that Iraq has the potential to do the same, Nina is currently in discussion with organisations in Northern Ireland to build on opportunities of knowledge share and awareness. This of course comes back full circle to

the aims of the AIWF impacting change through community engagement and inspiring the Arab global community through shared information, leveraging the power of women via a platform that drives economic change.

I very much hope that you will join the Nina community also, making your voice heard and your presence felt. So, get involved, register your business, share your story and make connections (or even help to fund us!) - at www.nina-iraq.com.

Madeleine White

*Capacity Building Specialist
& Editor-in-Chief, nina-iraq.com*

UPDATE FROM AIWF INSTITUTIONAL PARTNER – THE PEARL INITIATIVE

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on 8 June 2014 between the Arab International Women's Forum and AIWF Institutional Partner, the Pearl Initiative, the GCC-based, private sector-led, not-for-profit organisation developed to promote best business practices in the Gulf Region.

This MOU is aimed at supporting the Pearl Initiative's research programme entitled ***Women's Careers in the GCC: The CEO Agenda*** to analyse company best practices and encourage the progression of women into Executive and Board roles.

In the July 2014 issue of this Newsletter, we reported on the initial findings of this comprehensive survey carried out by the Pearl Initiative. Following on from this report, as part of the next stage of the programme, the Pearl Initiative held a Forum on 25 November 2014 on Women in Business with Effat University, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the objective of which was to highlight the business case for gender diversity at senior levels, and to share practical successful programmes to attract, retain and develop women into senior positions in the GCC region, and thereby create a larger pool of Board-ready women.

Speaking at the Forum was a distinguished panel of speakers who made a number of key points, some initial ones of which are:

- “Women in Business” is a corporate governance issue about building the most successful boards and senior leadership teams. To be successful, these teams need the right mix of individuals who bring the right mix of skills
- Leadership starts with education, and significant strides have been made over recent years in quality tertiary education for women
- But women are still significantly under-represented in the workforce, especially at senior levels
- There is a lack of job-focused training centres for women that are focused on labour market needs
- The situation for women's education and employment is much better in the main cities than it is across the majority of the country, especially rural areas
- We should look at institutions, such as Effat University, who are producing confident ambitious women, and find ways to replicate this model
- Specialised engineering, technical and scientific roles offer opportunities for women to advance, as these skills are in such short supply
- The quality, performance and productivity of the work done by women is often higher than that carried out by men, particularly at more junior levels

NEWS OF AIWF BOARD MEMBERS & FRIENDS CONGRATULATIONS TO AIWF BOARD MEMBER

HE Dr Shaikha Al Maskari, Chairperson Al Maskari Holding, Dubai Businesswoman of the Year 2014, UAE who has been presented with the **World Women Congress Leadership Award (WWCLA)** in Mumbai, India.

The WWLCA was created to showcase and recognise the best talent and professionals from diverse industries and sectors, and from different parts of the world. The awards programme encourages public and private sectors to promote women leaders, draws the attention of industry leadership toward the role of women in societal development, motivates women to compete in the corporate and labour market, supports working women empowerment strategies, highlights women's achievements in regional and global leadership, and drives women's aspirations by strengthening their leadership in sustainable economic development.

Among other members receiving the award at the WWLCA conference in Mumbai from the Arab World was HE Rabiha Diab, Former Minister of Women's Affairs, Palestine. More than 200 professional women from 120 countries attended the *World Women Leadership Congress & Award* conference organised by Dr Raju Bathia, Founder and Chief Editor World CSR Day, on 14-15 February 2015 in Mumbai, India.

AIWF IN THE MEDIA

The Sharjah Business Women Council promotes women's empowerment in the UK

As a result of the participation by a delegation of members of Sharjah Business Women Council, AIWF Global Platinum Partner, led by Chairperson HE Ameera Binkaram, in the AIWF London Conference Programme which was held in October 2014, we are proud to report that there has been substantial press coverage of these events in the Arab press: Al Khaleej, Al Itihad, Al Bayan and Gulf Today.

'A Strong Voice in Women's Arab Leadership' was the headline of a feature on AIWF Chairman, Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, in **Leaders Middle East** on 16th January 2015.

When asked in the press interview if she felt that Arab governments, private sector and regional development groups are doing enough to promote women's empowerment and entrepreneurship, Mrs Al Kaylani replied:

'The private sector has a critical role in creating a fair and supportive environment to support young women entrepreneurs, helping them to develop their access to resources, knowledge, capital, networks and mentors. The media also has an important role to play in transforming cultural biases and fighting back against misconceptions in the international marketplace about the skills and capacity of young Arab business leaders by promoting the region's many success stories. A study by the World Bank on women entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) debunks the myth that women-owned businesses are small and low-tech. It reveals that they are as fast-growing, technologically savvy and connected to global markets as companies owned by men.'

In the report of an interview with **Gulf Times** on 20 January 2015, entitled *'Arab International Women's Founder calls for gender-neutral business and property laws'*, AIWF Chairman, Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani outlined the key issues which need to be addressed to enable women to participate to their full potential in the workforce across the MENA region. These include addressing inadequate policy environments and legal structures related to entrepreneurship in the region; providing access to finance for entrepreneurs;

giving equal pay for equal work; ensuring that laws governing women's rights to maternity leave and pay are followed; providing flexible working terms that allow women to meet both work and family obligations and, last but not least, breaking down cultural resistance to women working.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BOARD MEMBER OF GHORFA ARAB-GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

and valued friend of AIWF, **Dr Gabi Kratochwil**, who has been presented with the **World Women Congress Leadership Award (WWCLA)** in Mumbai, India.

This award was made in recognition of her *'outstanding achievements and excellent performance as a cross cultural consultant, diversity management trainer and renowned author in building bridges across the globe, connecting minds, cultures and religions. She also takes an active role in promoting women's empowerment throughout her many non-profit initiatives'*.

Dr Gabi Kratochwil is the owner and Managing Director of CrossCultures, a provider of intercultural training, coaching and consultancy with special focus on the Arab World, Diversity Management and Women & Leadership, and is the author of business handbooks on the Arab world and Arab women which have been highly acclaimed by readers and the media.

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Ghorfa Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its Chairwoman in 2007, Dr Kratochwil initiated the Arab-German Businesswomen Dialogue at the Ghorfa Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry's annual Arab-German Business Forum and was a major participant when the Ghorfa, the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry, hosted the AIWF Annual Conference in Berlin from 23-25 October 2013 entitled *From Partnership to Inclusive Growth: Women in the Arab World, Germany & the International Community*.



Dr Gabi Kratochwil (3rd from left), Mrs Haifa Al Kaylani and delegates at the AIWF Annual Conference held in partnership with Ghorfa, the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry, in Berlin from 23 - 25 October 2013.

HOW TO JOIN AIWF

For further information on AIWF kindly contact:

Arab International Women's Forum
Berkeley Square House, Berkeley Square
London W1J 6BD, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 20 7887 7630 Fax: +44 20 7887 6001
info@aiwfonline.com www.aiwfonline.com

Date of next issue:

AIWF News - Issue No. 35 will be published in July, 2015
Kindly send all articles by 1 June, 2015